

**STAFF PERCEPTIONS ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION: A
CASE STUDY OF KENYA FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

BY

MARGARET WAMBUI NJENGA

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DECLARATION

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Sign:

Date:

MARGARET WAMBUI NJENGA

SHRD/PGC/044/16

Declaration by Supervisors

This Thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University Supervisors.

Sign:

Date:

Prof. Bernard K. Malakwen

Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies

School of Information Science

Moi University

Sign:

Date:

Dr. Stella Chebii

Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies

School of Information Science

Moi University

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my academic work to my husband, Titus and our two sons Keith and Ianben for their unwavering support throughout my academic journey. To my beloved Mom, your prayers kept me going. I respect and love them so much.

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Almighty God has been faithful to me through His divine protection and care; I genuinely adore Him.

ABSTRACT

Organizational communication is essential and critical to the success of any enterprise. Further, businesses all over the world depends on effective communication and employee perception towards the organization for its success.. Empirical evidence on employee perception on organizational communication is not clear hence the need for the study. The general objective of this study was therefore to determine the staff perceptions on organizational communication at Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI). The study was guided by the following three research questions: What is the nature of organizational communication at KEFRI?? How do employees at KEFRI perceive to organizational communication? And Which challenges of organizational communication do employees of KEFRI face? The research study was mainly informed by the communication accommodation theory. The study employed qualitative approach through the use of a case study method. The target population was the entire population of KEFRI which is 800 employees. Out of this, a sample of 20 participants from the population was selected using stratified and purposive sampling method. The participants included 5 top managers, 9 middle managers and 6 low level cadre. Data was generated through in-depth interviews, analysed thematically and presented in narratives. The study found out that the nature of communication pattern at KEFRI is downwards type of communication pattern. Another finding was that there were variations at the three levels of management on their perception on organizational communication. This was mainly attributed to their cadre, level of exposure, knowledge and skills. The top managers emerged comfortable with the pattern of communication in place. The middle managers believed that the patterns of communication need to well understood for better flow of communication, while the lower level preferred a more flexible pattern such as horizontal which favours their ranks. Another finding of the study indicated that there were several challenges facing employees in communication at KEFRI including; inadequate information communication technology skills and lack of awareness of the Institute's organogram especially by the lower cadre. In conclusion, employee perception has a direct bearing on how efficient and effective the communication process in an organization can be achieved. The study recommended interactive forums to combat incompatible differences that disrupt effectiveness in communication.

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OPERATIONALIZATION DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Below is a list of key terms as applied in this Thesis and their operationalization.

Communication: The act of transferring information from one individual to another through speech, written word or non-verbal ways. In the case of this study, communication is used in regard to dissemination of information at KEFRI

Communication Strategies: a plan designed to ensure effective and efficient communication within an organization or between an organization and its audience.

Information: Refers to verifiable and thus reliable factual data about the “real world” including opinions as well as reports about facts of the world. Robins (2005).

Stakeholders: Any person or group of individuals or institution, or group of institutions that have an interest on an activity or project both intended beneficiaries and intermediaries.

Dissemination: This is distribution of information to the general public usually conducted by specific given authority to release such information to the public.

Patterns: Are channels of communication inside a company. They illustrate the flow of messages within an organization as well as between organizations.

Perception: This is a propensity or the way someone understands, analyzes, or rates something. In this context, it refers to how employees assess or interpret the efficient usage of communication patterns in businesses.

Organization: A group of people who create a formal alliance in order to pursue group or individual goals.

Organizational: The sending and receiving of communications inside an organization is referred to as organizational communication.

Organizational Hierarchies: An organizational hierarchy is a system used to structure and define the roles, responsibilities, and relationships within an organization.

Effectiveness: In this context, effectiveness is the act of delivering the intended results; in this context, effectiveness is the utilization of communication patterns to produce the expected reaction.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CHERP:	Central Highland Eco-Region Research Programme
GE:	Global Economy
IV:	Internal Validity
KEFRI:	Kenya Forestry Research Institute
MDGs:	Millennium Developmental Goals
NFPRP:	National Forest Products Research Programme
UN:	United Nations
UNFCCC:	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the research's history, academic setting, and societal context, as well as the problem that prompted the study. It also includes the research questions and explains the scope of the investigation, as well as the study's rationale and relevance.

1.1 Background to the Study

Effective organizational communication is a cornerstone of success in any workplace, as it fosters collaboration, improves efficiency, and promotes a healthy work environment. In organizations of all sizes, communication serves as a means to transmit information, align goals, and resolve issues. However, the quality and effectiveness of communication within an organization often vary depending on the channels, practices, and attitudes toward communication adopted by leadership and staff.

Staff perceptions of organizational communication can significantly influence their engagement, job satisfaction, and overall performance. In many organizations, miscommunication, unclear messaging, or a lack of transparency can lead to misunderstandings, employee disengagement, and inefficiency. Conversely, effective communication enhances trust, strengthens relationships, and helps achieve organizational goals. The way staff members perceive the communication practices within their organization can, therefore, impact their sense of belonging, motivation, and productivity.

The success of a business depends on good communication on a global scale. Therefore, the success or failure of every organization depends on the effectiveness of communication. The flow of information between a sender and a receiver, as well as the inference (perception) of meaning between the parties involved, is what is referred to as communication (Bowditch et al., 1997). An individual, group, or organization (sender) can transfer a message to another person, group, or organization (receiver) through the process of communication (Gibson et al., 2003). Communication is the conveyance of meaning and comprehension to others through symbols, specialized languages, or both in order for the recipients of information to comprehend its intended use (Robbins, 2005). Organizational communication is crucial to the ability of many companies to run their operations, stay competitive, and fulfill their purpose.

Organizational communication refers to social collectives in which individuals create rote patterns of behavior to coordinate their actions and efforts to pursue individual and group objectives (Kreps, 1986). It has five essential components, including social collectivity, individual and organizational objectives, coordinated action, organizational structure, and integration of the organization with other organizations (Miller, 2012). Organizational communication is described as the sharing of information and perspectives inside an organization by Bovee and Thill (2000) and as "creating a favorable environment for all workers of a company" by Argenti (2003). Instead of being limited to information traffic, this notion expands organizational communication. Spreading information, knowledge, facts, and ideas broadly through various means is often relaying or disseminating information (Pochat, 2004).

Organizational communication becomes vital and necessary when it comes to interactions between employees inside a company. Communication inside the company becomes crucial to develop a shared understanding of the information offered to one another. Today's enterprises' performance and overall functioning depend on effective organizational communication, which has grown significantly more complicated and diversified. Morale, motivation, and employee performance affect how the company interacts with them. According to research, up to 70% of change efforts fail, and the leading cause of this failure is inadequate internal communication (Salem, 2008). Many firms disregard communication as a crucial component of management, which results in practices of employing subpar communication methods, delayed communication, misinterpretation of information, and even a complete lack of communication. Even though this notion is widespread across organizations, it can still be seen as a problematic issue because of the shifting nature of organizations and the variations in their structures.

Traditionally, managers have spent most of their time communicating in one way (meetings, face-to-face discussions, memos, letters, e-mails, reports, etc.). This has grown to be an essential component of their daily tasks. Greater cooperation and teamwork between employees in various functional groups are necessary to manage production operations efficiently. In order to monitor the employees' current performance and inspire them for improved performance, effective communication strategies have become more critical in all firms. Communication is one of the most essential and prevalent organizational tasks (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Fundamentally, communication is the basis for relationships, and healthy interactions between people and groups are essential to the operation and survival of organizations. Additionally,

"deep social and communication processes" are used to build and implement organizational skills (Jones et al., 2004).

Communication is more critical in organizations that provide essential goods and services. Some of the most critical are research institutions whose mandate is to develop innovations and technologies that form the foundation of the socio-economic development of their countries. Therefore, the role of employee perception in organizational communication in more highly diversified multilingual, ethnic and cultural setups remains unclear. Understanding employee perception will go a long way in improving the interaction between individuals within the organization and increase satisfaction, overall performance, and productivity.

This study aims to explore how staff perceive communication within their organization and the implications of those perceptions on organizational dynamics. By investigating the communication channels, frequency, clarity, and openness of information flow, the research seeks to identify key factors that influence staff attitudes and behavior in the workplace. Understanding these perceptions can help organizations assess areas of improvement in their communication practices and identify strategies for fostering a more inclusive, transparent, and effective communication culture.

1.1.2 Organizational communication today

Traditionally, managers have spent most of their time communicating in one form (meetings, face-to-face discussions, memos, letters, e-mails, reports, etc.). Greater cooperation and teamwork amongst employees in various functional groups are necessary to manage production operations effectively. Therefore, effective communication techniques have become even more crucial in all firms to control the

employees' current performance and inspire them to perform better. Communication is one of the most essential and fundamental organizational tasks (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Fundamentally, communication is the basis for relationships, and strong bonds between people and groups are essential for organizations to function and survive.

Additionally, "deep social and communication processes" are used to build and implement organizational skills (Jones et al., 2004). Research continues to advance, and corporate communication is redefined as communication changes. This field initially concentrated on public presentations made by leaders. Recently, the emphasis has been on interaction at all organizational levels. Much study focuses on how interpersonal connections are managed within organizational hierarchies since they make up a significant portion of corporate communication.

Communication is more critical in an organization that provides essential goods and services. Some of the most critical are research institutions whose mandate is to develop innovations and technologies that form the foundation of the socioeconomic development of their countries. Therefore, the role of employee perception in organizational communication in more highly diversified multilingual, ethnic and cultural setups remains unclear. Understanding employee perception will go a long way in improving the interaction between individuals within the organization and increasing satisfaction, overall performance, and productivity.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Today's firms have far more complex and diversified organizational communication, which has become crucial to the entire success and operation of enterprises. Morale, motivation, and performance among employees are all affected by how the company interacts with them. If disregarded, communication a crucial component of

management can result in low staff morale and subpar performance. It is critical to recognize that several companies all around the world have experienced severe losses as a result of improper or insufficient communication.

In today's rapidly evolving work environments, effective organizational communication is essential for promoting clarity, collaboration and productivity. However, despite the recognized importance of communication within organizations KEFRI being one, there exists a gap between how communication strategies are implemented by management and how they are perceived by staff members. This gap is the problem that the researcher wish to fill in order to remove discrepancies that could lead to misunderstandings, disengagement and reduced organizational effectiveness. Furthermore, the gap could hinder the institute from achieving its mandate which is to conduct research and disseminate research findings.

