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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO COMMUNICATION BARRIERS THAT
AFFECT THE SMOOTH MANAGEMENT OF SOME SELECTED
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BARINGO CENTRAL. A CASE
STUDY OF SACHO HIGH
SCHOOL , KAPROPITA GIRLS' AND PEMWAI GIRLS'**

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This project has been submitted with approval as the
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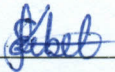
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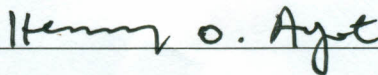
DECLARATION

This work is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.



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This project has been submitted with my approval as the University Supervisor.



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DEDICATION

The author of this project greatly appreciates the instruction and
This project is dedicated to my husband Kibet and my children
Komen, Jelagat and Kiprop. You are the most important people
in my life. of this study.

I also acknowledge the effort of Mr. A. Bojina who read the work
and gave necessary advice and guidance. This greatly assisted in
making the necessary corrections and adjustments.

Special gratitude goes to Mrs. Mary Omariba for offering her time
to type this work.

To the students and teachers of Napropala, Sacho and Pambai
who availed useful information for this study. I am also indebted
to the headteachers of the three schools for giving me vital
information that made this study a success.

To my parents, for offering me a chance to go to school and for
their inspiration that made me continue with my education.

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To my parents, for offering me a chance to go to school and for their inspiration that made me continue with my education.

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To you all, I am most indebted and may God bestow his blessings upon you.

ABSTRACT

Communication is an important tool of management in secondary schools. All programmes and activities in schools are co-ordinated through the establishment of effective communication networks. These networks link the school to the outside community. As a result of the value of communication in school management, it became imperative to study communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools.

The specific objectives that guided the study were based on the prevalent communication channels in the schools, their effectiveness and the communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. Questionnaires were used to collect data from students, teachers and the headteachers of the sampled schools. The findings were analyzed using tally and percentages. The results were presented using tables.

From the study findings, management tasks and the role of communication in the management of secondary schools were determined. It was also established that formal communication is used in all the schools with limited use of informal channels of communication.

Communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools were cited. The common communication barriers were identified as language, distortion, perception, social distance and physical barriers.

In schools where participatory management is practised, communication systems are clear hence all members of the community understand their roles and duties. The initiation of clear and effective communication systems where continuous feedback is encouraged minimizes incidences of communication barriers in secondary schools.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The smooth management of secondary schools greatly depends on the effectiveness of its communication networks (Dean 1988). Every school needs to establish communication channels both within and outside the school. Research evidence shows that, management by communication stimulates discussion and dialogue. As identified by Fayol (1945), there are four main management principles in practice. These are planning, organizing, leading, and controlling. All these management tasks have to be coordinated through communication.

The process of communication is evidenced in the school by the various tasks performed by the school management. In planning, the school management receives educational plans and objectives from the Ministry of Education through the Provincial Director of Education or the District Education Office. Planning is important as it forms the basic principle of school management (Okumbe 1998). These plans have to be communicated to the Board of Governors and the Parents Teachers Association before any decisions are reached or implemented.

At the beginning of every year, plans regarding various school activities are drawn by the Ministry of Education. These plans are communicated to the various members of the school community through the school management. As the school leader, the headteacher needs to ensure that educational plans are shared with all stakeholders to reduce incidences of misunderstanding.

All school plans must be effectively communicated to all members of the school community in order to enhance the smooth management of the school. Ineffective communication of school plans can lead to the disruption of educational programmes in the school. Dean (1998).

The organization of the school system has to be communicated to all those in the school. (Campbell (1977), stated that only through adequate communication can members of the school be made aware of the organization's systems and goals. For example, in a school system, the teachers must be informed about their duties and responsibilities by drawing time-tables, duty roasters and organizational charts, Dean (1998). The smooth management of the school can be achieved through making everyone aware of his

or her roles in achieving the school goals and objectives (Okumbe 1998).

The school is structured to enable it accomplish objectives and goals and to carry out plans for people to work effectively, (Boles et al., 1975). The school organization is based on job description whereby tasks are divided at departmental level. Heads of departments are placed in-charge of various departments in order to ease administrative tasks for the school management. The establishment of an effective communication system in the school harmonizes the activities of various departmental units towards the achievement of educational goals. The school management, therefore, needs to guide staff members to know their tasks, duties and responsibilities. Ducker (1954) wrote that:- “ The manager’s main vehicle for operating his affairs is information”

The headteacher can motivate, guide and organize teachers, students, parents and the board members to perform work effectively through the spoken or written word. The concepts of management and teamwork are based on the application of information, understanding, consultation and participation. All these elements rely on communication for their success in a school, Herman et al., (1973). The headteacher should try to build

teamwork to enhance his or her management skills. This is done by giving tasks to all stakeholders and in providing feedback on the progress of the team, (MOEST, 1999). The nature and quality of leadership and management that the headteacher provides will determine the effectiveness of the school.

The effectiveness of a school's management style is determined by its communication networks. It is through communication that information is passed over to the teachers, parents and students in order to enhance teaching and learning in the school, Okumbe (1998). Poor communication in schools has led to low academic achievement, high levels of indiscipline, sit-ins and strikes, Dean (1995). Communication is therefore a prerequisite to better management of educational institutions, (Fidler 1998) .

This study was done in three purposely selected schools namely Sacho, Kapropita and Pemwai Secondary schools all in Baringo District. The three schools have different historical developments. Kapropita Girls started as a Mission School in 1946 under the African Inland Mission while Pemwai Girls and Sacho started as harambee schools in 1976 and 1982 respectively. All the three schools are provincial schools.

The three schools were selected because of their differences in size and level of performance. Kapropita is a girls' school with 496 students, 45 teachers and 30 non-teaching staff. Sacho High School has 460 students, 46 teachers and 28 non-teaching staff. Pemwai Girls' has 342 students, 20 members of non-teaching staff and 22 teachers. Kapropita and Pemwai are girls' schools while Sacho is a mixed school.

Sacho High School has been performing well in National Examinations appearing among the top 20 schools in the country in the year 2000. Kapropita Girls' was among the best 100 schools while Pemwai was among the first 200 schools in the country.

From the above background information about the three schools, the communication systems adopted by the school as one of the management tools need to be studied. This study will be concerned with the communication systems in each of the schools, their effectiveness in school management and establish barriers to communication that affect the smooth management of these schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

On the basis of the preceding background, communication barriers that may exist in a school greatly affect its smooth management. Every school, despite its size, has problems of communication from time to time and it needs to work constantly towards maintaining proper channels of communication (Dean, 1998). The headteacher, subordinates and the external environment are linked by the schools' communication process. To achieve objectives, leadership to be exercised, people be motivated, decisions be made, efforts be co-ordinated and operations controlled, interaction through communication is necessary (Hicks et al., 1975). The flow of information between members of the school needs to be smooth, uninterrupted and be well-understood by everyone (Bell, 1988). This would reduce any barriers that would affect the smooth management of the school. All members in the school need to overcome barriers to communication if goals and objectives are to be achieved. A study done in the United States on how top management has to be understood by the subordinates showed that:

- At the vice-presidential level, managers understand about 75% of what they hear from the top.

- At the general supervisory level, the managers understand about 56% of the top level information.
- At the managerial level, 40% is received.
- The foreman receives 30%
- Persons in the production line receive 20% of the top level information

(figures from organizations theory and behaviour , Hicks et al.,(1975).

It is therefore imperative that school management finds ways to ensure that information is sent in a manner that can be easily understood by the receiver.

This study therefore investigated communication barriers that affect the smooth management of some selected secondary schools in Baringo District.

1.3. Research Questions

In order to address the above problem, the following research questions were posed: -

- (i) What are the channels of communication that are prevalent in the school?

- (ii) How often do subordinates complain of not getting information at the right time?
- (iii) How often do people fail to act on information, which was believed to have been passed by the school management?
- (iv) Are there major gaps in communication within the school?
- (v) Are there any possible solutions to curb these gaps?

From the above research questions, the following objectives were generated: -

- (a) To establish whether communication networks are connected such that information flows smoothly within the school organization.
- (b) To find out if the schools' communication networks are maintained and reviewed in order to get proper feedback?
- (c) To establish communication barriers that affect the smooth management of the school.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Schools as social organizations need to adopt effective communication networks by which "goal-directed behaviour can be guided, controlled and directed" (Olembo et al., 1992). Ineffectiveness in communication has been a hindrance to

attaining school goals. The identification and removal of these barriers can enhance the smooth management of schools.

The school management should realize the need to establish proper and appropriate communication networks since it is fundamental to the whole process of education (Dean 1998). This will ensure that information travels through all levels of the school and feedback is received on time (Okumbe 1998). For a school to realize its objectives, the management must create a unity of purpose in the community among the teachers, students, parents and the education office in order to get support. This can only be done through establishing effective communication networks.

The study will, therefore, increase awareness among school managers on the importance of creating effective communication networks. This enhances the smooth management of schools and also creates teamwork among all the stakeholders. It will also serve as a useful source of reference for future research in various aspects of communication and school management.

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were formulated for the study

1.5. Conceptual Framework

Communication is an important tool in management. Effective communication contributes to increased performance at the work place, cohesion, and job-satisfaction rates. Poor communication at the work place is reflected by poor morale and low motivation, (Bogumil, 1983). Accuracy and timeliness of information is very important in school management. Good management practice requires headteachers to act and disseminate information promptly, to avoid a breakdown in communication, (Bell, 1988).

1.7. Limitation of the Study

The effectiveness of any communication depends on why it is being sent, whether it is being sent to the right person, at an appropriate time, using the right channel. The school management needs to establish proper channels of communication to ensure that information travels in all directions and proper feedback mechanisms are put in place, Mworira (1993). Information can easily be misinterpreted if communication barriers exist. Failure to communicate effectively leads to management problems in the school

1.6 Assumptions of the Study

The following assumptions were formulated for the study.

- That communication barriers affect the smooth management of the schools.
- That barriers to communication are due to ineffective channels of communication used, level of education and social distance between members of the school management and subordinates.
- That the headteachers have adopted good interpersonal skills which enhance effective communication in the school.

1.7 Limitation of the Study

The study was conducted in Baringo District. The findings were confined to three schools namely Sacho, Kapropita and Pemwai. It is not possible to conduct the research in all the schools in the district because of limited time. The three schools were selected because of accessibility to the researcher and variations in size. The foregoing reasons are justified by Singleton (1993) that, the ideal research setting is one that is related to researcher's interest, easily accessible and that which allows development of immediate rapport.

There is no adequate literature in this area on the effects of barriers to communication on educational management. The researcher utilized here personal experience in school

management on the importance of communication. The area of communication is wide, however, the researcher tried to narrow it to barriers to communication and their effects on the smooth management of secondary schools.