1.3 General Objective

The objective of this study was to investigate the employee's perceptions of organizational communication

1.3.1 Specific objectives

- i) To determine the nature of organizational communication at KEFRI
- ii) To find out employee perceptions on organizational communication
- iii) To establish the challenges facing employees in organizational communication

1.3.2 Research Questions

- i) What is the nature of organizational communication at KEFRI?
- ii) How do employees of KEFRI perceive to organizational communication?

iii) Which communication challenges do employees of KEFRI face?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is divided into content scope, geographic scope and methodological scope.

1.4.1 Content Scope

In terms of content, the study covered the communication strategies available at the institute and how they are implemented. It sought to understand the perceptions of employees on the channels as well as the patterns of communication in the organization and the measures that the management and the employees may use to enhance internal communication among KEFRI employees.

1.4.2 Geographical Scope

Geographically, the study took place at the institute's headquarters, located in Kiambu County. This is because the communication department is based at the headquarters. In addition, the head office has a significant number of employees working in various cadres of the organization.

1.4.3 Methodological Scope

In terms of methodology, the study used the qualitative approach. Therefore, it will employ the case study method and data generation techniques such as interviews and document analysis and thematically analyzed.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study's sample size was restricted to top managers, middle managers, and junior staff. More employees' participation would have been fantastic since it may have led to more inclusive research output. However, the intricacy of the procedural requirements prevented this. This research was done at the KEFRI headquarters due to time and logistical constraints. Despite this, the study utilized deliberate stratified sampling to get data at all management levels. Second, there was a constraint to the literature study since few empirical studies were conducted at Kenyan research institutes on employee perceptions of organizational communication. As a result, the study made significant borrowings from other nations, some of which had differing stages of development, in order to supplement the little local research with intellectual ideas. Although there is still a need for the study to be done in this area to bring more information to the issue of employee perception of organizational communication, this was a discovery for the field of organizational communication in Kenya. Thirdly, the research results were likewise restricted to the variables and conditions present at the institute during the study.

The researcher did not have enough time to conduct the interviews since the institute's senior management did not provide it. Several top officers requested their assistants to respond to the inquiries. Persistence on the part of the researcher, who repeatedly went back to make appointments, overcame this obstacle. Ultimately, 5% of the top management level consented to an interview. Respondents were reclusive and afraid of being victimized. For fear of retaliation, several people hesitated to provide all their knowledge regarding organizational communication. The respondents received assurances from the researcher that the data would be kept strictly confidential and that

their identities would not be displayed on the research instruments. Because of the nature of certain workers' jobs, the time required for interviews exceeded the allotted time. It was not easy to schedule meetings with senior management for interviews.

Ultimately, this research study's result would be restricted to unique characteristics connected to the institute. Nevertheless, as most of the findings relate to people rather than technological concerns, they may be shared throughout research institutes.

1.6 Justification of the study

The study results would enable the Management of KEFRI to establish the effects of proper communication practices on organizational commitment, hence identifying the areas where improvements can be made. The study would also help the management plan to develop and implement effective and efficient corporate communication practices that will lead to improved organizational commitment among employees in KEFRI. The Management would further be in a position to identify the challenges and gaps in communication leading to ineffective organizational communication, which has become pronounced among the employees in corporate organizations, KEFRI being one of them. Ineffective organizational communication, which has become pronounced among the employees in most corporate organizations, thus derailing the aspects of good outcomes, would be tackled.

It would also be helpful for other researchers who may want to reference data on how effective organizational communication practices affect organizational commitment to evaluate prior methods applied to tackle related issues. Additionally, they could identify flaws in assumptions or areas that the aims and designs did not sufficiently address.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings and outcomes of this study will contribute to a better understanding of the employee perspective of corporate communication. The study would also allow the institute to develop effective communication policies and procedures that would increase communication across different levels of management, lowering misunderstanding and resentment and boosting efficiency.. The results will advance theoretical understanding and empirical research on how employees see corporate communication. Additionally, more research on how employees perceive organizational communication may be done using the study's limitations and recommendations for additional research.

Efficacy of the entire communication among employees will be enhanced and valued if only the stakeholders should relate with one another through the use of proper channels of communication.

1.8 Summary

In chapter one, the research's context has been described, as well as the issue that led to the investigation. The scope of the investigation and the available research have both been stated. Finally, a defense has been made, and the study's importance has been discussed. A review of the study's literature is given in the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This segment examines relevant research on effective communication patterns. It looks at different communication patterns, how they may be utilized successfully, the flow of communication, obstacles to good communication, and how to get through them. The literature review was built on scholarly sources, including articles, theses, academic books, journals, and dissertations. The study took into account a survey of pertinent ideas and literature on organizational communication. Finally, it considered the issues with organizational communication.

2.1 Definition of key communication concepts

The efficient operation of practically all organizations depends heavily on communication. Any business or group that wants to succeed has to have effective communication. It eliminates time that would otherwise be squandered and gives consumers and staff the resources they need to succeed and be happy. Ineffective communication will ultimately result in longer production times and lower profits. Effective communication must be in place to prevent this scenario (Barnlund, 2008).

As a result, "information exchange between a sender and a receiver, and the inference (perception) of meaning between the parties involved" may be used to characterize communication (Carey & James, 2009). This conversation demonstrates that communication is a two-way process of sequentially connected pieces. Managers who comprehend this procedure can evaluate their communication styles and create

communication plans that satisfy organizational requirements (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2006). Many forms of communication include intrapersonal, group, public, mass, and internet interactions.

Interpersonal communication is when two people engage, but intrapersonal communication is when one interacts with oneself or evaluates oneself. On the other hand, engaging with others is referred to as group communication. Mass communication is using media to reach an excessive number of people (television, newspaper, internet, radio). Lastly, employing online software created to communicate with users or browsers is machine-assisted communication (Gamble & Gamble, 2012).

According to the communication model created by Gamble and Gamble, communication comprises a process that involves the information source, the transmitter, the noise source, the receiver, and the destination (2012). The source of information is the one who communicates it, and that person employs a particular sort of transmitter or medium, such as spoken word, written word, or telephone. The receiver receives the information but may be distorted by a particular noise source, which might come from anywhere. The message is subsequently interpreted by the receiver, ultimately delivering it to its intended recipient (Bryant & Heath, 2000).

Not only is communication crucial to a business, but it is also a necessary aspect of daily living. According to Gamble & Gamble (2012), "How we interact with one other influences our lives and our planet," and "Communication is the heart of our Humanness" Humans can reach out to one another or face situations that test their adaptability, integrity, expressiveness, and critical thinking abilities by using their communication skills. Communication inside the business becomes crucial for everyone to grasp the information provided. Additionally, it serves as the

organization's glue. Additionally, it assists individuals inside the organization in achieving both individual and collective objectives, implementing and adapting to organizational changes, coordinating operations, and digitally interacting with all organizationally pertinent behaviors (Robert, 2017).

2.2 Situating study in the field of communication studies

Organizational communication is fragmented and diversified (Baker, 2002). It covers formal and informal communication, micro- and macro-level communication, internal organizational communication practices (newsletters, presentations, strategic communications, work direction, performance reviews, and meetings), and communications directed at an audience outside the organization (public, media, inter-organizational). Communication technologies, diversity, organizational learning, knowledge management, conflict management, and innovation are also included. Organizational communication struggles to establish and communicate some sense of coherence across these several topics as a new academic field (Baker, 2002). Baker argues further that while the study of corporate communication is not new, it has only lately gained some level of academic respect.

The study of organizational communication acknowledges that interpersonal and persuasive speaking abilities and practical interpersonal communication skills are only a tiny part of communication in companies. Additionally, it acknowledges that communication issues and needs affect all companies, not just commercial ones. To implement its mandate of conducting research and disseminating research findings, KEFRI is dedicated to developing technologies, partnering, and sharing knowledge with employees, stakeholders, and the general public.

The Institute achieves this through a commitment to implementing a communication strategy that integrates various communication channels and methods to successfully communicate research findings, among other communications, to both internal and external publics. This Strategy intends to enable the Institute to deliver its strategic directions, fit message content, and improve its visibility and image by implementing communication approaches. KEFRI has been functional in internal and external communication processes using multiple methods to strengthen action, working relationships, service delivery, customer and employee satisfaction, and feedback mechanisms.

Its communication strategy is anchored on the existing communication and the current strategic plan. In a bid to align internal and external communication functions for effective message delivery, the Institute ensures keeping employees informed through existing communication channels, observing Institute's core values by all employees, resolving public complaints effectively whenever they occur, and considering the various fluctuations and trends in social, political, economic and technological realms, maintaining

constant dialogue with partners and networking, maintaining a continuous flow of current and accurate information to keep stakeholders abreast of the latest institutional developments, and maintaining a practical public feedback framework and information dissemination.

Peter Banerjea, HuffPost Company, which is digitally connected to the world, affects, among other things, brand recognition, creativity, and staff productivity. All your employees may now actively participate in communication, from upper management to the support crew. Additionally, good communication makes it possible for your

complete team to work together and significantly contribute to the success of your company.

2.3 Review of relevant literature

On a global scale, definitions of organizational communication frequently draw distinctions between formal and informal communication and internal and external communication. Researchers in organizational communication generally focus on formal internal communication. Communication between leaders and employees is the most popular subject in research on internal communication problems. Additionally, studies are addressing communication and learning, sense-making, and communication effectiveness, while informal communication-focused research is still largely non-existent (Johansson, 2007).

2.3.1 Organizational flow of information

A study on how effective organizational communication affects attitude, happiness, and job satisfaction is reported by Proctor (2014). The study's most noteworthy finding is the relationship between participants' attitudes and happiness, the degree of manager communication, and employees' capacity to offer ideas, comments, and feedback. They share information and solicit employee feedback from the manager's attitude and dedication to a positive workplace and employee satisfaction. Employee involvement in decision-making was found to have the greatest impact on employee motivation, followed by information sharing, communication channels, and employee perceptions of organizational communication, according to research by Mutuku (2014) in Nokia Siemens networks in Kenya. On the other hand, the 7 C's of communication had the least impact on employee motivation. To give them experience with the complexities of managing a business and to ensure that any information shared is clear, polite,

accurate, and comprehensive, the author suggests that company managers involve employees from all cadres. Additionally, timing and organizational structure should always be considered when communicating because they greatly impact communication.