1.8 Definitions of Significant Terms

Communication: Transmission of information from one person to another. It is a tool used in making our opinions, ideas, attitudes or feelings known to others.

Effective communication: When a message is transmitted, it elicits desired reaction or response from the recipient.

Communication network: It is a pattern of interpersonal communication among members of a group.

Management: Process of designing, developing and effecting organizational objectives and resources in order to achieve the set goals.

School: It refers to the social institution in which the education of the youth is conducted. The 'school' includes the area it occupies, the physical facilities and the personnel found within it, that is, pupils, teachers, administrative staff and the subordinate staff.

Communication barriers: These are aspects of communication that make it difficult for a communicator to pass information effectively and elicit defined results.

Headteacher: This is the teacher with the overall administrative responsibility of running a school and to whom all members of the school are answerable.

1.9. Abbreviations

PTA - Parents Teachers Association

- BoG - Board of Governors
- MoEST - Ministry of Education Science and Technology
- TSC - Teachers Service Commission

Communication in schools is extremely complex and an exhaustive study on this topic in the management of schools is unattainable. (Bell, 1980). The concept of communication is broad and barriers to communication are numerous and varied as they continue affecting the smooth management of secondary schools. This is evidenced by low self-esteem among staff, absenteeism, poor academic performance, strikes, sit-outs and other school management problems. Foodman Hermerford (1997) also stated that "the lack of communication in schools is a major barrier to the effective management of schools". The barriers of communication in the management of secondary schools in Harare District. The review of literature related to this topic are based on the following areas:

- Definition of communication.
- Management tasks in school.
- Role of communication in school management.
- Communication systems provided in secondary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Communication in schools is extremely complex and an exhaustive study on this topic in the management of schools is unattainable, (Bell 1988). The concept of communication is broad and barriers to communication have remained unresolved as they continue affecting the smooth management of secondary schools. This is evidenced by low self-esteem among staff, absenteeism, poor academic performance, strikes, sit-ins and other related management problems, Roodman Hermarman (1973). Good management practice requires headteachers to act on and disseminate information promptly to avoid breakdown in communication, MoEST (1999). This study is based on the barriers of communication that affect the smooth management of secondary schools in Baringo District. The review of literature related to this topic are based on the following areas:

- Definition of communication
- Management tasks in school
- Role of communication in school management
- Communication systems prevalent in secondary schools

- Communication barriers that affect the management of secondary schools
- Possible solutions to communication barriers that affect the management of secondary schools

Review of literature explores published books and journals drawn from international, regional and local publications. Secondary sources of literature include minutes of meetings and other related records.

2.2 Definition of Communication

The concept of communication is broad and has been defined and used differently by many scholars, Miller G. (1963). Some scholars have looked at it as it relates to the lives of human beings and others see it as it exists within social organizations and different institutions. Communication is a common human activity whereby thoughts, and feelings are exchanged constantly as interactions take place, Fidler (1998). It is a tool that is used to build relationships in a social organization. The above definition is shared by Okumbe (1998) who defined communication as “the exchange of information and transmission of meaning”. It is the process of transferring meaning and understanding from one person to another, Kibera (1996).

Communication has also been defined by Scott (1967) as “ a process which involves the transmission and accurate replication of ideas ensured by feedback for the purpose of eliciting action which will accomplish organizational goals”.

Communication simulates discussion and dialogue among members of a team. It is the basic ingredient of human relations in the management of people, Roodman et al., (1973). Leadership and teamwork among people are based on information, understanding, consultation and participation, all comprising communication. According to Bell (1985), communication is concerned with action, initiating action, preventing action or giving people information on which they may wish to act. Alfred (1965), states that communication is the act of sharing information, thoughts, attitudes or opinions among members of a group. This is further shared by the works of Boles et al., (1978) that communication is for giving performance feedback, exchanging opinions, attitudes seeking information and giving information.

Communication is a process in which one person transmits some type of information to another or group, Baron Paulus (1991). It is a reciprocal affair involving the mutual exchange of information

between two or more sides. Any concept or idea that is conceived in the mind of an individual cannot be read by others unless they are made external by putting them in words, gestures or by entering directly into a computer, Walter (1983). A research conducted by the Ministry of Health, Education Department (1998) concluded that communication motivates people to change, act, adopt and achieve desired results. Through communication, social organizations can create a sense of purpose and unity to attain predetermined goals.

2.3 Management Tasks in Schools

Management is the process of designing, developing and effecting organizational objectives and resources in order to achieve the set goals. Bogumil (1983). The headteacher working through and with the Board of Governors, has the overall responsibility for the total organization and administration of the school. Bell (1988). The increasing influences in the school on the part of the parents, Board of Governors, the Ministry of Education and sponsors are aspects of school management, Dean (1998). The Board of Governors in respect to the provision of the code of management for secondary schools entrusts the headteacher with full responsibility for internal organization, management and discipline of the school for instructional supervision and for

maintaining discipline in the school. The school boards, however, are charged with various responsibilities such as;

- Staff management whereby boards may hire the services of teachers or non-teaching staff. It also contributes towards the employment of teachers by the TSC. It also recommends to the TSC the appointment or dismissal of a teacher.
- Staff housing and welfare
- Financial management
- Leadership development and practice
- Staff and student motivation and discipline

The Parents Teachers Association (PTA) plays a leading role in establishing and maintaining school community relations, Olembo et al., (1992). Through their meetings with teachers, they offer advice to teachers and the school management on matters related to ways of improving the school. The PTA also provides the much needed financial and material resources to the school. In liaison with the Board of Governors, PTA's pass resolutions on matters that relate to the development of their schools. According to Capel (1971), Elsbree et al., (1967), Mwangi (1978), the tasks of the headteachers fall in the following areas:

- Communicating
- Curriculum and instruction
- School community relations
- Pupils personnel
- Staff personnel
- Parents
- Financial and business management
- Physical facilities.

Odali (1984), clarifies these duties as managerial and instructional leadership. The school management has the task of co-ordinating all the activities in and outside the school that contribute towards the attainment of educational goals. This can be achieved by developing confidence and understanding between all members of the school community through establishing and maintaining effective communication networks (Mbugua 1987).

Curriculum and Instructional Programmes

The school management is directly involved in curriculum implementation and supervision. This is the basic operational area of all school administrators, Mbaabu(1983). All school

managers must ensure that there is improvement in instruction by developing effective instructional leadership on the part of the headteacher, Campbell (1971). The headteachers must ensure that the educational objectives of their schools and the means of achieving them are clearly spelt out by the professional staff, Olembo (1975). The headteacher must ensure that effective teaching and learning is observed in the school through regular supervision of classroom instruction. The headteacher must keep abreast of any changes in the curriculum so that he can communicate to the other members of the school community.

According to Mwangwu, the instructional roles of the headteacher can be summarized as;

- Organizing the school time-table and seeing to the day-to-day operation of the school.
- The selection and procurement of instructional materials.
- Designing and implementing ^{EVA} appraisal programmes and reporting students' progress.
- Establishing formal structures of authority through which work can be arranged and divided by delegating duties to other members of the school community.
- Be involved in staff development and training

- Providing appraisal reports for teachers
- Encouraging teachers and students to use the available teaching and learning resources.

School Community Relations

School-community relation is inevitable because the community greatly influences activities that take place in the school. It has been defined as an organized factual information service for the purpose of keeping the public informed. This is meant to develop continuing public consciousness, confidence and active participation in the educational process, Kindred et al (1976).

School-community relation is a co-operative development and maintenance of efficient two-way channels of information and understanding between the school, its personnel and the community.

The school is an integral part of the wider community and all the members of the school are directly or indirectly affected by what happens to the larger society. The society also expects a certain role from the school such as developing certain attitudes and mental attributes which are necessary for the improvement of the society's life, (Ozigi 1977).

The school management have the task of constructing the bridge between their schools and the community that support them. The headteacher, who is at the centre of school management, is charged with the functions of decision making, communicating, influencing, co-ordinating and evaluating the programme, Kindred et al., (1976), translated these functions to include the following actions;

- Establishing a basic policy for developing and encouraging constructive relationships between the school and community.
- Planning of process and procedures for keeping the school and public members informed.
- Establishing communication channels between the school system and the public.
- Utilizing all members of the administrative system's experience, knowledge, perceptions and skills in decision making in regard to the various facets of a school community relations programme. These include the Board of Governors and Parents Teachers Association members.

Students Personnel

The other major concern of the school management is dealing with the pupil personnel. They determine the number of pupils to be enrolled in their schools. This should correspond to the availability of human and material resources, (Bell, 1988). The headteacher has to identify students who need special attention such as the weak and indisciplined, students. Special services should be planned and provided to such students through remedial work and offering guidance and counselling. Headteachers should set clear rules and regulations that govern pupils' behaviour to avoid conflict with the students and their guardians. They should also guide members of staff on how to relate with their pupils so as to avoid unnecessary conflicts and to work towards the achievement of educational objectives, (Campbell,1971).

Staff Personnel

It is the duty of the school management to determine the type and number of staff members needed to run the various programmes of the school , Peters (1976). The headteachers should develop appropriate staff personnel policy which will help to achieve educational objectives and to make working conditions attractive to teachers and as such make them want to contribute

more towards school goals, Bell (1988). The school management should motivate the staff personnel by:

- Establishing duties and responsibilities
- Making available the resources required for performing duties to achieve the schools' predetermined goals.
- Dividing tasks to various departments and harmonizing these units vertically and horizontally by establishing proper information systems.

Staff members must know what their assignments are and the level of performance expected with guidance from the management, Herman (1973). It is the responsibility of the headteacher to "... see that things get done and ensure that staff co-ordinate their activities towards the achievement of clearly defined aims and objectives". Ward as quoted by Bell (1988).

The headteacher needs to induct new teachers into the school system and the local community so that they can be acquainted. They should be helped to adjust to the job if they are newly posted. The headteachers should help teachers grow professionally by encouraging them to attend in-service training programmes, seminars and workshops. The headteacher should

constantly appraise the work done by the teachers and other personnel in the school.

Financial and Business Management

The other task of the school management is that of finance and business management of school affairs. It is an activity that is instrumental to the achievement of the major purpose of the school. Olembo et al., (1992). The school management should have long-term plans for the budget, choose between alternatives and related costs and business, Okumbe (1988). The budget should be formulated in detail so as to depict the sources of income and the various educational programmes to be financed. This will make all those concerned with the school enterprise to understand how school revenue was spent.

Physical Facilities

Physical facilities are important for instructional programmes to succeed. These include school buildings, grounds, equipment and facilities for instruction. The school management should ensure that the physical facilities are adequate and that the financial resources for the expansion of physical facilities are available. They should also make sure that the school facilities are properly

maintained and managed by competent personnel. Mbaabu (1983).