A workplace where all employees strive to positively impact the organization benefits from a combination of individual and supervisor responsibility for fostering a positive office culture. A study evaluating communication strategies at higher education institutions: A case of Walter Sisulu University is reported by Mgweba (2017). The study aimed to look into how well Walter Sisulu University and its students communicate. Although respondents believed communication was satisfactory, a mixed method approach found that questions were raised about the efficiency of the communication strategies used. The study suggested using email as a primary method of communicating with students.

2.3.2 Communication climate in the organization

An organization's communication climate is of utmost importance because it affects its success and effectiveness. According to a study by Nordin et al. (2014) on organizational communication climate, conflict management, and communications management in an oil and gas company, communication climate is of utmost importance to an organization because it helps it function effectively and succeed. An organization's communication climate may impact the workplace culture, which can help or hinder horizontal and vertical employee communication. Organizations with positive work cultures promote participation, a constructive exchange of ideas, and conflict resolution.

Due to the impulsive chemicals and heavy machinery used in this study's high-risk workplace of an oil and gas company, communicative behavior could result in fatal incidents. Thus, the study examined the effect of personnel conflict resolution techniques on the overall organizational communication climate in a high-risk work environment. The conclusions of the discussion on how different communication techniques used in conflict management affect the tone of organizational communication. Overall results suggested a connection between organizational personnel roles and conflict management, following general employee meetings and direct manager communication regarding how employees prefer to receive information from the company regarding new decisions, policies, events, or changes.

The impact of organizational communication on employee job satisfaction in the Kenyan telecommunications sector was evaluated (Mberia & Bosire, 2017). Their study aimed to evaluate the effects of communication climate and organizational information flow on employee job satisfaction. They discovered that the attributes of organizational information flow, communication climate, type of information shared with employees, and information load all work together to benefit employees' productivity and job satisfaction. They also discovered that organizational communication is crucial in ensuring employee job satisfaction. The study found that these factors work together harmoniously to ensure effective organizational communication, which promotes job satisfaction.

Recent academic research on organizational communication in Kenya has concentrated on how social media and other technological advancements affect workplace communication (Kariuki, 2017; Sindani, 2017; Njuguna, 2005). Others assess the effectiveness of the tactics organizations employ for internal

communication, while others have focused on the importance of organizational communication to the overall success of organizations as businesses (Mutuku, 2014).

2.4 Organizational Communication

Sharing Information with Employees, written by Alexander R. Heron in 1942 and examining manager-employee communication, is perhaps where organizational communication as a specialist in our subject emerged (Redding & Tompkins; Meyers & Sadaghiani). Organizational communication is divided into three stages, according to Redding and Tompkins. The Era of Preparation (1900–1940) saw much of the foundational work for the discipline we know today. The main areas of emphasis during this period were public speaking, business writing, managerial communication, and persuasion. Business and industrial communication started in the Era of Identification and Consolidation (1940–1970) when it became clear that particular group and organizational ties were required. The growth of empirical research "supported by innovative endeavors to establish ideas, theoretical premises, and philosophical criticisms" occurred during the Era of Maturity and Innovation (1970–present) (Redding & Tompkins 7).

Organizational communication refers to social collectives in which individuals create rote behavior patterns to coordinate their actions and efforts to pursue individual and group objectives (Kreps, G. L. 1986). It has five essential components: social collectivity, individual and organizational objectives, coordinated action, organizational structure, and integration of the organization into a network of other organizations (Miller, K. 2012). Organizational communication, according to Argenti (2003), is "creating a pleasant environment for all workers of a company," as opposed to Bovee and Thill's (2000) definition of it as exchanging knowledge and ideas inside

an organization. With this view, corporate communication encompasses more than just information flow. Therefore, transmitting or distributing information entails conveying information, knowledge, facts, and ideas globally via various media (Pochat, 2004).

A homogenous and heterogeneous culture may be perceived in an organization as an open system. The homogenous culture highlights the corporate and professional cultures, representing a long-term dedication to organizational advancement. Subcultures that arise in various organizational units are what create and develop the diverse culture. An organization is an entity or association made up of individuals or groups that engage in rule-based collaboration to accomplish shared objectives.

2.4.1 Types of organizational communication

Different types of internal communication can affect how an organization's members adjust their behavior. Organizational communication activities can be understood in one of three ways: 1) Operational-internal, or the arrangement of communication inside a company to meet goals. Personnel refers to any alterations in the knowledge and emotions that people may have at any moment. Operational-External is the organizational communication structure that focuses on attaining the work goals done by individuals and groups outside the organization. There can be communication among individuals, groups of individuals, inside or outside an organization. It may be spoken, nonverbal, written, formal, or casual. Not every communication takes place or flows in the same way or direction (Communicationtheory.org, 2010). Business information, business communication, and early mass communication studies published in the 1930s through the 1950s can be used to track the field's history. The current field is well-established, and it differs from other areas in terms of its theories and empirical interests (Putnam, Linda; Woo, DaJung; Banghart, Scott, 2017).

when they get it directly from top management, particularly the CEO. Similarly, when the CEO interacts with the staff and receives input directly, it increases employee satisfaction.

According to MacLeod and Clarke (2014), effective downward communication increases workers' engagement in companies. However, poor downward communication may serve as a barrier to workers' performance, significantly impacting job satisfaction. The main goal of downward communication is to give subordinates information about the organization's policies, objectives, and processes in addition to directives, orders, and recommendations. Since employees frequently struggle to understand the orders given to them, top-level management can explain the business's rules and procedures through downward communication. However, downward communication lets people know about policies, strategies, and process changes. The organizational structure is a major barrier to downward communication (Bronn, 2015). It might be difficult for subordinates to give candid feedback on any message from top-level management that can reveal if the communication was comprehended when the organizational structure is very bureaucratic. Communication from top-level management may be misread or misinterpreted because of perceptual gaps between them and their subordinates. Likewise, when the message gets twisted as it passes down the ladder, a large organization's chain of command may face difficulties (Bronn, 2015).

2.4.3 Upward communication

The transfer of knowledge inside a group or organization from a lower to a higher level is known as upward transmission. It conveys present issues, informs progress toward goals, and offers higher-level feedback. Through upward communication,

management is informed about how staff members feel about their employment, coworkers, and the company. Additionally, managers look to upward communication for suggestions on how to make improvements (Robbins, 2007).

Upward communication is crucial for ensuring that lower-level staff members educate upper-level management about their jobs, the comprehension of their responsibilities, their preferences for and objections to their positions, etc. (Herbst, 2012). This is crucial since management greatly benefits from employee feedback when developing organizational strategy.

Similar to downward communication, upward communication gives lower-level employees a way to voice their ideas and suggestions to management regarding problems relating to their jobs inside the company. Additionally, upward communication systems motivate employees since they may convey their opinions or attitudes to management (Drafke, 2013). In an organization, improving upward communication fosters involvement and positive interactions between staff and management. Since upward communication is used as a smart work-management strategy, choices made after receiving feedback from workers are also more acceptable to both sides (Kalla, 2015).

Upward communication is hampered by several obstacles, including sorting, filtering, and analyzing. Sifting regularly can alter the original message and render it incomprehensible when information from employees to management passes through too many levels or stages in the hierarchy, diminishing its efficacy (MacLeod & Brady, 2013).

When employees relay a message to senior executives through a direct supervisor, upward communication filtering occurs. The employee's immediate supervisor may change the content of the message to reflect the superior's perspective on the circumstance, which may differ from the employee's intended message. As a result, a distorted message is delivered to the management's intended recipient (Watson-Wyatt, 2004). When the organizational hierarchy frequently governs information exchanges, expert syndrome from one party will always precede in such situations. As a result, the other party feels uneasy about its insufficient knowledge (Dominick, 2012).

Any communication counts as an activity since it is consciously created and does not occur on its own. Upward communication must be thorough, clear, understandable, fast, dependable, and accessible since effective internal communication may also shape an organization's exterior image and eventual reputation (Drafke, 2013). Performance reviews, suggestion boxes, employee attitude surveys, grievance processes, superior-subordinate dialogues, and informal grapevine are some examples of upward communication.

2.4.4 *Horizontal communication*

Information exchange between departments at the same level within an organization is known as horizontal communication (i.e., peer-to-peer communication). In a company's divisions, horizontal communication occurs between personnel at the same level (Cameron & Wilcox, 2011). The majority of horizontal communication is used to solicit assistance or plan activities. Members of a department gather to address a disagreement within or across departments; these discussions are facilitated by the underlying variables emerging from horizontal communication, which also boost morale, the effectiveness of work performance, and conflict resolution.

Creating a positive work environment is one of the strategies to inspire employees through horizontal communication. Teams and employees may share information, work together, and solve problems through horizontal communication across superiors, departments, or divisions (Kalla, 2015). Since there are no power dynamics between the communicators to obstruct successful communication, this is often a more open dialogue. Presentations, consultations, meetings, and formal electronic communication are all outcomes of peer-to-peer communication. Teamwork is made possible through horizontal communication, which boosts the effectiveness with which organizational activities are completed (Dolphin, 2015).

Horizontal communication frequently encounters obstacles that might change its significance and provide difficulties for the company. One of the key issues is that when horizontal communication is prevalent, organizational management may lose control of the workforce (Gollwitzer, 2015). This happens because management may feel it has a limited role in regulating peer-to-peer communication. Conflicts, poor coordination, and even a lack of coordination by employees against management are inevitable when management loses control over peer-to-peer communication. Employees exposed to one another through horizontal communication may disagree and engage in conflict. Similar to vertical communication, horizontal communication may foster insubordination within an organization if rigorous norms are not approved and properly adhered to. Differences typically hamper horizontal communication in style, cultural variety, personality, or even job positions (Kalla, 2015). Competitive employees may also be reluctant to cooperate or share knowledge (Dolphin, 2015).

Employees that have effective horizontal communication may help one another, offer constructive feedback, and collaborate. Employees must communicate frequently and effectively to develop collaboration. Therefore, mutual respect, trust, and pursuing a common objective are the only ways to foster efficient horizontal communication (Giorgi & Marsch, 2015). An effective horizontal communication system may improve employee morale, lead to more productive and content workers, and enable the company to build its brand via improved performance (Mumby, 2013). When issues are handled inside an organization at the same level, one takes action quickly and simultaneously relieves superiors of unneeded issues (Memoria & Ganker, 2001).