Communication

Communication in schools like in any other organization is fundamental to the whole process of education. The school management have an important responsibility of ensuring that proper communication channels are established both within the school and the world outside. Olembo et al., (1992). The school is made up of sub-systems that are interrelated. Any change in one part of the system has to be communicated to all the other sub-systems of the school. Such an action averts any crisis or a breakdown in any part of the system. The headteacher is at the centre of this system. It is his duty to enable all members of the system to receive information on time and by using the established communication channels, Bell (1988).

Management

As the leader of the school, the headteacher is charged with such functions of decision-making, influencing, co-ordinating and evaluating the school programme. For the headteacher to fulfill these functions, he/she should observe the following management tasks:

- Ensure appropriate communication with everyone

- Create and maintain a communication system.
- Ensure that information travels in all directions.
- Seek information and feedback from all levels within the system.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the communication channels being used in the school (Reen, 1995).

The success of secondary schools as social organizations within the society depends greatly on communication networks. Any breakdown and misunderstanding in communication may lead to a lot of inefficiency in the management of the school. The school management, therefore must be concerned with all the communication activities through which the school can achieve its predetermined goals and objectives

2.4 The Role of Communication in Secondary School Management

The need for effective communication in all social organizations is a pre-requisite for the attainment of predetermined goals and objectives. Hicks et al., (1975), schools as social organizations must establish proper and efficient communication networks that will allow for smooth management. Research findings by Mworira (1993) indicate that the school management needs to establish

proper channels of communication to ensure that information travels in all directions and proper feedback mechanisms are put in place. With proper communication and dialogue, most problems in schools can be resolved.

Whitaker (1982), identified four major functions of communication in educational management as listed below:

- Helps control the behaviour of teachers, students and supporting staff. It is used to define roles of each staff member in the school and the students are informed about the expected behaviour through rules and regulations.
- Used to motivate all members of the school community by establishing proper communication channel and feedback mechanisms.
- Encourages social interaction within the institution as feelings, ideas and opinions about work-related activities and social aspects of their lives are expressed.
- Facilitates the decision-making process. The school management needs to develop strategies to ensure that proper communication systems are put in place.

Fiedler (1998), further identified the functions of communication which include the following:

- Used to pass information to the concerned parties about school policies.
- Facilitates decision making in the school whereby information reaches the concerned individuals on time.
- Encourage social interaction within the organization as people express their feelings about work-related activities and social aspects of their lives.
- Used to pass information about specific situations and needs that arise in the school. This includes updating all stakeholders about the daily, weekly, monthly or yearly progress of the school.
- Help control the behaviour of teachers, students and other members of the institution.
- Enhance the sharing of school tasks and duties.
- Help the headteacher in the process of management.

The two writers agree on the roles of communication in school management in that they see it as a tool that can be used to communicate all school's aims, goals, mission and objectives to the teachers, parents, students and the community in general. To achieve the common goals and maintain a common

commitment by members of a school, free-flow of information through all ranks in the school need to be encouraged. Hicks et al., (1978) observed that communication necessitates co-existence of people in an institution thus making it possible to drive people towards the achievement of common goals. They stated that through communication, we have been able to share knowledge and combine efforts and this ability has enabled us to develop and expand our store of knowledge, technology and culture. Without the capacity to communicate at an advanced level with one another, man would not have progressed beyond the primeval stage.

Effective communication therefore, guarantees the smooth management of secondary schools. Better communication skills need to be established so that the efforts of all the stakeholders are co-ordinated and controlled. A conducive environment for the effective transfer of information between all the parties concerned makes interaction possible. Lack of understanding leads to hostility or unwillingness to participate in the activities of the school.

Communication is important to the management of secondary schools because most of the time, the headteacher talks to colleagues, participates in meetings, consults with parents, and other community members, provides news releases and prepares reports for perusal by the Ministry of Education officials. For good management to exist, proper and effective communication must be instilled. Bell (1981) indicated that the first duty of the school manager is to develop and maintain a system of communication that provides for an upward flow to benefit decision making, a downward flow to benefit implementation of policy and a horizontal flow to facilitate co-ordination of all parts of the organization.

A two-way communication system should be encouraged for staff relations to be enhanced. For a harmonious working and peaceful co-existence based on acceptable conduct and behaviour amongst students, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and all stakeholders, proper communication skills need to be developed. School management is about working with human and material resources. Ducker (1954). In the words of Mbiti (1975) as quoted by Kamau (1997), the headteacher must realize that his major task is to make the school's purpose clear to everyone: to see that necessary equipment and monetary resources are available

for school use and to motivate his staff, pupils and parents to produce a living spirit as well as excellence in work performance .

The school managers must ensure that the existing human and material resources within the school work efficiently. The school's aims, goals, mission, vision and objectives should be made clear to teachers, parents, students and the community in general through establishing proper communication systems.

2.5 Communication Systems in Schools

The communication system of a school determines the effectiveness of its management. The activities of all members of the school are influenced by the communication network prevailing in the school. Bell (1988), observed that communication is the lifeblood of the school. Openness in communication systems allows for free flow of information within and outside the school. Hicks et al., (1978) observed that "high performance in organizations tended to be positively correlated with openness of communication channels between the supervisor and the subordinate". It is important to make information travel in all directions. The school management should ensure that information travels upwards, downwards and sideways. Bernard (1978), identified controlling factors in communication system as follows;

- Lines of communication should be known.
- Lines of communication should be short and direct
- Complete chain of communication needs to be followed.
- Lines of communication should not be broken or interrupted.

The flow of communication between members of the school organization needs to be smooth, uninterrupted and well-understood by everyone. Effective transfer of information makes it possible for all members in the school to interact freely.

The Process of Communication

Communication is a process whereby there is a changing flow of thoughts, feelings and information between two or more people. The need to communicate triggers off the communication process. Further communication is enhanced by effective feedback. The process of communication is complex because one person's message stimulates a response that in turn provides a reason for further communication. The process of communication has been illustrated by various writers using communication modes.

The source of information must conceive an idea or concept and make this information known to someone else. The concept or idea must be made external by putting them in words (spoken or written), non-verbal forms (gestures, facial expressions) or by entering directly into the computer. This process is done after the communicator has encoded the concept. The information is therefore transmitted using the appropriate channel, Baron (1991). The channel used in transmitting the information depends on how the message has been encoded. If it is written, then it is mailed or copies given to the concerned parties. If it is verbal, it can be sent by phone or presented directly in face to face meeting. Messages entered into the computer storage can be sent directly to another computer via satellite, Roodman (1970).

The receiver interprets and decodes the message back into an idea or concept. The receiver responds to the message either by exhibiting an action or giving feedback. Feedback provides room for the evaluation of the effect of the message on the receiver, Dean (1998). Through feedback, the sender can know whether his messages are being attended to, regarded, translated and acted upon, Harold et al., (1978). It should be noted that the communication process is dynamic not linear. Responses may be

formed even before the message has been completely received. All the stages in the process of communication may occur at the same time.

On the communication process, there are filters that prevent the message from being encoded and received in the intended manner. The receiver or respondent may filter the message through common or personal barriers. The sender filters information to ensure its proper construction and meaning before he converts the idea into language. The receiver filters the information using his own perception and organizes the ideas or concepts to fit his experiences. These filters may distort the original message hence leading to misunderstanding. There are also other barriers such as noise that may distort the message.

It is therefore imperative for a school manager to have skills in preparing to send a message, encode, receive and decode messages. He must have the subject matter, choose words correctly and the appropriate modes of transmitting the message.

Forms of Communication

Information in institutions move through formally established channels or through informal channels. The flow and control of

information determine the effectiveness of the management of an institution. The two types of formal communication are interpersonal and managerial communication, Epeck (1988). Interpersonal communication takes three forms namely: oral, written and non-verbal.

Oral communication involves speaking and listening. A great deal of time in the school is spent in speaking using telephone, attending meetings, assemblies and making presentations during open or parents days (face to face talks), Baron (1991). Good listening skills enable one to communicate better with others because you will be able to provide and receive feedback immediately (Okumbe 1998).

Written communication includes letters, reports, notices, manuals and other types of documents that are essential to school management. It provides a permanent record of ideas, decisions or actions that can be read as the original message.

Non-verbal communication or the silent or unspoken language, Hall 1959 as quoted by Okumbe 1998, defines non-verbal communication as "non-word human responses and the perceived characteristics of the environment through which the

human verbal and non-verbal messages are transmitted". Non-verbal communication includes gazes, expressions and body movements. Important messages are also sent through how we arrange our offices and our use of physical space between the sender and the receiver, Paulus (1991). Other important aspects of non-verbal communication include the time allocated to talking to someone, the physical appearance, employment titles, mode of dress, and interpersonal interactions.

The other form of communication is managerial communication that occurs between the various positions in the school hierarchy. This takes the form of vertical, and horizontal communication, Kibera (1996). Vertical communication constitutes both upward and downward transfer of information. The manager needs to ensure that information travels upwards downwards and sideways, Dean (1998).

Upward communication is the type that moves from lower levels to upper levels of the institution. Upward communication may not be channelled through all the ranks in the institution. It may come from the students directly to the headteacher., Dean (1998)

Downward communication flows often from the upper levels to lower levels. It takes many forms such as newsletters, memos, instructions performance appraisals and meetings, Kiberu (1996).

Horizontal or lateral communication occurs between people at the same level of the institution's chart or different departments. For good management to exist, proper and effective communication procedures must be instituted. Dull (1981), indicated that the first duty of supervision is to develop and maintain a system of communication that provides for an upward flow to benefit decision making, a downward flow to benefit implementation of policy and a horizontal flow to facilitate co-ordination of all parts of the organization. Therefore, formal communication systems must be established and maintained to reduce false rumours and confusion.

2.6 Communication Barriers that Affect the Smooth Management of Secondary Schools

It has been established through research that people in institutions spend 90% of their time communicating, Schwartz (1963). Communication is key to leadership as ineffective communication results in administrative chaos. Communication

in schools is extremely complex because policy making at the Ministry of Education to individual job description needs to be communicated effectively, Bell (1988). Exhaustive analysis of communication is beyond our scope in this study. Establishing commonness through communication does not come naturally. There are many barriers which make it difficult for the communicator to reach his goals. GoK (1984).

• Those related to words.

Communication may be ineffective because of barriers that elicit negative reaction from the recipient. According to Epeck et al., (1985), communication is not a simple process because it is quite complex and imperfect that it “malfunctions easily and may result in miscommunication”. Failure to communicate effectively will lead to management problems. This needs to be avoided in schools through establishing clear communication channels or networks.

A school manager as a communicator needs to ask the following questions;

- What do I need to communicate?
- When should I communicate?
- To whom should I communicate ?
- How should I communicate?

School managers need to be aware of barriers to communication and be able to handle those barriers tactfully. Among communication barriers are social distance, perception, language, distortion, filtering, physical barriers and organizational barriers.

According to Gulberton (1978), communication barriers can be divided into three categories:

- Those related to words.
- Communicator who sends the message.
- Those related to the receiver.

a) **Language Barriers**

Communication is made difficult when language barriers exist. Words are symbols of things that suggest diverse meanings to different individuals. Korzyboki (1974) described words as being “a map of the actual territory but not the territory itself ----” This means words will never describe all they represent but only approximate the meaning (Okumbe 1998).

Cole (1993) indicated that verbal difficulties are a frequent source of confusion and misunderstanding. These may arise because of sheer lack of fluency on the part of the sender or because of the

use of jargon or perhaps because of pitching the message at too high a level of understanding.

The words you use and the way you carry on conversations determine the value others place on what you have to say. Repetitive phrases and use of qualifiers draw away the audiences' attention, Epeck (1999). Select words that will transmit the meaning you desire to communicate, Bogumil (1983).

The expressions used by the sender can result in disorganized ideas, clumsy sentence structure and unnecessary repetition, Herman et al., (1973). This reduces clarity and precision of sentence thus leading to misinterpretation or misunderstanding of sentences. Bell (1988) observed that "Good communication must avoid ambiguity and the possibility of being misunderstood or misinterpreted". The communicator must beware of ambiguity because you may end up with a different meaning, Epeck (1999). The communicator must express meaning but not to impress the audience.

Effective communication, therefore, demands that the message is clear, unambiguous, short and simple, Okumbe (1998). It

should be transmitted in a style that is acceptable and understandable, Bogumil (1983). In schools, communication is made difficult where the headteacher uses a language or words that cannot be understood by the students, non-teaching staff, board members and parents, Olembo (1992).

b) **Social Distance**

Communication has the function of pulling people together towards common goals. This enables the school management to maintain common commitment among all members. The social distance that may exist between the school management and the subordinates creates a barrier to communication.

Lott and Summer (1967), observed that the lower status individual may allow higher status individual to approach him quite closely but not dare approach such high status person to the same degree of closeness.

This is common in schools as social distance may exist between the Board of Governors, parents, headteacher, teachers, students and the support staff, Okumbe (1998).

Social distance is created when a feeling of goodwill and rapport are absent in the daily work environment, Roodman (1973). A poor superior subordinate relation reduces the ability to communicate freely for the benefit of the institution. Artificial walls of silence are created in the minds of people in the school organization because healthy dialogue and group effort are discouraged by the existence of social distance. It therefore becomes impossible to have human relations without communication and vice versa, Herman (1973). Fear leads to omission of part of an intended message because of fear of retribution, Okumbe (1998). Teachers may be apprehensive when it comes to discussing school issues with the headteacher as a result of fear.

c) **Perceptual Barriers**

The cardinal principle in communication is the relationship between the sender and the receiver (Marcus 1983). He further stated that:

the effectiveness of communication tends to be directly proportioned to the degree to which, both the sender and the receiver regard and treat each other as human in socio-cultural context of the event.

The attitude of the receiver towards the sender and the subject matter tends to affect communication. This creates a situation whereby the receiver lacks interest in the message or information and may also lead to poor retention, Herman et al., (1973).

One other factor related to the above is the halo effect whereby the sender or receiver has preconceived feelings towards each other, Gullet (1973). In this regard, the sender may lack the precision necessary to communicate with objectivity. Selective perception may also hinder effective communication in that receivers selectively see and hear what is based on their needs, motivation, experience, background and personal characteristics, Okumbe ((1998). Herman et al., (1973) observed that every person brings to the communication process an accumulation of past experience, attitudes and motives.

Individual differences therefore, bring perceptual barriers that affect the process of communication.

d) **Distortion**

Distortion occurs when a message is altered as it passes from one point to another. Harold et al (1975). Distortion of messages results from too frequent communication that seems unimportant

or trial. Bell (1988). The elements of the message that may lead to distortion include use of imprecise language, misinterpretation of the message, social distance between the sender and receiver, poor choice of symbols and channels of communication. Epeck (1998). Information from top management reaches the subordinates with a totally different interpretation from what was intended.

The way these channels are manipulated varies. Any message or information should, therefore, be conveyed in a language using a mode that can be absorbed well by the listeners. C. I. Bernard (1978).

e) **Filtering**

This occurs when positive messages get to the superiors while negative messages are filtered. The sender manipulates the information so that it can be received more favourably by the receiver. Krogh (1994). In a school, the intensity of filtering is high because of the hierarchical levels in its management. Bowles, et al., (1978). Feedback that reaches the school management is filtered such that positive reports from subordinates are received. This may affect the smooth management of the school because the top managers may bask in the flow of positive reports while the school is having serious

problems such as indiscipline and absenteeism of staff or students. Baron (1991).

f) **Body Language Barriers**

Body language and other forms of non-verbal communication can affect the process of communication. The body language channels are arms, hands, face, eyes, body angle and position. The way these channels are manipulated sends messages to others. Angry fingers pointing gestures make people defective and stop listening. Epeck (1999).

Nervous habits such as ring twisting, fingernail biting and hand wringing draw the attention of listeners away from the message. The space between the sender and receiver may also affect the communication process. The message will not be received well if the distance between the sender and the receiver is wide. People feel uncomfortable if the sender is too close to them. The mode of dress may distract attention of the listeners. People need to dress modestly to reduce the effects of communication barriers. Roodman (1973). The way the office is arranged and the type of furniture expresses a lot about the manager.

g) **Physical Barriers**

They are a common problem in communication. These barriers include physical noise, the arrangement and comfort of chairs and the temperature in the room. All these affect effective listening and thus distracts the attention of the receiver away from the message. Paulus (1975).

Other factors that contribute to ineffective communication as identified by Roodman (1975) include:

Cultures

Cultural beliefs, attitudes, symbols, values and behaviours vary from culture to culture. The modes of communication and social relationship vary from culture to culture. This affects our communication with other people.

• **Motivational barriers**

The receivers fail to read and interpret messages and reports because people do not understand how they will benefit from your message.

• **Premature evaluation causes confusion.** Managers need to permit adequate time for thorough exploration of the message before decisions are made.

• **A message should be well-timed to avoid conflicts.**

- Age difference between the sender and receiver.
- A message may be distorted by the status of its sender receiving additional attention if the sender is very senior and being ignored if the sender is very junior.
- Gender bias whereby some cultures still view women as being inferior to men. They do not take messages from women seriously.

2.7 Possible Solutions to Communication Barriers that Affect the Smooth Management of Secondary Schools

The activity of people in the school revolves around communication. The school management has to ensure that right information reaches the right people at the right time. Dean (1995). This should happen efficiently and effectively. There is need in school management to take note of the existing barriers to communication and work towards establishing effective communication. The school can work towards overcoming communication problems in management by establishing clear communication policies. Efforts to enhance communication, to improve accuracy and effectiveness are highly desirable (Paulus, 1991). The school, therefore needs to work towards better communication. Various writers have given possible ways of improving communication systems. John

Dean (1995) identified three main factors that may help improve communication in a school.

- Ensuring that information travels in all directions
- Feedback is received from all levels.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of communication

a) Ensuring that information travels in all directions, communication should not only be a top-down arrangement but information should also travel upwards and sideways. Members of staff need to be encouraged to contribute their views. The headteacher can give assignments to a group of teachers to discuss and come up with their views in the absence of the headteacher. Create an opportunity for teachers to discuss freely and bring out individual ideas.

It is important to encourage teachers to communicate with each other and share ideas. This results in better performance when a good communication climate has been created.

b) Seek Feedback from all Levels

The headteacher must establish the feelings of others in the school concerning various matters. He should establish rapport with all members of the school by walking about and talking with those he meets in the school compound. Also talk with parents and Board members frequently so that you can get to know their views of the school.

c) Evaluate the Effectiveness of Communication

Evaluate regularly the communication system by using a check-list. In a school that has a good communication system, the following characteristics are prevalent:

- The right messages get to the right people on time
- There exists clear channels of communication upwards downwards and sideways.
- There is unity of purpose whereby everyone seems to be involved in the communication process.
- The timing of communication is not delayed
- The system is evaluated regularly and maintained.

Roodman (1973) observed that "the meanings of words, are not in the words they are in us". The sender must use words that can be understood clearly by the receiver. The headteacher

should be aware of ambiguity of sentences to avoid being misunderstood. Sentences and words should be clear to avoid ambiguity. Communication barriers can be resolved through establishing a sincere two-way communication system, mutual trust confidence, respect and concern for the needs of others. A participative system encourages the involvement of others in discussions. Each member of the school should be encouraged to contribute information according to their experience and competence.

2.8 Conclusion

Communication system of a school determines the effectiveness of the school management. Communication being the lifeblood of the school is basic to school management. Communication controls, corrects, gives feedback and influences the behaviour of all members of the school community. Staff relations are influenced by communication. Therefore, effective communication systems need to be established in schools for smooth management.

Good communication skills need to be developed between the teachers, students, support staff, and the outside community. Openness in communication systems allows for free flow of information in the school. This makes interaction possible

between all members of the school community, thus creates a conducive environments for the effective transfer of information. The school needs to adopt effective communication channels. Communication in schools may be ineffective because of barriers that elicit negative reaction from the recipients. Misunderstanding, false rumours and confusion ensue within an organization if the members are not appropriately and promptly informed about matters concerning their work. These factors resulting to ineffective communication are caused by social distance, language barriers, organizational structure, perception, filtering and distortion. All members of the school community need to overcome barriers to communication if goals and objectives are to be achieved. The board, parents, headteachers, students and the external environment are linked by the organization's communication process. Identify barriers that hinder effective communication between these different groups of people. Better communication skills need to be developed to create a conducive environment for the effective transfer of information in the school.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study was based on purposive sampling of three schools in Brno, Czechia. These were girls schools and one mixed school. The sample has been influenced by academic performance of the

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the procedure followed in conducting this study. It focuses on location of study, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection, pilot testing and data analysis.

3.2 Location of Study

The study was conducted in Baringo Central in Baringo District. There are 17 schools in the area of study and it was not possible for the researcher to visit all schools because of spatial distance and accessibility.

These reasons therefore, formed the basis of selecting only three secondary schools namely: Sacho, Kapropita and Pemwai to study communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools in Baringo Central.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Procedures

The study was based on purposive sampling of three schools in Baringo Central. These were girls schools and one mixed school. The sample has been influenced by academic performance of the

schools which reflect the success of communication skills in the schools. The study comprised the following randomly selected personnel in each school.