2.4.5 Channels of communication

A message can be delivered to its target audience through communication channels. We can regularly utilize many channels simultaneously, each with various advantages and disadvantages. Not every communication takes place or moves similarly (Communicationtheory.org, 2010). Moorcroft's 2003 study of three Jordanian telecommunications firms makes little difference in how great a company's business plan may seem. It matters if it reaches employees and secures their support to operate at peak performance.

Business information, business communication, and early mass communication studies published in the 1930s through the 1950s can be used to track the field's history. The current field is well-established and differs from other areas in terms of its theories and empirical interests. Putnam, Linda, DaJung Woo, and Scott Banghart (2017). According to a number of studies, there is a clear relationship between employee job satisfaction and the flow of information from top management down to the workforce (Abugre, 2011; Goldhaber, 2008; Goris & Petit, 2002). Regarding employee work

satisfaction, horizontal and diagonal communication offers clear advantages over the top-down and bottom-up communication that characterizes the vertical flow of information. According to Gamble & Gamble (2002), communication is generally accepted to interchange important messages that bond individuals representing those companies. Gamble further asserts that whether the message is official or not, corporate communication has a variety of channels and delivery methods.

2.5 Employee Perception

Perception is a disposition or how a person perceives, assesses, or rates something. In this context, it refers to how employees perceive or assess the efficient utilization of communication patterns in workplaces. **Employee perception** refers to how employees view, interpret, and make sense of various aspects of their workplace, such as communication, leadership, organizational culture, policies, and job satisfaction. These perceptions play a crucial role in shaping the work environment, affecting employee behavior, motivation, engagement, and overall organizational performance. Arnold, E., & Silva, N. (2011).

In the context of organizational communication, employee perception focuses on how employees feel about the ways in which communication occurs within the organization. It involves their thoughts on the effectiveness, clarity, frequency, and transparency of communication processes, as well as their satisfaction with the channels and feedback mechanisms available to them. Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (2012).

This aligns with Shannon and Weaver's (1949) Communication Model, which highlights the importance of clear and effective communication in reducing

misunderstandings. According to Shannon and Weaver, any communication that lacks clarity (noise) will lead to misinterpretation and ineffective organizational functioning.

Downs & Adrian (2009) also discuss the significance of clarity in communication in organizational settings, emphasizing that unclear messaging can result in poor employee morale and disengagement. If employees are unsure about messages or the timing of communication, it can lead to inefficiency, confusion, and frustration. The organization may need to implement more structured and detailed communication protocols to ensure clarity, perhaps through regular meetings, bulletins, or more thorough emails from leadership.

2.6 Challenges in organizational communication

Several factors are usually evident when it comes to issues that affect effective communication in any given organization, thus hampering communication efficacy among employees.

2.6.1 *Uncontrolled internal communication*

When employees fail to respect the hierarchy in an organization, they often fail to recognize dignity and authority, thus losing the integrity required based on internal communication procedures. When communication channels are not followed properly in the organization, the employees are usually liable for misusing their internally required procedures to ensure prudent communication (De Riddler, 2003). However, proper internal communication can be enhanced by ensuring that improved collaboration strategies among the employees are strived at. Employees, on the other hand, ought to follow the stated communication procedures from the supervisors down

to subordinates through a well-stipulated internal mechanism that would effectively be consolidated by proper internal communication (Ogbo & Onekanma, 2014).

2.6.2 Lack of information clarity and required correctness

For any information to be perceived by employees in a structured organization, the aspect of clarity and correctness is vital and prudent among the employees. The desired outcome of what has been communicated to the employees should always be clarified plainly. If the information is not correctly articulated, it compromises the effectiveness required in a co-operate organization, thus compromising the organizational tranquility. Well, clarified messages and ideas will enhance the dissemination of information from one individual to another; thus, employees will all strive to achieve the stated goals (Zhang & Agarwal, 2009). Further, well-clarified messages would eventually boost the moral integrity and confidence among the employees.

2.6.3 Managerial syndrome

Sometimes top directors may negatively perceive the subordinate staff, fellow employees, and other organizational stakeholders. Negative perception makes the interaction among employees lose meaning in the context of organizational advancement and intended achievements. Frequently, negative perceptions would always attract emotions towards any information relayed, thus compromising its authenticity and clarity among the employees in an organization. Sometimes the perception may be wrong or negative, thus hampering or distorting the effectiveness of what ought to have been communicated across the organization. Bossy attitudes would promote employee stereotyping of their bosses, thus failing to accord them the

required respect that would later compromise communication effectiveness. Perceptions should be avoided to ensure bottlenecks are not a form of hindrance to the organizational advancement.

2.6.4 Lack of proper communication strategies when relaying information

Some of the issues hampering the devastating efficacy of information are the lack of proper strategic capacity to handle each other in a corporate organization. How the managers, directors, and organization supervisors are supposed to be communicated should differ from how junior employees are approached. Proper strategies would ensure organizational capacity is well achieved and perceptions are well handled based on how individuals communicate as employees.

Good communication strategies provide an integrated approach that would stimulate communication satisfaction among the employees, this efficacy being realized in the entire process. Well-stipulated strategies are usually vital in ensuring the organization's objectives, goals, and achievements are articulated effectively. The employees should learn how to use face-to-face expressions and employ better non-verbal cues that would stipulate proper communication Yokoyama and Igawashi (2006). Emotional and physical distances should also be well calculated to ensure immediate directors and top officials are not offended during communication. When efficacy in communication is well articulated, the agenda thrives conclusively; thus, other parameters will be well affected Chen (2008).

2.6.5 Communication breakdowns among the employees

Communication breakdowns are usually evident if the organization fails to appreciate one another or each individual feels “super-special” when handling organizational

tasks. If employees use hard terms ‘jargon’, the statements will not be well articulated, thus lacking efficacy in communication. More often than not, complex aspects of any communicated information would lead to communication breakdown; hence efficacy would be a pipe dream within an organization.

When messages are misinterpreted, breakdown becomes possible because the formality of information tends to lose its meaning and authenticity. This would often contribute to misunderstanding what ought to have been shared (McCroskey, 2009). The use of ‘slung’ in a corporate organization would also contribute to the breakdown of the information among employees who are not conversant with current trends of modernity in a given organization. The use of slung or handing information would also tend to interfere with the proper linguistic approach that would be required in a corporate organization such as KEFRI.

2.6.6 Poor conflict management skills between management and employees

Most often, conflict does arise if a group of employees is communicating. Conflicts can also be experienced among the senior staff and employees. These conflicts require all stakeholders to accommodate each other to realize proper resolutions. Steinberg (2007) asserts that emotional disorientation triggers hormonal imbalance that would eventually provoke an individual's emotional status, which could make one hyper to the extent of failing to handle conflicts amicably. Conflicts ought to be avoided in order to avoid tasks being left pending to the extent of disrupting the objectives of the organization.

2.7 Review of relevant theories

A theory explains a phenomenon because it entails perception, certain views, assumptions, and descriptive perspectives. Theories try to explain the possible practicability and critical essentialities that are vital for any given research aspect Kothari (2008).

They would be vital in assisting the researcher to critically look at the aspect of communication in totality, thus explaining the fundamentals of any communication patterns. Information sharing theory is a type of explanation for a set of observed phenomena. According to Harper (2002), the theory is "the net that we throw out to catch the world in order to rationalize, explain, and dominate it." The concept of a theory is at the heart of any scholarly process, and while those in the social sciences tend to adopt the natural sciences' tests of a good theory, many who study communication adhere to a communication theory concept similar to that found in other academic fields.

2.7.1 *Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT)*

First conceived by communication professor Howard Giles in 1971, Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT) was mainly about speech, but then adapted to involve verbal and nonverbal communication (Hordila-Vatamanescu, 2010). Giles assert that CAT looks at many frameworks that explain several adjustments that people articulate in maintaining or limiting social distance or gaps in communication. The CAT theory expounds on how individuals embrace communication, strategize ways they deal with several happenings that result in any given communication, and solve personal differences that might hinder their effective communication across the global divide in

a well-structured manner Matteson (2016). Based on several principles and concepts, communication accommodation theory could be vital to explain the efficacy of communication at KEFRI as a governmental organization; that is, communication is not only based on the institutional employees but also on other approaches that could disrupt effectiveness. Findings posit that the accommodative strategies of convergence and divergence were vital in making communication effective in a corporate organization.

This theory mainly deals with speech purporting that people adjust their communication styles to accommodate others in their conversation. The theory helped to evaluate conversations among employee in the organization.

2.7.2 Uncertainty Reduction Theory

Uncertainty-Reduction Theory (URT), also known as initial interaction theory, developed in 1975 by Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese, is a communication theory from the post-positivist tradition. URT tries to demonstrate how people use interactional tactics to decrease unpredictability about other people. According to the theory, people are nervous about unpredictability and pursue ways to foresee the outcomes of social conversations. Uncertainty reduction theory (URT) was initially introduced as a set of axioms (global realities which do not have to be substantiated) and scientific theories (assertions believed to be real) that define the connections with both uncertainty and different communications attributes. URT was created to explain the conversations of seven significant aspects in any complex interplay: written communication, nonverbal expressiveness, evidence-searching behavior, closeness, mutual benefit, resemblance, and likeability (Hebbani & Frey, 2007).

URT posits that when people are uncertain about each other, they are motivated to reduce that uncertainty through communication. In the context of organizational communication, this theory can help explain how staff perceptions are influenced by the level of uncertainty they experience regarding their roles, relationships, and the organizational environment itself. This theory is directly related to staff perceptions of organizational communication because it highlights the critical role of communication in reducing uncertainty in the workplace. Clear, consistent, and transparent communication practices reduce uncertainty, enhance trust, and lead to more positive perceptions of the organization, whereas poor communication can heighten uncertainty and lead to negative staff attitudes and behaviors. Organizations that effectively apply URT principles can improve staff satisfaction, engagement, and overall communication effectiveness.

2.7.3 Taylorism and Communication Theory

The scientific management theory's creator, Fredrick Taylor (1909), focused more on individual behaviour and organizational structure than communication. However, he believed communication was formal, hierarchical, and planned to complete tasks and boost output and efficiency. He promoted more direct, horizontal communication within organizations, especially during times of crisis where quick action is crucial. The scientific management school acknowledged that, at the very least, when specific management "principles" were not correctly applied, communication issues could arise in organizations. For instance, if a manager's area of influence grows too large due to having a large number of subordinates, their capacity for effective communication with them is likely to suffer. (Mooney & Reiley 1939; Gulick & Urwick 1937).