- All headteachers
- Five teachers
- Three heads of departments in each school
- Twenty students preferably form 2 and 3 students

The above sampling method has been adopted because it is time consuming and costly to get data from all members of the school community. As observed by Thirkettle 1976, instead of obtaining data from the whole --- ampling methods are often used in which a sample selected from the whole is dealt with and from this sample conclusions are drawn to the whole.

A selection of a small number of schools was in consideration of the reason that the study would focus deeply on relatively small but information rich sample that represents the whole, Patton (1990), Best and Kane (1993).

3.4 Research Instruments

The study employed a number of research instruments. These were questionnaires for headteachers, teachers and students.

The schools also provided documents and records of minutes, organization charts, letters of invitation to meetings, communication forms, the ministry and attendance registers

(a) **Questionnaires**

The administration of questionnaires was aimed at collecting information pertaining to communication network and its effectiveness in the running of the daily activities of the schools. From these questionnaires, the students and teachers' own perceptions on areas that need improvement in the communication systems of the school were assessed. The use of questionnaires was preferred because it is time saving and allows for the collection of data from a larger group of people as it is the case in this study. Furthermore, it is least costly and results are easy to summarise (Bell 1993 and Kane 1995).

(b) **Interviews**

The interviews with the headteachers dwelt on various aspects of the importance of communication in school management and communication barriers experienced in the schools. Through interviews, more

information was obtained regarding communication problems in the three schools.

Interviewing was selected because of its several advantages. These include giving an opportunity to in-depth data (Best and Kahn 1993), ensuring high response rates and they encourage naturalness of the situation since the researcher comes face to face to the respondent (Bell 1993). In this way, the respondents were able to express their views and ideas freely while the researcher probes for adequate elaboration of issues. Kane (1995) sums that interviews can be modified to fit the needs of the situation, can convey empathy, build trust, collect rich data and provide clear understanding of the respondents' own viewpoints.

(c) **Documents**

Relevant documents were looked at. These included minutes of meetings, internal memos, organization charts, communication from the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission, letters

The data to the parents and record keeping procedures of the schools.

3.5 Data collection procedures

It was important for the researcher to obtain permission from the relevant authorities before conducting the research.

The questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents and were collected after one week. Appointments were made with the headteachers as to when the interviews should be conducted.

3.6 Data analysis

The data were analyzed using tallymarks and tables to represent the frequencies of responses. The coded data were analyzed and tabulated using descriptive statistics. The above mode of presentation gives a quick visual impression of the quantifiable variables regarding communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. This was chosen because they easily communicate the findings to the majority of the readers. Gay (1976).

The data were analyzed within each theme involving quotations from the respondents. Data analysis was hoped to give a comprehensive account of the problem under study.

This section presents the findings of the study based on

3.7 Pilot Testing

The questionnaires were pretested using a different school which was not part of study sample. This establish their reliability and validity.

analyzing data has been chosen because they easily communicate the findings to the majority of readers Gay (1976).

The themes were developed around the following major themes:

- 1. Demographic information,
- 2. Administrative tasks in secondary schools
- 3. Communication systems that are prevalent in the respective schools
- 4. Communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools.
- 5. Methods used to reduce communication barriers in secondary schools

Out of the sample used to conduct the study, the return rate of questionnaires was as follows:

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on quantitative and qualitative statistics. The above mode of presentation gives a quick visual impression of the quantifiable variables regarding data on communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. This method of analyzing data has been chosen because they easily communicate the findings to the majority of readers Gay (1976).

The findings are developed around the following major themes:

- Background information.
- Administrative tasks in secondary schools.
- Communication systems that are prevalent in the respective schools.
- Communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools.
- Methods used to reduce communication barriers in secondary schools.

Out of the sample used to conduct the study, the return rate of questionnaires was as follows:

- 51 students out of 60 returned the questionnaires
- 11 out of 15 teachers
- 13 out of 15 heads of departments.
- All the headteachers of the sampled. Schools.

The questionnaires were both open and close-ended. Close-ended questionnaires are presented in frequencies and percentages while open-ended are presented in narration form whereby outstanding responses are mentioned and in some instances quoted.

4.2 Background Information

In this study, the background information of all the respondents and the sample schools is given.

4.2.1 Background Information of Students

Table 4.1 Ages of Students

Age	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
12-14	1	1.9
15-17	46	90.1
Over 17	4	7.8
TOTAL	51	100.0

From the above table, over 90% of the students were aged between 18 and 17 years. At this age bracket students can identify the communication system prevalent in their school and its effectiveness in the day-to-day running of the school. This group of students are in Form 2 and Form 3. There were only 4 students who were over 17 years and 1 student under 15 years.

Table 4.2 Categorization by sex

Sex	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Female	43	84.3
Male	8	15.7
TOTAL	51	100.0

The number of female respondents was more than that of the males. This is as a result of the fact that two of the schools visited are for girls and the third is a mixed school.

Table 4.3: Categorization by classes

Form	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
1	2	3.8
2	24	45.3
3	25	50.9
TOTAL	51	100.0

Table 4.3 presents the forms of the student respondents. Over 90% of the respondents were in Form 2 and 3.

4.2.2 Background Information of the Teachers

Table 4.4: Categorization by age

Ages	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Below 30	5	45.5
31-35	3	27.3
36-40	1	9.1
Over 40	2	18.2
TOTAL	11	100.0

Table 4.4 presents the ages of the teacher respondents. Most of the teachers interviewed are relatively young with 45.5% below 30 years.

Table 4.5: Categorization of teachers by sex

Sex	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Male	5	45.5
Female	6	54.5
TOTAL	11	100.0

The table above shows that 54.5% of the teachers interviewed were females and 45.5% were males.

Table 4.6: Qualification of the teachers

Professional qualification	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
Diploma in education	6	54.5
Bachelor of education	5	45.5
Master of education	0	0.0
TOTAL	11	100.0

Table 4.6 presents professional qualification of teachers. It shows that 54.5% have diploma in education while 45.5% have Bachelor of Education degree. There is none with Master of Education or any other qualification.

Table 4.7: Teaching experience

Duration	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Below 1 year	1	9.1
1-5 years	3	27.3
5-10 years	2	8.0
Over 10 years	5	45.6
TOTAL	11	100.00

Table 4.7 presents the teaching experience of the teachers sampled in this study. From the data above, 27.3% have a teaching experience of between 1 and 5 years, 18.0% have taught for between 5 and 10 years while 45% have taught for over 10 years.

4.2.3 Background Information on Heads of Departments

Table 4.8: Age of heads of departments

Age	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Below 30	1	7.7
31-35	6	46.2
36-40	3	23.1
41-45	2	15.4
Over 45	1	7.7
TOTAL	13	100.00

The table above presents the ages of the heads of departments sampled for the study. 46.2% are aged between 31-35 years, 23.1% are aged over 41 years. Only one is below 30 years of age.

Table 4.9: Sex of heads of departments

Sex	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Male	8	61.5
Female	5	38.5
TOTAL	13	100.00

In the sample of heads of departments, there are more males (61.5%) than females(38.5%).

Table 4.10: Professional qualification of heads of departments

Qualification	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Diploma in education	4	30.8
Bachelor of education	8	61.5
BSC, PGDE	1	7.7
BA, PGDE	0	0.0
Master of education	0	0.0
TOTAL	13	100.0

From the above table, 30.8% have Diploma in education, 61.5% had Bachelor of Education degree and 7.7% had Postgraduate diploma in education.

4.2.4 Background Information on Headteachers

In this study, all the headteachers of the three schools were interviewed. Below are tables that present data on the background information the Headteachers.

Table 4.11: Age of headteachers

Age	Frequency(N)	Percentage (%)
30-35	1	33.3
36-40	0	0.00
Over 40	2	66.7
TOTAL	3	100.0

From the table two headteachers (66.7%) are aged over 40 years while one is between 30-35 years old (33.3%). Considering the fact that two of the schools sampled are for girls, two headteachers are therefore female while the one heading the mixed school is a male.

Table 4.12: Professional qualification of headteachers

Qualification	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Bachelor of education	2	66.7
Master of education	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	100.00

Table 4.2.12 presents the professional qualifications of the headteachers. Two of the headteachers have a Bachelor of Education degree while one has Master of Education degree.

Table 4.13: Teaching experience

Duration (years)	Teacher		Headteacher	
	Frequency(N)	%	Frequency(N)	%
Below 2 years	0	0.00	2	66.7
2-5 years	0	0.00	1	33.3
6-10 years	0	0.00	0	0.00
10-15 years	1	33.3	0	0.00
16-20 years	0	0.00	0	0.00
Over 20	2	66.7	0	0.00
TOTAL	3	100.0	3	100.0

The headteachers have a long teaching experience. The table indicates that all the three headteachers have taught for over 10 years. However, they are newly appointed as headteachers and have little experience in this position. Only one has been a headteacher for over 3 years while the other two were appointed less than two years ago.

4.2.5 Background Information on the Sampled Schools

The tables below give a clear indication of the student population, members of staff and nature of the schools sampled for the study.

Table 4.14: Student population

Population	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
301-400	1	33.3
401-500	11	66.7
TOTAL	3	100.0

Table 4.15: Population of teaching and non-teaching staff

Number	Teaching staff		Non teaching	
	Frequency(N)	%	Frequency(N)	%
11-15	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
16-20	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
21-25	1	33.3	1	33.3
26-30	0	0.0	11	66.7
Over 30	11	66.7	0	0.0
TOTAL	3	100.0	3	100.0

Table 4.16: Nature of the schools

Nature of school	Frequency(N)	Percentage(%)
Government	11	66.7
Private	1	33.3
TOTAL	3	100.0

From the study it was established that all the three schools are Provincial Boarding schools.

4.3 Management Tasks Performed by the School Management

In this study, the management tasks performed by the school management were identified. Form the responses of the teachers, it was established that 81.8% of the teachers performed other management tasks other than teaching. 18.2 % had no added responsibility. The duties they perform contribute towards the total management of the schools. The areas of responsibility identified by the teachers are:

- Class teachers
- Games teachers
- Library.
- Club patrons

- Discipline committees
- Staff welfare committees
- Guidance and counseling

The heads of departments reported that they play a key role in the management of their respective schools. The heads of departments who were sampled for the study identified the following duties that they perform in school:

- Keep records of all the activities of the department.
- Motivate other teachers to work towards team building in the department hence the whole staff.
- Promotion of school community skills that would enhance a good working relationship among members of staff.

As a result, each teacher would work towards the achievement of schools' goals thus contributing towards the smooth management of the school. The headteachers were asked to state how often they perform certain administrative tasks.

All the headteachers agreed that they always perform tasks that are related to curriculum implementation (66.7%), management of finances (100%), staff and student personnel (100%)

maintenance, of records (100%), filling of statistical reports and returns (100%).

All the headteachers (100%) believe that the co-ordination of all activities in and outside the school contribute towards the smooth management of the school. From their responses, it can be noted that the headteachers often engage in the establishment and maintenance of school and community relations, they also prepare newsletters and documents to be read by the parents and Board of Governors.

The headteachers were further asked to rank the management tasks in order importance. All the headteachers agreed that the following tasks are very important in the management of secondary schools:

- Curriculum implementation.
- Management of school material and financial resources.
- Management of staff and student personnel.
- Establishment and maintenance of school community relations.

The headteachers share management tasks with other members of the school community. The heads of departments and members of staff are placed in positions of responsibility in that tasks are delegated to them. They have meetings with the headteachers to plan and evaluate all the activities that take place in the school. They draw up programmes and activities for the term.

One headteacher commented that regular meetings with the teachers, at the beginning of the term are important. He pointed out that;

holding heads of department meetings is important for planning purposes and moving thereafter for a staff meeting immediately the term commences. In such meetings, teachers come up with their terms programmes and activities which are then harmonized for smooth operation. In between the term, consultative meetings are held. A meeting is held at the end of the term to review and evaluate the activities of the term.

The headteachers further stated that all proposals raised by heads of departments should be discussed in a full staff meeting before it is approved. This means, therefore, that all teachers are involved in the day-to-day management of activities in the school.

In the study, it was established that the headteachers had put in place various strategies to ensure that assignments are done by the staff to the expected standards. Regular supervision and follow-up are done. Constant consultations, supervision and monitoring done.

The headteachers also pointed out that the induction of new staff members and students is important. One headteacher noted that;

by inducting new members of staff upon appointment to any post, the member is given the description of the job to explain their roles and avail a guide to the newly appointed teachers.

In secondary school management all the departments are harmonized to ensure the achievement of goals. The responses of the headteacher on the harmonization of various departments in school for smooth management can be summarized as follows;

- Having regular consultative meetings
- Establishing a system whereby all work done in each department is recorded.
- A regular supervision and co-ordination of all activities done in the school.

- Establishment of efficient channels of communication so that information can easily be passed to members of departments in the school.

Consultation through the establishment of effective communication systems is paramount in school management. One headteacher noted that he frequently consults other headteachers when he faces difficulty in his school. This contributes to the development of effective management skills.

4.4 Communication Systems

From the foregoing discussions on management tasks, the effectiveness of communication is central in the management of secondary schools. All the teachers and headteachers interviewed cited the importance of communication in the management of activities in their respective schools.

In the study, the respondents were asked to state the communication channel that is most effective in the management of activities in their schools. Most of the students cited written communication as the most effective. The table below shows students responses to the effectiveness of communication

channels in passing information concerning certain programmes in their schools.

Table 4.17: Communication channels and their effectiveness

Activity	Written (%)	Oral (%)	Both (%)	Percentage (%)
School routine	74.5	17.7	7.8	100.0
School activities	37.2	32.9	9.8	100.0
School rules	96.1	0.0	3.9	100.0
Time tables	100.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
Duties/responsibility	37.2	49.0	13.7	100.0

From the table above, majority of the students responded that written communication is effective in passing information concerning school routine (74.5%) and timetables (100%). Oral communication is most effective when passing information concerning duties and responsibilities (49.0%) and school activities (52.9%). However, the use of both oral and written was cited by some students as being most effective.

From the study, 27.3% of the teachers agreed that both oral and written communication are effective while 54.5% felt that oral communication is the most effective. The table below illustrates the responses of the teachers regarding the effectiveness of written and oral communication in their respective schools.

Table 4.18: Effectiveness of written and oral communication

Information	Written %	Oral %	Both %	Percentage %
Duties/responsibilities	36.3	0.0	63.6	100.0
Changes in the curriculum	54.5	0.0	45.5	100.0
Timetables	81.8	0.0	18.2	100.0
School programmes	63.6	0.0	36.4	100.0
School routine	54.5	9.1	36.4	100.0

Table 4.18 clearly indicates that written communication is more effective in passing information concerning various programmes in the school. For duties and responsibilities, 63.6% of the respondents remarked that both oral and written communication is prevalent in their schools.

The heads of departments indicated that both written and oral channels of communication are used frequently in their schools. However written communication is most effective in passing information concerning duties and responsibilities in their respective schools.

From the foregoing discussions, it was clearly noted that meetings between the school management and members of staff and students are important. Open discussion in such meetings encourages exchange of ideas hence contributes to efficient management of the school.

The headteachers were asked to state how often they have meetings with students, teachers, parents and members of the Board of Governors. Their responses are presented in Table 4.4.16.

Table 4.19: Frequency of meetings in percentages

	Always	Occasionally	Once a term	Percentage
Students	100%	0.0	0.0	100.0
Teachers	100%	0.0	0.0	100.0
Parents	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	100.0
BOG	0.0%	33.3%	66.7%	100.0

The table indicates that the headteachers have meetings always with the students. This encourages dialogue and free interaction between the school administration and the students.

The parents and Board of Governors members also contribute to the management of schools. Meetings with them are important and as shown in the table one of the schools have meetings with them occasionally while the other two schools meet once a term. In such meetings, oral communication is used.

In the questionnaires, the headteachers were asked to state the system frequently used to pass written information to the staff, parents and board members. Their responses indicate that letters and internal memos are used. From the study, it was also established that all schools have notice boards where written information is posted for staff and students to access. The students write important information and place them on the notice boards for the teachers and school administration to read.

It was also observed that all three schools have notice boards placed on corridors, staff rooms and headteacher's office. The school motto is posted in front of the Administration block in all the schools. None of the three sampled schools had organizational charts nor school magazines.

The schools kept record of all meetings that are held in the school. These form points of reference to many activities in the school and also provide vital information when required.

Informal meetings are also encouraged in all the sampled schools. "Barazas" are held in two of the schools at least once per year. The headteachers felt that these forums encourage students to air their views freely.

Out of the three schools, only one had a suggestion box. 74.5% of the students in the study felt that it is necessary to have a suggestion box while 25.5% did not see the use of a suggestion box where open communication is encouraged.

The headteachers lauded informal interaction as one of the communication systems used in their schools. This encourages free interaction hence reducing social distance that may exist in such institutions.

4.5 Communication Barriers

Communication barriers exist in many institutions leading to management problems. In a school, 90% of the time is spent communicating. Information makes the school, and where

efficient communication channels are put in place, then minimal management problems are experienced. Effective communication contributes immensely to better management of secondary schools.

In this study, communication barriers were identified that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. The responses from the students identified social distance between them, the teachers and the school administration. Some teachers are harsh and unapproachable hence limited social interaction. This inhibits free flow of ideas and information. The students also felt that the school management does not give them opportunity to air their grievances freely. 60% of the students had the opinion that some cases of indiscipline in their schools are caused by lack of communication between the students and the school management. If proper guidance and counselling is offered to the students, then cases of indiscipline would be limited.

Indiscipline cases, as observed by one teacher, is as a result of lack of free interaction between the teachers and the students. Indiscipline is characterized by the students' damage of school property whenever they lack a channel of communication to air their views.

From the study, the students observed that there are few informal meetings between the teachers and students. The table below shows the frequency of meetings between teachers and the students.

Table 4.20: Frequency of meetings between teachers and students

Staff	A %	O %	S %	R %	N &	Percen- tage %
Headteacher	33.3	11.7	49.0	5.0	60	100.0
Deputy headteacher	21.6	39.2	29.4	7.8	1.9	100.0
Class teachers	54.9	17.6	27.4	0.0	0.0	100.0
Subject teachers	41.12	17.6	19.6	13.7	7.8	100.0
Teacher on duty	39.2	12.6	19.	9.8	11.7	100.0
Boarding teacher	29.4	19.6	39.2	11.7	0.0	100.0
Guiding and counselling	11.8	13.7	47.0	27.4	0.0	100.0

The students were asked to state the frequency of meetings with their teachers using Always (A) Occasionally (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (C) and Never (N). The frequencies were converted into percentages as shown in table 4.20.

From the table, it can be pointed out that meetings between the teachers and students is minimum 33.3% of the student stated that they meet with their headteacher always while 49% sometimes have meetings with their headteacher. Guidance and counselling is very important in school. The students were asked to state how often they meet with the teachers in-charge of guidance and counselling 47% indicated that they sometimes meet while 27.4% rarely have forums with their teachers. Only 11.8% indicated that they meet always for guidance and counselling.

One teacher commented that there exists few communication barriers in their school since “teachers air their views freely in staff meetings”. He further said that organized meetings with students have contributed immensely to the enhancement of good management in the school. However, he identified one barrier that is experienced. During such meetings, most teachers are absent and therefore miss a lot of information that would help in the smooth management of the school. This has caused a lot friction between the school administration and the teachers hence affecting the smooth management of the school. Grapevine takes over official communication channels thus affecting working relations in the school.

In one of the schools sampled, it was found that 75% of the teachers do not attend morning assemblies. Therefore, information that is shared with the students does not reach them as expected. Lack of such vital information causes management problems in the school since activities cannot be co-ordinated as expected.

There is need to enhance oral communication in order to promote a conducive and free working atmosphere. One teacher cited lack of informal oral communication between the teachers and the school administration. This has contributed to management problems as harmonization of roles cannot be achieved where interpersonal relationships are lacking. It was further observed by the teachers that internal memos and letters can be used when other channels of communication are not appropriate. The contributions of teachers are not taken into consideration by the school management. They felt that, they need to be more involved in the decision making processes of their schools.

The heads of departments identified some communication barriers existing in their schools. The summary is given below:

- Consultative meetings are not regular and the frequency of such meetings need to be increased since they are

Table 4.20 shows that forums for interaction and also teachers feel more involved in decision making.

- There is limited interaction between members of staff, students and the school management. There exists social distance which leads to frequent conflicts within the school that affect the smooth management of the school.
- Written communication needs to be reinforced with oral communication to make messages clear to the students, and members of staff.

The headteachers were asked if they experienced any complaints from staff and students concerning gaps that exist in the communication systems of their schools. Two of the headteachers admitted that they sometimes experience such problems. They further added that such complaints arise from teachers who fail to attend meetings and those who absent themselves from school.

Common communication barriers were presented in the questionnaires that were given to the headteachers. They were asked to indicate whether they experience such barriers or not. Table 4.21 presents their responses. The frequencies are converted into percentages.