The manager's delegation of power to subordinates at lower levels of the hierarchy, along with a corresponding reduction in the span of control, served as the solution to this problem. The theory distinguished between the staff's and the 'line's' communication functions. Staff officials were typically experts in particular fields, and it was believed that part of their communication role was convincing their executive head to follow their recommendations. Line officials served as cogs in the chain of command, relaying orders from their superiors to their subordinates and ensuring that these directives were properly carried out.

While Taylorism focuses on efficiency through hierarchical and one-way communication, communication theory encourages open, collaborative, and dynamic exchanges. The perception of organizational communication by staff is shaped by whether they feel heard, understood, and involved in the process, which in turn affects their engagement and satisfaction at work.

From the communication theories discussed above, open system theory offers the best perspective for defining communication in an organization. Individuals in an organization can make and carry out logical decisions thanks to the avenues provided by open system communication for a feedback mechanism. Like any other organization, KEFRI relies on input from various sources when making decisions that affect how they carry out their daily tasks. For the various publics that make up KEFRI to coordinate their activities, there must be a smooth flow of information. The diversity of the KEFRI customer base and the message they want to convey must be considered when choosing the channels used for information dissemination. This calls for effective and appropriate structures and channels to support the efficient and

effective information flow within KEFRI. Determining KEFRI's current situation about effective organizational communication is crucial.

2.8 Summary

The concept of organizational communication was discussed in this chapter, along with its place in the discipline of communication studies. Additionally, it justified the study based on the literature review and reviewed pertinent theories and recent organizational communication literature. It concluded by summarizing the main points of the chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology adopted for this study was described. The rationale for embracing the described method is also explained, as well as the use of the data generation techniques – interviews. To conclude, the trustworthiness of the study and the ethical considerations that emerged from the study were discussed.

3.1 Research Approach

The study adopted a qualitative research approach that is systematic and well-articulated, with profound interpretations to acquire opinions and better approaches to a given phenomenon. It entails subjective analysis of opinions, possible attitudinal parameters, and behavioral patterns to be realized during the research process (Kothari, 2008). Several insights were dealt with prudently, thus sorting out the required impressions. The researcher sought to determine factors influencing the approach as a vital tool to the already discussed paradigm. The researcher chose qualitative research because the issues under investigation were subjective, particular, and context-based, as posited by Jwan & Ong'ondo (2011).

3.2 Research Method

The case study method was used in this study. Research on the case study is the investigation and analysis of one or more cases to illustrate the complexity of the subject under study (Stake, 1995). It gives an in-depth insight into an individual or event that ought to be investigated. The researcher well-articulated the case study analysis and descriptive

dimensions. The employees at KEFRI, with a wealth of experience, were vital in the entire process, thus ensuring the research was decisive.

This qualitative case study method focused on primary and secondary data sources to achieve the study's aim. Primary data entailed observation and in-depth interviews with top managers, middle managers, and junior officers at the KEFRI's Headquarters.

The headquarters holds over 75% of KEFRI employees compared to 25% in outstations, thus the ideal study area. The sample size was 20 participants consisting of (5) top managers, (9) middle managers, and (6) junior officers with relevant information to explore how the employees perceive communication in the organization.

The top managers implement patterns and channels of communication in the organization and ensure that there is a laid down policy of communication to guide staff. The middle managers, on the other hand, made sure that the policies put in place were cascaded to the staff under them and that they were followed accordingly.

3.3 Target Population

According to Newing (2011), the population is the collection of sampling units or cases in which the researcher is most interested. As per Kothari (2004), the term "population" refers to all objects in any field of study and is also referred to as the "universe." According to Ngechu (2004), the target population is a clearly defined or specified group of individuals, entities, households, businesses, services, things, or occasions under investigation. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the target population should have some observable characteristics to generalize the study's findings. The target population for this study was 800 staff. Using purposive sampling technique, 20 participants from three different levels namely; top management, middle management, and lower level.

3.4 Sampling

According to Holloway & Wheeler (2012), sampling is the process a researcher employs to compile subjects, locations, or objects to study. Purposive sampling, which is a thorough procedure for choosing several objects or people from a given population in that the specifically chosen group has elements that fully represent characteristics in a given group (entire group) in a research study, was used in this study, (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011). The researcher used purposive sampling to get detailed information from those with vast experience in communication. Further, purposive sampling was grounded on the study questions, available time, and resources to commence the research. The employees were the participants during the research process, and the sample size made it easy to observe the viable characteristics. The sample size was scaled down to 20 respondents; 5 top managers, 9 middle managers, and 6 junior staff were purposively interviewed (Table 1).

I used a purposive sampling approach to select participants who could provide rich insights on the topic. Given the qualitative nature of the research, the aim was not to achieve statistical generalization but to explore in-depth perspectives from a smaller group. After considering factors such as data saturation and the practical constraints of time and resources, I determined that a sample of 20 participants was sufficient to ensure diverse viewpoints while allowing for thorough analysis. This sample size is consistent with similar qualitative studies, where smaller groups are typically used to generate meaningful detailed insight.

The research was conducted at KEFRI headquarters in Kiambu County. KEFRI headquarters was best suited due to the presence of all cadres of employees, from the senior directors to the junior subordinate, who ensures the smooth running of the

organization. The table below shows the symbols assigned to interview transcripts and the labels assigned to each. The symbols were used throughout the chapter.

Table 3.1: Symbols assigned to interview transcripts

Symbol	Level	No. Interviewed
R1 (a – e)	Interview with top managers in KEFRI	5
R2 (a – i)	Interview with middle level managers in KEFRI	9
R3 (a – f)	Interview with junior staff in KEFRI	6
Total		20

3.5 Data Generation Techniques

Both primary and secondary data sources were gathered and used in this study. In-depth interview schedules with participants were used to gather primary data. In addition, secondary data containing pertinent information was gathered from the literature already in existence, including journals, books, reports, reports on related research, policy, the KEFRI strategic plan, government publications, and other related materials on the internet to the current research topic under study. The two data generation methods were employed to increase the study's validity. The details of the primary sources are provided below;

3.5.1 In-depth interviews

Data for this study were gathered through in-depth interviews. A qualitative research technique called “in-depth interviewing” involves conducting lengthy one-on-one

interviews with a select few participants to learn about their perspectives on a given concept, initiative, or circumstance. The people interviewed included the top management, middle-level management, and junior staff. The interviews were scheduled for thirty to forty minutes for each interviewee, all of whom were one-on-one. Five top managers were interviewed, each taking between 25 and 35 minutes, depending on the limited time each manager had to attend to other duties. Nine middle managers from various sections were interviewed, each taking 35-40 minutes.

The purpose of picking on a more significant number of interviewees in the middle management was because they are more in various cadres. Further, the researcher would find more than one middle manager in one section depending on the number of personnel in a given section. At the junior level, six participants were picked, each being interviewed for 35 – 40 minutes.

The interviews provided an opportunity “to step into the mind’ of the participants, to see and experience the world as they do themselves (Abbott, 2007). It included a series of inquiries to cover the particular goals of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Further, the discussions gave participants a chance to freely give their views by describing what they feel should be done to improve information dissemination at KEFRI. It was an oral exchange between the interviewer and the interviewee with proper clarifications per the study’s requirements. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed.

3.6 Document analysis

Document analysis was also used to generate data for this study. In document analysis, a type of qualitative research, the subject of the study is given voice and meaning by

the researcher's interpretation of the documents (Bowen, 2009). Journals and other publications of the KEFRI organization are examples.

The process of analyzing documents includes categorizing content into themes, much like focus groups or interview transcripts (Bowen, 2009). Documentary sources are used as a primary focus of research and to supplement the data that researchers have gathered, according to Yin (2009). He adds that case study topics are likely to all be relevant to documentary information, which should focus on comprehensive data collection strategies. Documents related to vertical and horizontal communication and any other documents used to guide employee communication in the organization were analyzed.

3.7 Data analysis

Analysis of data was done thematically. According to Jack Caulfield (2019), In thematic analysis, the researcher closely scrutinizes the data to find recurring themes, subjects, concepts, and patterns of meaning. Using this approach, I looked at the information gathered from the observations and the interviews, which helped me identify the themes. Jwan & Ong'ondo showed that there were different levels of data analysis (2011). Six steps were taken in the analysis, as will be discussed below:

Transcription: The data analysis process begins with this step. According to Mondada Lorenza (2007), transcription is the process of giving a written account of spoken words. Individual or group interviews are typically verbatim transcribed for use in qualitative research (exactly word-for-word). The researcher turned all verbal information from interviewees into written form after taking notes from observations

and conducting interviews to gather data, ensuring that the transcriptions captured all the utterances.

Re-familiarization with the data: Although the transcript facilitated familiarization, the transcripts were reread for re-familiarization without intentionally grouping them into themes. The significance of this reading was also to identify transcription errors, correct them, and form a general idea of the data. Interpretations were noted down, transcripts were copied into new documents, and read through the data again, removing fillers, repetitions, and any redundancies that were not considered helpful for the data. The data's general direction and the nature of the thoughts were established (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011).

First phase coding: After ensuring all the transcripts were the actual representation of the interviews, the initial codes were generated. According to Dornyei (2007), coding entails highlighting and labeling selected transcribed data extracts so they can be quickly transcribed, retrieved, or grouped. Scrutinizing for any meanings and patterns was then data coded by identifying any exciting segments. The scope of this study guided the generation of codes. Data that seemed irrelevant at that point was labeled as 'later' to review later, as advised by Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011). The student was eager to label the codes and save the codes into a new Word document.

Second phase coding: After the first level coding, the various codes were re-grouped. Codes that looked similar were merged while turning others into categories. Data previously labeled 'later' was revisited for any relevance and was labeled appropriately. Every effort was made to make sure codes with the redundancy of overlaps and repetitions were removed. Litchman (2006) proposed that there must be much going back and forth to the original data numerous times. This made it easier to

come up with some themes and sub-themes while keeping the pertinent sections underneath them.

Third phase coding: At this stage, categories were grouped into themes; this phase is what Cresswell (2007) refers to as selective coding. Different categories and codes were grouped and re-grouped into themes in this coding phase. To ensure appropriate categorization and management of the data, a chart was used to categorize different themes under each study research question.

Production of the report: This stage involves the final data analysis and subsequent report creation. The researcher, therefore, embarked on production once there was certainty that the themes were appropriate. Jwan and Ong'ondo (2011) observe that the production of the report involves 'telling the story from the mouth of the participants and telling it to the readers by paraphrasing the statements and only retaining a few direct quotes to give the report credibility. Therefore, when writing the report, there was cognisance of the need for the inclusion of enough extracts, mainly for purposes of demonstrating the strength of the themes earlier highlighted.

I was to conduct 20 interviews with staff members from different departments in the Institute. However, I arrived at the level of saturation at interview number 13 where I realized that I am hearing the same perspectives and experiences repeatedly also, no new information was emerging after each interview and these made me realize that I could be nearing the saturation level. Similarly, I started hearing the same feedback on how communication flows between management and staff. Complaints about how information is shared also became common and these were clear indications that I had reached the saturation level.

3.8 Trustworthiness of the study

To be credible, a research process must be accurate, meticulous, and rigorous enough to support the claims it makes (Jwan & Ong'ondo, 2011). Some mechanisms that would ensure credibility (the extent to which the finding would be believable and reflective of the participants realities), transferability (This was consideration that the findings can be applied or transferred to other settings or groups) dependability (This is the consistency or reliability of the study findings over time and across similar settings) , and confirmability of the research process were used to ensure the study's reliability and corroboration by others. The degree to which a study investigates what it claims to investigate and reports what happened in the field is called its credibility.

Two data generation techniques (interviews and document analysis) were used to ensure credibility. Various cadres of employees were interviewed in order to get different viewpoints. Furthermore, the work was peer-reviewed by my supervisors and colleagues. To ensure transferability, this study was conducted so that analytic generalizations can be made from the findings. To ensure dependability, sufficient detail of the research process was provided, a process known as thick description. Daymon and Holloway (2010) argue that a thick description is a thorough account of the procedure, setting, and participants in the study, including their intentions and meanings. To ensure conformability, all decisions were explained, and samples of my data were provided to my supervisor.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics entails the study of values in the realm of human conduct within any given instruction or rules that would govern a person or a group of people in a specialized

undertaking (Heiman, 2011). Most often, ethics can be attributed to one's conduct that does not elicit behavioral indiscipline cases.

On informed consent, participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures and benefits before agreeing to participate. Participation was voluntary and could be withdrawn at any time without consequences. Confidentiality and privacy was considered where anonymity and use of pseudonyms applied. Psychological and emotional harm to participants was also observed. The research aimed to provide benefits, either directly to participants or to society, while minimizing potential harm. Justice (fairness in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of research) was upheld. Integrity and honesty to all participants was upheld. The researcher assured participants for accountability of her actions and the ethical conduct of their research.

Some ethical issues during the research process are; refraining from inducing the participants to commit acts that diminish their self-esteem—for example, confronting the available respondents or refuting what they have said publicly. All the respondents and other individuals gave full consent before the interview. The respondents were not subjected to mental discomfort (stress) by training them to respond on a given timeline. All respondents are treated somewhat with due respect and diligence.

3.10 Summary

The methodology of the study has been described in this chapter to guarantee that it complies with ethical standards. Furthermore, assurances regarding the study's credibility have been made.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Overview

This chapter presents the results of the research findings. The findings relate to the research questions that were used to guide the study. The first question focused on scrutinizing the nature of organizational communication in KEFRI. Further it sought to examine how well communication is understood among the employees at various levels.

The second question, explored employee perception of organizational communication in the institute. The third question, sought to find out the challenges that employees face in communication within the Institute.

4.1 Nature of organizational communication in KEFRI

This study was guided by among other things the KEFRI Communication Strategy 2014, which aims at enhancing information flow and feedback to adequately meet the needs of both the internal and external stakeholders. Further the strategy gives guidelines on how communication both internal and external ought to be carried out. The corporate communication pathways used in the Institute includes; verbal communication, written communication, ICT, publications, print and electronic media. This study dealt specifically with internal communication among KEFRI employees.

The study found that most participants were neither aware of the existence of the Strategy nor the content of the KEFRI communication strategy. They expressed their

desire to know what it entails and follow the correct communication patterns set in the Institute. According to findings, this Strategy emphasizes encouraging customer feedback, staff being one of them. The Strategy also calls for effectiveness, clarity, efficiency, transparency, and integrity in handling communications. It further advocates for high levels of accountability and responsibility in communicating and advocating for feedback from the recipients. Bringing the staff to full knowledge of the Strategy would enable them to follow the set patterns comfortably and conveniently.

Though there is a Communication Strategy in KEFRI, it is evident that most staff are not aware of it, neither do they know its content. The strategy would be more advantageous to the Institute if proper sensitization of the same could be done to all the staff. Such policies really assist in streamlining areas of their focus (R2 f).

The majority of us junior staff members are unaware that a communication strategy is in place at KEFRI, and if it's there we are not informed. We would be glad to know it anyway to avoid communicating or talking anyhow. I wish the Institute could inform us about it so that we don't do things wrongly or in our own ways and manner. The Institute should sensitize the communication strategy to all the staff (R3 f).

4.1.1 Internal communication

Internal strategy is meant to increase knowledge, build support for internal reforms and address new and existing staff concerns to understand and implement institutional goals in close cooperation with existing human resources and labor relations (Zaag & Savenije, 2000). Internal communication is intended to build line management and the entire administration of the institution's commitment to messages and, if well implemented, ensure that the messages are cascaded down through the hierarchy organization Curtain 2005.

Effective communication between team members within an organization is a result of internal communications. It is intended for a collection of procedures in charge of ensuring effective

communication and teamwork among organization members (Jason Antoine, 2016). Effective internal communication influences employee and organizational manager engagement, which is essential for achieving organizational goals (Welch & Jackson, 2007). KEFRI has developed an internal communication strategy to address the daily means of disseminating information among staff members within the Institute. Internal communication is also intended to develop internal channels to disseminate information to thematic areas, Eco-regional centers, and Sub-centres. The success of internal communication depends mainly on how messages are crafted and reported. Other internal communication includes: Telephone calls, memos, circulars, emails, internal meetings.

4.2 Communication Strategy in KEFRI

KEFRI is responsible to all its clients and interested parties seeking information, products, and services. To ensure that all its clients continue accessing information, products, and services, KEFRI has established a Communication Strategy to guide the institution in internal and external communication. This Communication Strategy acts as both framework and basis for the Institute's entire communication effort to support KEFRI's Corporate Strategy, including its mission, vision, and core values.

The Institute has identified communication goals, key objectives, and potential communication methods. The intention, first, is to improve KEFRIs' visibility through the adoption of communication fronts that strengthen information flow and knowledge exchange between KEFRI and its stakeholders. Secondly, to strengthen working relationships, engagements, service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Thirdly, ensure all stakeholders are reached and that all key messages are communicated effectively.

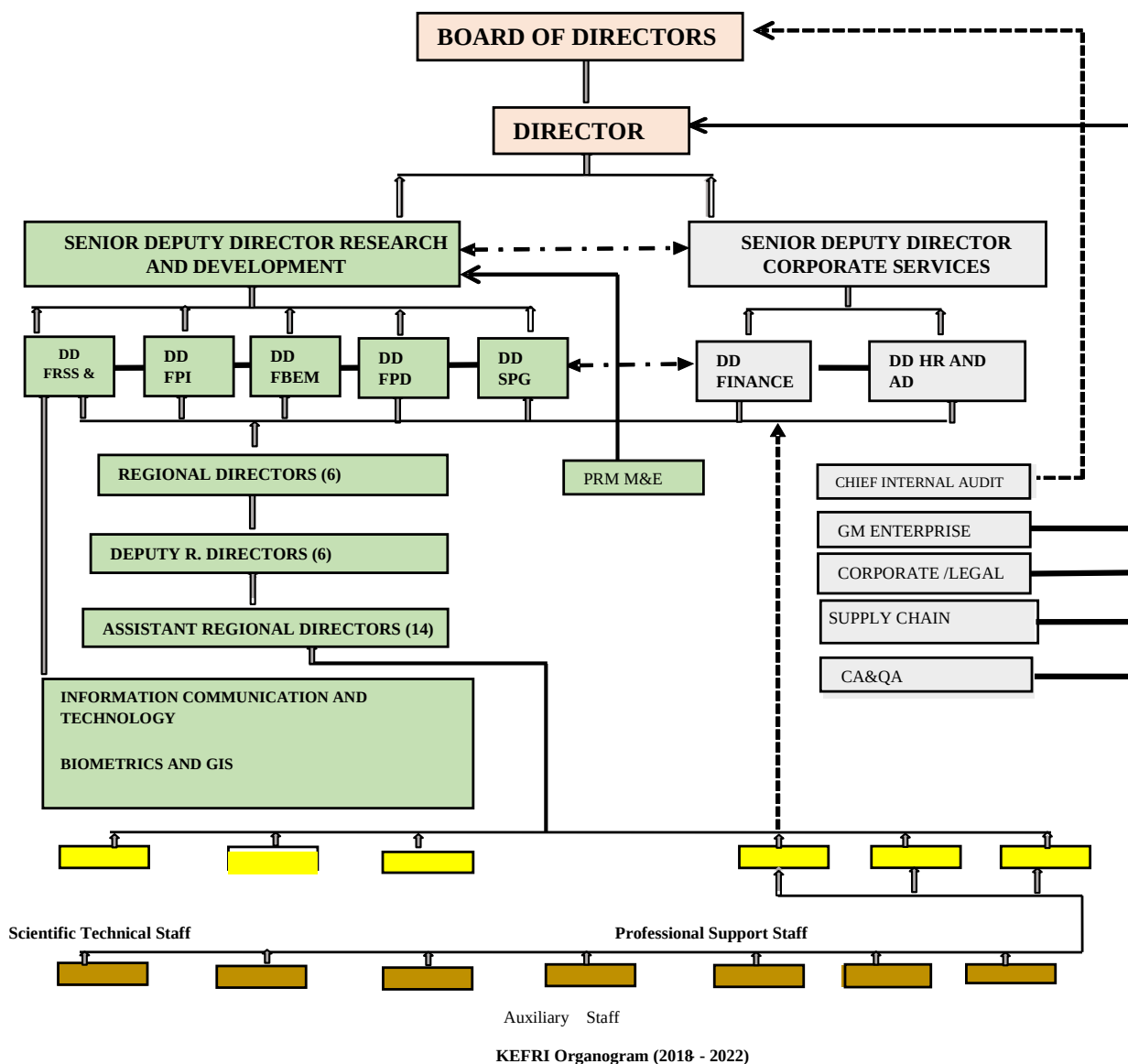
This Strategy also outlines communication approaches that the Institute will apply in undertaking research and disseminating information to meet stakeholders' needs and dynamics and contribute to the realization of Vision 2030 aspiration. The principles set out in this document shall also be applied across KEFRI in the regulation, production, processing, and marketing functions of those involved in seeking or delivering products and services.