Table 4.21: Communication barriers experienced by headteachers

Barrier	Frequency(N)		Percentage (%)		Total
	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Language	1	11	33.3	66.7	100.0
Perception	11	1	66.7	33.3	100.0
Distortion	1	11	33.3	66.7	100.0
Filtering	11	1	66.7	33.3	100.0
Body language	-	111	0.0	100.0	100.0
Physical discomfort	1	11	33.3	66.7	100.0
Gender source	1	11	33.3	66.7	100.0
Age difference	111	-	100.0	0.0	100.0

Table 4.21 shows the communication barriers that exist in the three schools. The major barriers experienced by the headteachers are perception (66.7%), filtering (66.7%) and age difference (100.0%). The staff have different opinions about the headteacher that directly hinder effective communication. The teachers and students receive only what is based on their needs and motivation. Individual differences and needs bring out perceptual difference in communication. The attitude of the teachers, students, parents and other members of the school

towards the headteacher determines their level of reception to information passed over by the school management.

Filtering is also identified as a major communication barrier in school. Filtering occurs where positive messages get to the school managers and negative messages are omitted. The hierarchical levels existing in schools encourage the filtering information from the subordinates to the school management. The school management gets the impression that everything is running smoothly in all the departments in the school when problems exist.

Age difference is also cited as a major factor affecting the smooth management of secondary schools. One headteacher commented that some of the teachers who graduated recently are much younger than senior members of staff. This contributes to communication breakdown as information is filtered or distorted to suit their needs. The language that is used by the seniors may not be understood by the younger generation of teachers and students. Messages from the school management are misinterpreted leading to conflicts in the management of the school.

From the study, the headteachers identified other factors that lead to a breakdown in communication in their schools. These lead to complaints and dissatisfaction among members of the school community. The following factors were cited:

- Absenteeism on the part of members of the school community when important information is being passed through assemblies, staff meetings and parents meetings.
- Ignorance of information due to laxity among the teachers leads to communication problems in the school.
- Lack of commitment makes teachers look for scapegoats to escape blame when problems arise in the school.

These factors also apply to parents as the headteachers reported that 75% of the parents attend meetings. Parents do not make follow-ups on the performance of their children seriously neither do they receive reports given to them by the school. This contributes to management problems in school because information that links the school to the parents is lacking.

The headteachers also expressed dissatisfaction at the way vital information is held by members of staff and students. They fail to bring major problems to be addressed by the school

management. This later causes major management problems in the school which could be avoided if information flowed freely from the subordinates to the top management.

Poor communication systems existing within the hierarchy of the Ministry of Education and schools delay vital information. The methods used to send information are poor because in some cases letters reach schools late hence delaying information that could be acted upon. Sometimes headteachers receive directives from the ministry through the media before circulars reach respective schools. The use of telephones is unreliable because some schools are not on phone while lines may be out of order because of maintenance problems.

Communication barriers, being common in secondary schools, need to be removed by developing a two-way communication network. This encourages the participation of all members of the school in all activities within the school. A free atmosphere would encourage all members to interact freely and therefore share ideas that would help reduce communication problems in the school.

4.6 Methods of Improving Communication Systems in Schools

Secondary schools need to work towards developing effective policies that would overcome communication problems. This study also looked at possible methods that can be applied in the sampled schools to remove barriers to communication that may lead to management problems.

From the responses of the teachers and the headteachers, it came out clearly that problems related to communication can be resolved. They identified several factors that may help improve communication in a school. These are:

- a) Involving the concerned in most decision making before communicating so that it can be received positively. Communication needs to travel in all directions hence creating a conducive communication climate.
- b) Written communication needs to be reinforced with oral communication. For official messages, internal memos and letters should be used. However, for guidance and counselling and informal meetings, oral communication is preferred.
- c) Constant follow-ups should be made to ensure that what is communicated is implemented. Feedback to be

The school received from all levels within the school thus encouraging open communication.

- d) The headteachers need to interact freely with the students and staff so as to establish rapport with all members of the school. He or she will know what is happening in the school. Distortion and filtering of messages shall be avoided.
- e) Communication from the ministry needs to be mailed directly to schools for information to be received and acted upon on time.
- f) Have mail services to facilitate fast and effective passage of information.
- g) Encourage frequent dialogue within and outside the school by establishing good school and community relations.

Conclusion

Communication barriers affects the management of secondary schools. From the study, the communication systems adopted by the schools elicits negative or positive reaction from the recipients, misunderstanding and confusion result from poor communication systems hence affecting the smooth management of schools.

The schools that were sampled in the study have developed appropriate communication systems by ensuring that information is passed using the right channels. However, from the study, several communication barriers have been identified. There is need to adopt the different communication systems as expressed by the teachers. This would help improve communication systems in secondary schools.

3.2 Summary of Findings

In the foregoing chapters, it has been noted that all activities within the school revolve around communication. All the teachers and headteachers sampled in this study cited the importance of communication in the management of various activities in their respective schools. Effective communication channels are necessary in a school so that information is passed in an efficient manner and is acted upon in timeliness. Feedback completes the communication process in secondary schools.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. The study was conducted in Baringo Central Constituency where three schools were selected out of the 17 secondary schools in the constituency. It is hoped that the findings of the study reflect the situation in other secondary schools. This chapter presents a summary of the findings. Recommendations are made basing on the research findings and suggestions for further research is presented.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

In the foregoing chapters, it has been noted that all activities within the school revolve around communication. All the teachers and headteachers sampled in this study cited the importance of communication in the management of various activities in their respective schools. Effective communication channels are necessary in a school so that information is passed in an efficient manner and is acted upon immediately. Feedback completes the communication process in secondary schools

whereby information is exchanged between the subordinates and the school management to ensure that it is received and acted upon as expected.

From the study, it was noted that each member of the school community has management roles to play. The students and teachers have various responsibilities that are delegated to them by the school management. These activities contribute to the smooth management of the school as each member plays complementary roles that lead to the total management of the school.

The headteachers have various management tasks they perform to enhance the smooth management of the school. They stressed that their responsibilities are wide and cover all areas of school management. Their main roles can be summarized as;

- Curriculum interpretation and implementation.
- Management of financial and material resources.
- Preparation of documents and maintenance of records.
- Induction, development and appraisal of staff.

Frequent meetings between members of the school community are important in the management of secondary schools. These

are forums where all management functions in the school are discussed and harmonized for smooth operation purposes. Before any proposals are approved, they are discussed in a full staff meeting so that all members of staff are involved in all decision making processes in the school. The parents and Board of Governors are also involved in the management of the school.

All the assignments given to staff members are evaluated regularly, through follow-ups and supervision. Continuous feedback is encouraged to ensure that all members perform their duties effectively. Departments that exist in schools are harmonized through consultations, supervision and co-ordination. Records are kept for reference and are also used to evaluate activities in the respective departments.

Activities in schools are co-ordinated through the established communication channels. The schools that were sampled have set up formal communication systems that ensure effective management. Both oral and written communication channels are in use. During meetings, oral communication is preferred as members exchange ideas freely. Official messages are written and posted on notice boards. In most instances, written communication is reinforced by oral communication. The three

systems of communication are encouraged. Downward communication benefits the implementation of policies, upward communication encourages decision making and horizontal communication facilitates co-ordination.

In the study, communication barriers were cited that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. When communication is ineffective, it elicits negative reaction resulting to management problems.

Social distance that may exist between the school management, teachers and students inhibits free flow of information through all the ranks in the school. Teachers felt that headteachers have distanced themselves hence making free communication difficult. The teachers are not free to discuss issues that concern the school and the problems affecting the teachers. The students cited the poor relationship existing between them and some teachers. This has inhibited free interaction and lack of proper guidance from the teachers.

Informal meetings between the students and teachers are few. These could act as forums in which students can interact freely with the teachers and be able to discuss their problems with the

school management. The use of suggestion box is not common in schools and yet this is one way of allowing students to express their feelings freely. *of ignorance of duties and also laxity.*

Perceptual barrier is one factor that affects the process of communication in secondary schools. The perception of staff towards the school management leads to communication problems in schools. There is disinterest in any information that is passed over by the school management. This is exhibited by the fact that some staff members do not attend all meetings called by the school administration. As a result, messages are altered as they are passed over to absent members of staff. This leads to misinterpretation of the message as the intended message does not reach its receiver hence eliciting negative results.

In upward communication, it has been established that filtering is common whereby positive messages reach the superiors thus affecting the management of schools. Serious problems may be covered by the subordinates at the expense of the total management of the school. In the study, physical barriers was observed in the offices visited whereby heads of departments have different offices from other members of staff.

It was also established that motivational barriers exist in secondary schools. Some members fail to interpret and act on information because of ignorance of duties and also laxity.

Members of staff lack interest in programmes that would help in enhancing the smooth management of the school. This is seen in lack of commitment to duty among the teachers. Complaints and dissatisfaction are common in such schools where staff are not co-operating with the school administration.

Age difference is also a contributing factor to communication barriers. The teachers who graduated recently have different perceptions of information and hence interpret or filter information to suit their needs and feelings.

Grapevine is common where unofficial messages reach before official ones hence causing anxiety and discontent in the schools.

The study also established that because of hierarchical ranks in the Ministry of Education, serious communication problems exist.

This has led to the delay of vital information that needs to be acted upon by secondary schools.

5.3 Conclusions *investigate why some schools perform poorly*

From the foregoing results, it can be concluded that the information obtained from this study would prove useful to school managers. They would know the existing communication barriers that affect the smooth management of secondary schools. The concepts of management and teamwork are based on information, understanding, consultation and participation. Through the establishment, development and maintenance of efficient communication systems in secondary schools, management problems are minimized. It is important to note that the external environment is linked to the school by communication networks.

Poor communication leads to communication barriers and therefore affects the smooth management of secondary schools. Though the study was done on a few schools, it however presents general information on communication systems and barriers that exist in boarding and mixed secondary schools.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

1. This study was conducted in only three schools in Baringo District. There is a need for a similar study to be undertaken in other districts.