Having a strong communication strategy in KEFRI that is well understood and embraced by employees would pave way for dynamic communication patterns. This was evident from participants who advocated on acquiring more information on what the communication strategy at KEFRI entails.

4.3 Patterns of communication in KEFRI

In an organization, communication patterns are the channels through which lines of communication are established. They show how messages move both inside an organization and between organizations.

Communication in KEFRI is guided by the organogram (Figure 1). While all official communication should be addressed to the Director, it however clearly stipulates the communication flow which would be either upwards, downwards or horizontal.



Key

DD	Deputy Director
FRSS	Forest Research Services
FPI	Forest Productivity and Improvement
FBEM	Forest Biodiversity and Environmental Management
FPD	Forest Products Development
PRM	Partnerships and Resource Mobilization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
CA and QA	Corporate Affairs and Quality Assurance
GIS	Geographic Information System

Figure 2: KEFRI Organogram

Effective communication like the downward which is used in KEFRI gives employees a thorough comprehension of the message they have been given. Additionally, this type of communication promotes organizational discipline and staff compliance. Because instructions and information come from the

sources of power that are able to coordinate activities from the top, they can easily be adhered to (R1 e).

Patterns of communication seems to have failed in most organizations since the set patterns mainly don't work according to organizational charts. For example, in KEFRI, I believe the pattern ought to be downward since communication is supposed to flow from top coming down, but this seems not to be quite efficient. Delegation is much easier when it moves from upper management. A pronounced and well sensitized communication strategy would really help to curb such incidences (R2 e).

A haphazard way of communicating like grapevine can burn a whole institute since it spreads like bush fire. Adopting one type of communication pattern would offer better and clear directives to staff. Well, grapevine is not always bad because it informs senior managers on what is hot and trending hence put them on their toes, but on another hand it could be dangerous to an organization if entertained too much (R3 e).

4.4 Channels of communication in KEFRI

Communication channels are how people in an organization receive/send information. KEFRI, a research Institution whose mandate is to disseminate research findings, has well-established communication channels. The Institute is committed to successfully implementing a communication strategy that integrates various communication channels and methods to communicate research findings to the internal and external public successfully. Communication at KEFRI is usually done through letters, telephones, memos, emails, social media (WhatsApp, facebook, Twitter), SMS, publications, reports, newsletters, and meetings. Croft & Dalton (2003) stated that internal communication is frequently accomplished through memos, newsletters, magazines, intranets, departmental briefings, and email.

Feedback from supervisors, feedback for the entire team/department, and management feedback to the team/department were all regarded as being extremely helpful. This shows how highly valued feedback is among KEFRI staff.

4.4.1 Letters

The written message in a letter is sent through a medium from one person to another. Newspapers and placards are two examples of written content that is typically excluded from the term. Even these, though, might contain content that is written in the style of a "open letter." Sending news, information, and greetings are the main goals of letters. Letters form a significant component of communication channels within KEFRI. This is more so between headquarters and its regional offices, in its thematic areas and staff. The institute has a well-established chain of command in the flow of communication using this channel. As a form of its knowledge management systems, KEFRI has well-established Registries. In KEFRI, communication done through letters is usually ideal since, besides being a good reference record, they also show that communication took place and feedback was given or is expected. Written communication is also hard to alter, so its original meaning remains, and a response is expected per the original communication. Findings revealed that letters are easier to preserve and retain, and if need be, important information can be retrieved from time to time.

Letters are an effective way to record important events and information for documentation. Additionally, they serve as evidence that is admissible in a court of law. A handwritten letter is more likely to be read right away than the numerous emails that are constantly flooding our inbox. In general, letters are the best form of communication (R1 a).

Writing a letter gives one time to reflect on the content they are writing, in contrast to texting or even talking on the phone. Being able to take some time to gather your thoughts before actually putting pen to paper is one of the best aspects of writing a letter. Letters are cheap since one only needs a pen, a paper and mind (R2 a).

Letters have been used since time immemorial if am not wrong, this is one of the oldest means of communication. So they will never lose meaning or value, again one can chose on how long or short you want a letter to be. However, they should be written in a way that they are easily understood and hence appropriate feedback (R3 a).

Employees at KEFRI perceived that communicating through letters is more efficient and accessible for future reference because of the storage possibilities. While on general observation, letters used at KEFRI are significant since they serve as a formal method of communication between employees and management. Reference and retrieval are usually easy, mainly because there is a central registry in KEFRI where all communications are channelled. They also offer helpful information on issues pertaining to organizations and, if necessary, can serve a legal purpose.

4.4.2 Telephones

When people are far apart, they can still talk to each other on the phone. The telephone adds a more personal touch by giving workers the chance to incorporate two-way real-time communication. Due to the availability of telephones in every office, the results indicated that the telephone is one of the most popular channels of communication.

When it comes to customer service, phone calls are among the most useful forms of communication. People can communicate in real time over the phone, and when faced with a difficult choice, people are more likely to choose voice communication than any other. The telephone provides a more personal touch, giving companies the chance to incorporate two-way real-time communication with customers (R1 b).

Our reliance on technology has made it difficult for us to imagine living without our smartphones or accessing information with a button press. Likewise, even in offices, telephone is a very vital means of communication making work easier and saving time a great deal (R2 b).

Communication through telephone conversation gives a personal and informative touch, hence creating a greater sense of loyalty in employees. The following description by a participant was offered as one such example:

Getting a call especially from a person senior than you, makes one feel good, privileged and honoured. This is so because rarely do senior officers make calls to their juniors. Talking on phone can strengthen your connection and build intimacy, and can improve your communication skills with that person (R3 b).

Some employees were of the opinion that despite the fact that phones allow callers to connect directly with respondents thus having instant feedback, they can be misused especially those that are used within the premises of the organization i.e. the extension lines. Despite its high value, electronic communication does not seem to be sufficient. Mobile phones are valued by employees as a means of communication. If setting up in-person meetings is challenging, a phone call might in some circumstances be sufficient. This demonstrates the value of immediate communication and information sharing in businesses. Instant messaging is a good communication tool when information is required as soon as possible.

4.4.3 Emails

Emails are electronic messages that are sent over a network from one computer user to one or more recipients. Computer users on a network can send text, graphics, sounds, and animated images to one another using the e-mail system. On the majority of networks, information can be sent simultaneously to all users or to a chosen group or person. Email communication is nearly instantaneous, which facilitates information dissemination and quick employee response.

KEFRI has developed state of the art infrastructure on ICT and adopted the use of emails as one of its critical communication channels. Emails are typically quick, easy to reference, and reachable from anywhere as long as you have an internet connection. They are therefore the best option. Any computer, anywhere with internet connectivity, can send and receive emails.

Email is viewed as being extremely helpful by respondents in the organization. Emails play a significant part in company internal communication. The outcomes amply demonstrate that:

Email is a vital communication tool that is quick, inexpensive, widely available, and reproducible. Since email offers quick and easy ways to send all types of electronic data, using it can be very advantageous to employees. They provide an easily searchable trail of conversations and interactions basically, emails are convenient since they are accessible from anywhere with an internet connection (R1 b).

Emails allows a message to be communicated to several recipients at once...it's a very convenient way of communicating. Retrieval of messages when needed is very easy and of course with reduced or no cost at all. Many organizations KEFRI inclusive receive alot of emails a day, granting them an opportunity of quick response (R2 c).

Emails are good and fast but before an officer do an email, it is important to think about why you are sending the email, to whom you are sending it and whether the person will be able to access it. This is so because some junior officers are either not literate or are not in a position to access internet services (R3 b).

4.4.4 Face-to-face

Being able to see the other party or parties during a conversation makes for face-to-face communication. Since the speaker and the listener can both see and understand body language and facial expressions, communication is improved. Face-to-face communication has been identified as a crucial tool for the dissemination of information, and among its many advantages is the ability to conceptualize opposing viewpoints as a source of insightful feedback. But they come to the conclusion that the gap between theory and practice is widening. Another common channel of communication in every organization is verbal face-to-face communication. Face to face communication is used on day to day basis in KEFRI in both formal and informal communication.

Employees use face to face communication to convey information that are related to the official business of the institute (Feedback on reports etc). Employees preferred face to face as there are less chances of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. The study further found out that it is a convenient and cheap way of passing information to employees. The findings suggested that verbal communication also helps clear up an issue faster without so much back-and-forth explanations thus connecting the employees and removing the gap of understanding between them. In addition, verbal communication helps to solve problems faster and amicably.

Since communication is built through face to face connections, making eye contact and interpreting body language, allows the other person to see how your actions align with your words and enhances your credibility. Trust isn't built over a text message, a colleague who never sees your face is not likely to feel the same connection to you as someone whose hand you shake on a regular basis (R1 c).

Verbal communication is very important since it's easier to convince someone. Imagine conversing with someone who disagrees with you, communicating over text or email can be really cumbersome and ineffective. You may not have full attention of that person, or he/she may just be skimming over the words you've written (R2 c).

Face-to-face communication is one of the richest channels of communication that is used at KEFRI. Physical presence, the tone of the speaker's voice and facial expressions help recipients of a message interpret that message as the speaker intends. This is the best channel to use for complex or emotionally charged messages, because it allows for interaction between speaker and recipients to clarify ambiguity. An employee can evaluate whether the person being communicated to has received his message as intended and ask or answer follow-up questions. This was evident as expressed by one of the recipient;

Communication is not just talking...No! There is another important issue of body language which you can only detect through face to face communication. This can tell you a lot about a person and how they are feeling about what you are saying. This is information that you can't get over email, phone or letter. Talking has made people who were almost killing each other sit down, eat together and laugh over petty issues (R3 c).