2. There is need to investigate why some schools perform poorly in national examinations due to factors other than communication barriers.
3. A study should be done in urban schools to establish communication barriers that affect their smooth management. This study was conducted in rural schools.
4. Further considerations need to be made on the effects of communication barriers on the smooth management of secondary schools.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADTEACHERS

This questionnaire is meant purely for academic research.
Respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

Section a background information

Use a tick (✓) to fill in responses

1. Age of the Headteacher

- a) Below 30 years ()
- b) 30-35 years ()
- c) 36-40 years ()
- d) Over 40 years ()

2. Sex

Male () Female ()

3. Duration as a headteacher

- a) Below 1 year ()
- b) 1-5 years ()
- c) 6-10 years ()
- d) Over 10 years ()

4. Academic qualifications

- a) Diploma in Education ()
- b) Bachelor of Education ()
- c) BSC, PGDE ()

d) BA, PGDE ()

e) Master degree ()

f) Any other(specify) ()

5. For how long have you been a headteacher in your present station?

a) Less than two years ()

b) 2- 5 years ()

c) 9-10 years ()

d) Over 10 years ()

6. For how long have you been a secondary school teacher?

a) Less than two years ()

b) 2-8 years ()

c) 9-14 years ()

d) Over 15 years ()

7. For how long has this school been a secondary school?

a) Less than two years ()

b) 2-8 years ()

c) 9-14 years ()

d) Over 15 years ()

8. What is the student population of your school below 200?

a) 201-300 ()

b) 301-400 ()

c) 401-500 ()

d) Over 501 ()

9. Indicate the number of teachers in your school

a) Below 10 ()

b) 10-26 ()

c) 21-30 ()

d) 31-40 ()

e) Over 40 ()

10. How many non-teaching staff are employed by your school?

a) Less than 10 ()

b) 11-15 ()

c) 16-25 ()

d) 21-25 ()

e) over 25 ()

11. Is your school a:

(i) Government school? ()

Harambee school? ()

Church sponsored? ()

Pirate? ()

(ii) 1 streamed? ()

2 streamed? ()

3 streamed? ()

- 4 streamed? ()
- Over 4 streams? ()
- (iii) Boarding ()
- Day ()
- Day/boarding ()
- (iv) Mixed boys & Girls ()
- Boys ()
- Girls ()
- (v) National ()
- Provincial ()
- District ()

SECTION B: ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS

By using a tick (✓), indicate how often you perform the following administrative tasks in school. Always (A), Often (O), Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), Never (N).

Task		Frequency				
		A	O	S	R	N
1	Curriculum implementation					
2	Management of school finances					
3	Management of material resources					

4	Management of staff and students					
5	Establishment and maintenance of school/ community relations					
6	Preparation of school newsletter and documents for parents					
7	Staff development and appraisals					
8	Induction of new staff					
9	Maintenance of staff and student records					
10	Filing statistical returns and reports to the Ministry of Education					

(ii) Rank the management tasks in order of importance to you

2. (i) In a school, planning for all activities is important. Do you involve the heads of departments and teachers in drawing terms activities?

3. (i) How often do you consult with other heads of secondary schools on the following management tasks in your school?

(ii) How do you ensure that staff members know their assignments and the level of performance expected of them?

(iii) Which systems have you put in place to ensure that the various departments in your school are harmonized?

	Always	Occasionally	Once a term	Once a year
Students	_____	_____	_____	_____
Teachers	_____	_____	_____	_____
Parents	_____	_____	_____	_____
BOG	_____	_____	_____	_____

3. (i) How often do you consult with other heads of secondary schools regarding management tasks in your school?

a) Always ()

b) Sometimes ()

c) Rarely ()

d) Never ()

(ii) Do you find such consultations important to you as a headteacher?

SECTION C: COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

1. How often do you have meetings with your students, teachers, parents, and Board of Governors

	Always	Occasionally	Once a term	Once a year
Students				
Teachers				
Parents				
BOG				

2. a) When you have meetings with students, do you encourage them to air their views freely?

Yes () No ()

If no, how do the students pass information to you as their headteacher

b) Do all BoG members and parents attend all the meetings you have invited them to?

Yes () No ()

If no, what could be the possible reason for this?

3. Which of the following is used in your school frequently to pass written information to teachers, parents and Board of Governors?

Letters ()

Reports ()

Manuals ()

Internal ()

Any other ()

4. What is the response of teachers to written communication?

Very positive ()

Positive ()

Very negative ()

Negative ()

b) Do students respond positively to verbal communication where free exchange of ideas is encouraged?

Yes () No ()

5. How do you rate the interaction between teachers and students in your school?

Very good ()

Good ()

Fair ()

Poor ()

6. Do you have the following facilities, in your school?

Organizational charts ()

Notice Boards ()

School magazine ()

School vision ()

7. (a) Do you keep record of all meetings held in your school?

Yes () No ()

(b) How important are these records to you as a school manager?

SECTION D: COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

1. (i) Communication is an important aspect in secondary school management. How often do members of your school complain of not getting information that was believed to have been sent?

a) Always ()

- b) Sometimes ()
- c) Rarely ()
- d) Never ()

(ii) By use of a tick, indicate whether the following communication barriers can be attributed to the above problem.

Barrier	Yes	No
Language		
Perception		
Distortion of information		
Filtering of information		
Body language barriers		
Physical discomfort		
Gender of the sender or source		
Age difference		

2. (i) How often do teachers complain about lack of communication or about not receiving information regarding their duties?

- a) Always ()
- b) Occasionally ()
- c) Rarely ()
- d) Never ()

(ii) In your opinion, what are the reasons for such complaints?

3. Do teachers and students sometimes fail to bring major problems to your attention soon enough for your attention?

Yes () No ()

If yes, what are the reasons for this?

4. (i) Commutation between the Ministry of Education and your office is important in school management. How do you rate the existing communication systems used between secondary schools and the Ministry of Education?

a) Excellent ()

b) Good ()

c) Fair ()

d) Poor ()

(ii) If it is not effective, what are the possible reasons for this ?

(iii) In your opinion, what improvements can be made in communication between secondary schools and the various institutions of the ministry?

5. What needs to be done in order to make communication from your office to other members of the school community effective?

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Please answer the questions below as fully as possible.
Please answer all questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

Thank you for co-operation.

This will be treated with confidentiality. Do not write your name.

Name of the school _____

(1) Age

(a) Below 30 ()

(b) 31-35 ()

(c) 36-40 ()

(d) 41-45 ()

(2) Sex

Male ()

Female ()

(3) Which classes do you teach?

(a) Form I ()

(b) Form II ()

(c) Form III ()

(d) Form IV ()

(e) All ()

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Please tick [] in the appropriate bracket or fill in the blank spaces. Respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

This will be treated with confidentiality. Do not write your name.

Name of the school _____

(1) Age

(a) Below 30 ()

(b) 31-35 ()

(c) 36-40 ()

(d) Over 40 ()

(2) Sex

Male () Female ()

(3) Which classes do you teach?

(a) Form 1 ()

(b) Form II ()

(c) Form III ()

(d) Form IV ()

(e) All ()

(4) State your professional qualification

(a) Diploma ()

(b) Graduate ()

(c) Masters ()

(d) Any Other ()

(5) Duration of teaching in your present station

(a) Below one year ()

(b) 1 - 5 years ()

(c) 5 - 10 years ()

(d) Over 10 years ()

(6) What subjects do you teach?

(7) Apart from teaching, what are your other responsibilities in the school?

(8) To perform your duties in school, communication is very important.

(i) What channel of communication do you find effective in your school?

(a) Written ()

(b) Oral ()

(c) any Other ()

(ii) In your school, which communication channel is used to pass information to the teachers about:-

(a) Duties and responsibilities? _____

(b) Changes in the curriculum? _____

(c) Time-table? _____

(d) School programmes? _____

(e) School routines? _____

(Indicate whether oral or written)

(9) In your opinion, do you find these channels effective?

(10) Do teachers interact freely in your school?

Yes () No ()

(ii) If no, what are the reasons for limited interaction among teachers in your school?

(iv) Do teachers and students interact freely?

Yes () No ()

(11) Do you have frequent staff meetings?

Yes () No ()

If no, what means of communication is used to pass information from the school administration to the teachers?

(12) What are some of the problems that affect the passing of information to teachers from the school administration?

(iii) In your opinion, what needs to be done to improve communication systems in your school?

(b) Form 2

Thank you for your co-operation.

(a) Who gives you information about:

(i) School routines? _____

(ii) School activities? _____

(iii) School rules? _____

(iv) Timetables? _____

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

Please answer the following questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

Tick where appropriate

Do not write your name

Name of school _____

(1) Age

(a) 12 - 14 ()

(b) 15 - 17 ()

(c) Over 17 ()

(2) Sex

Male () Female ()

(3) Class

(a) Form 1 ()

(b) Form 2 ()

(c) Form 3 ()

(a) Who gives you information about:-

(i) School routine? _____

(ii) School activities? _____

(iii) School rules? _____

(iv) Time tables? _____

(v) Subjects offered in the school? _____

(vi) Duties and responsibilities? _____

(Headteacher, deputy, headteacher, head of department,
Head of subject, subject teacher, school captain, prefects)

(b) Is the information above given to you orally or through
writing?

(i) School routine _____

(ii) School activities _____

(iii) School rules _____

(iv) Time-table _____

(v) Duties and responsibilities _____

(Indicate whether it is written or oral communication)

- (4) Students have various issues to discuss with their teachers and the headteacher. Indicate by use of (/) a tick how often you have meetings with your teachers/prefect to share information about your welfare in school. Always (A), Often, (O) Sometimes (S), Rarely (R), Never (N).

APPENDIX 4

Source of Information	Frequency				
	A	O	S	R	N
Headteacher					
Deputy Headteacher					
Class Teacher					
Subject Teacher					
Teacher on Duty					
Dorm Mistress/Master					
Guiding/Counseling Department					

(5) Do you have a suggestion box in your school?

Yes

No

(ii) In your opinion, is a suggestion box an important tool for sharing information with your teachers?

True

False

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

Please Tick (/) in the appropriate bracket or fill in the blank spaces. Kindly, respond to all questions as honestly and accurately as possible.

This will be treated with confidentiality. Do not write your name

(1) Age

(a) Below 30 ()

(b) 31-35 ()

(c) 36-40 ()

(d) 41-45 ()

(e) over 45 ()

(2) Sex Male () Female ()

(3) Which department do you head?

(4) State your academic qualifications

(a) Diploma in Education ()

(b) Bachelor of Education ()

(c) BSC PGDE ()

(d) BA PGDE ()

(e) Masters Degree ()

(f) Any other (specify) _____

(5) Below are some of the duties performed by Heads of

Departments in secondary schools. Indicate by use of a tick

(/) whether you perform these duties.

(a) Translation of curriculum to members of your department()

(b) Keep records of your department. ()

(c) Motivate others to work towards team building in the department ()

(d) Promotion of school community relations ()

(e) Establishing efficient communication skills within your department()

(6) To perform your duties in school, transfer of information and sharing of ideas with other members of your department is very important.

(i) What channel of communication do you find effective in your department?

(a) Written ()

(b) Oral ()

(ii) In your school, which communication channel is used to pass information to the teachers about:

(a) Duties and responsibilities? _____

(b) Changes in the curriculum? _____

(c) Time table? _____

(d) School programmes? _____

(e) School routines? _____

(indicate whether oral or written)

(7) How often do you have meetings with the headteacher to evaluate, school related activities?

(a) Always ()

(b) Sometimes ()

(c) Rarely ()

(d) Never ()

(8) Do you have frequent meetings with members of your department to evaluate the various tasks given to the members?

Yes () No ()

(9) Do you encounter problems in passing information to members of your department?

Yes () No ()

If yes, specify.

In your opinion, what needs to be done to improve the systems used to pass information to members of your department?

Thank you for your co-operation

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