Additionally, in-person meetings are thought to be very beneficial. According to Croft & Dalton (2003, p. 63), regular meetings between the top management and employees are crucial. One effective way to deliver the measurement and the upward feedback simultaneously is to set up regular face-to-face opportunities for top management to be exposed to employee thinking. This is unmistakably supported by the KEFRI staff, who place a high value on both face-to-face interactions and feedback from managers and supervisors. Concerning the alarming issue of management being disconnected from its workforce, Corrado et al. (1994, p. 35). They stress how crucial it is to set up procedures for resolving this issue and offer sensible feedback. Employees of KEFRI indubitably concur with this. It follows that management and supervisors must be present and provide regular feedback to the company in order to improve internal communication.

4.4.5 Departmental Meetings

Departmental meetings are conducted by members of the same department in an organization to exchange ideas and discuss issues concerning the department. In KEFRI, departmental meetings are convened to evaluate performances, discuss work plans among other issues of the department. The meetings are scheduled mainly quarterly or when need arises.

Departmental meetings are extremely beneficial because they give people a chance to exchange information, make announcements, or participate in departmental decision-making. However, they can be harmful if they are used

to obstruct others, demonstrate status or power, or encourage work avoidance (by attending meetings merely because they have been scheduled) (R1 d).

If done properly, meetings are extremely important. They give people the chance to contribute to an organization's success while also fostering a sense of belonging, trust, and importance. An organization runs on meetings and one-on-one conversations (R2 d).

Departmental meetings at times may have a big impact since if there is poor relationship between employees, staff enter the meeting room being enemies and leave that room still enemies. Convenors of the meetings should rather look for ways of reconciling those that have differences or conflict first before holding the meetings. However, they are a good way of communicating to staff or same section and ironing issues (R3 d).

According to the study, cordial relationship between all staff at all levels should be the backbone of communication in an organisation. Departmental meetings when structured and well conducted improve communication within the department leading cohesion and hence productivity of staff. According to all surveys, face-to-face, one-on-one communication is still the most valued form of communication by employees across all sectors, according to Smith & Mounter (2005, p. 74), but it can be problematic if team leaders and other supervisors don't understand what it means. The employees will find their own ways to fill in the knowledge gaps, according to Smith & Mounter (2005, p. 75), if management has decided not to practice one-to-one communication or is not doing so sufficiently. In the situation of this business question, it is possible. It's likely that rumors and false information will spread within the company because people feel they don't get enough information through official channels. According to Green (2006, p. 3), communication can take the form of actions. Because they miss meetings and one-on-one feedback, actions may be exactly what the company's employee's demand. Actions refer to verbal exchanges that can be seen, and meetings and direct criticism are examples of that.

4.5 Perceptions of employees on organizational communication at KEFRI

Selecting, compiling, and interpreting information is the process of perception. Select stimuli are perceived during this process after passing through our perceptual filters, organizing themselves into our preexisting structures and patterns, and then being interpreted based on prior knowledge. This section summarizes the results of the second question, which was: How do employees of KEFRI perceive to organizational communication? In the quest to answer the above question, the study sought to explore how employees perceive communication in the organization. The findings are presented under the following staff categories: top management; middle level managers and junior staff.

4.5.1 Top management's perceptions on organizational communication

KEFRI's top managers consists of the directors, deputy directors, heads of divisions such as human resource, administration, chief and principal researchers. Respondents in the top management were of the opinion that communication plays a critical role in smooth running of the Institute. They indicated that the use of proper channels of communication is critical and should be supported. Most of the respondents were comfortable with the organizational communication at KEFRI since it is understandable and straight forward.

In addition, they expressed that the channels are readily available and accessible and that if one channel of communication is not clear, one is able to choose another. However, despite all that, they had few complaints concerning existing communication challenges.

Perception differences can lead to misunderstandings or even serious communication breakdowns. Conversations may differ from how someone else

will complete the process because perception is a cognitive process that helps us understand our experiences, how we receive, filter, and interpret behaviors (R1 a).

The impact of perception on communication is all about how different people can interpret the same message in different ways. Communication problems in the workplace can result in a variety of distortions, such as biases or judgments of other people. This is where communication issues can arise (R2 g).

Communication in the organization is okay but it's misused by a few who like using short cuts in order to avoid following procedures and enjoy informal ways of doing things. I feel downward communication is the most ideal in a big organization like KEFRI since proper and specific directives about jobs to be done will be straighter (R3 a).

The importance of supervisor communication to organizational functioning, according to Van Vuuren et al. (2006, p. 124–125), is rooted in the contribution of communication to commitment. The role of interactions between managers and employees is reiterated by the effects of communication on fit and efficacy perceptions because sense of direction, motivation, and competence are significant to both parties. Consequently, this aspect of communication is crucial in organizations. It's bad for the entire organization if there is poor communication within teams and between managers and employees. The absence of effective team communication is difficult to make up for through management communication.

4.5.2 Middle managers perceptions on organizational communication

Middle managers at KEFRI comprise of Regional directors, their deputies, corporate affairs, chief auditor and supply chain. This group plays a critical role in the supervisory activities of the institute. To them therefore, proper communication to the upper and lower cadres is important for smooth running of the institute. Findings from the middle level managers indicated that knowledge of a communication strategy was quite scanty. They emphasized that if the strategy is well followed, it gives a good oversight of how communication within the organization ought to be carried out. They

preferred the elaborate and predominant type of communication like the downward since among other things, it enhances organizational discipline, efficiencies, and ease of delegation. Most of the respondents at this level prefer horizontal communication because they are dealing with staff of the same level whom they are comfortable with. However, some respondents were of the opinion that downward communication has some disadvantages like; slow feedback, interpretative problems, demotivates employees and the fact that it's not motivating at all since it appears like command.

In several instances, it is very well understood that when you hold a conversation with someone of your level whether formal or informal you feel good, relaxed, comfortable and happy regardless of the pattern. However, in most cases you find that there is no protocol even on an official communication. There is therefore a need of adhering to the endorsed way of communicating especially the official communications (R2 h).

Let me say for sure that regardless of set systems and patterns of communication, most of us staff are unable to follow, not because they are bad but because informal communication seems much convincing and fulfilling than the systematic ones. For example, to be honest downward pattern of communication may not be quite motivating at times since it may appear too official. However, on the other hand, it could help avoid conflicting information and disagreements in an organization (R3 b).

According to Wanyama (2016), a lack of clear communication patterns is a problem in human resource management. The communication's content must be planned so that the organization's goals are accomplished. The message's communicator or transmitter must be precise, lucid, and clear. Employees believe they should have access to clear information so they can perform their jobs effectively.

4.5.3 Junior staff perception on organizational communication

Junior staff in KEFRI entails the professional support staff comprising of scientific technical staff and auxiliary staff. Most of the respondents are totally unaware of the communication strategy. They are however aware of all possible communication channels within the institute. However, majority of employees receive a lot of

information through grapevine. They suggested though that a defined pattern of communication is important to avoid a mix-up of communications. They were of the opinion that a defined pattern would also help the seniors in appraising them in their performances. Regardless of the formality of downward communication, there was a general feeling that communication ought to flow from seniors preferably coming down through the right way and channel.

Sensitization on communication and especially the communication strategy is the only thing that would enable the junior staff to embrace the laid down channels and patterns. Otherwise communication will remain to be a big barrier (R1 b).

Differentiating between patterns and channels of communication is not easy for most junior staff, they only know of types of communication. Though it is somehow definite that mostly the pattern of communication used by junior staff in the offices is horizontal, the predominant pattern according to KEFRI organogram should be adopted (R2 i).

We become more friendly and closer to one another through our talking, some of our communication reaches the senior managers and actions are taken to our benefit. Okay, I would not advocate for any type of communication pattern, but atleast its good when an organization has two main patterns in order to try and suite the staff in all levels (R3 b).

It was definite that horizontal and grapevine communications work better for most of the junior staff since there is no protocol followed. Most junior officers were of the opinion that these are more convenient ways of communicating more so because they would talk freely without fear. A respondent was quick to point out that, there are important factors to consider in communication which include: type of communication, the person and the channel. Senior managers must decide whether to manage the components of the communication mix or to be managed by rumour, according to Quirke (1996). In their responses to the open-ended questions, many employees address rumours.

4.6 Challenges that exist in organizational communication at KEFRI

Workplace communication issues can be detrimental to interdepartmental working relationships, productivity, and morale. Unresolved communication issues have the potential to reduce profits, raise turnover, and result in errors that harm the company's reputation. Common issues can be identified and resolved in order to prevent problems from becoming out of control. Effective communication has been cited by academics like Roger (1998) as a key component of any organization's success. People within an organization exist because of effective communication, which involves the sharing of knowledge, information, attitudes, and judgment.

Lack of knowledge of the Institute's organizational structure, a lack of ICT proficiency, a lack of tools and equipment to carry out communication, occasionally a lack of feedback, and an abundance of information are some of the communication challenges that KEFRI faces.

4.6.1 Lack of awareness KEFRI communication strategy

Majority of staff in KEFRI were not aware of an existing communication strategy that guides the Institute.

We have a challenge of not knowing existence of a communication strategy. We need sensitization of it, it could even be printed into small handbooks that one can carry along for familiarization purposes. Further translation into Kiswahili could be done for better understanding of it. That way proper communication would be a sure bet (R2 f).

Through the use of internal communication channels, it facilitates professional identity by encouraging employees' understanding of the organizational environment. Given that employees rely on internal communication channels to disseminate critical organizational information; knowledge of an effective communication strategy is

appropriate in these channels. But if ignored, the diversity of internal communication channels can damage the workplace environment and produce inefficiency due to confusion and misunderstanding (Welch, 2012). Effective communication techniques therefore support creative thinking and enhance internal communication within businesses (Hallahan et al., 2007).

4.6.2 *Lack of knowledge of KEFRI organogram*

In as much as an organization organogram guides on communication structures, it was evident that most employees at KEFRI are not aware of its existence or what it entails. The organogram ought to be hanged predominantly where every employees is able to see, read and understand. This way all employees will be able to know how communication flows. This was evident from one of the respondent;

What is an organogram again? This is a new term and for sure am not aware of what it is. This are some of the things that need to be impacted in us like injections so that we are able to follow and avoid going contrary (R3 f).

Organizational structure determines the manner and extent to which roles, power, and responsibilities are delegated, controlled, and coordinated, and shows how information flows between the levels of management. Organizational structure can boost coordination of communication, decisions, and actions. Effective communication within organizations and between people leads to increased understanding and more satisfying relationships (Tseng & Lee, 2011). Communication is a major shaping force in the organization. Davelas (2002) stated that “the level of interaction among members of an organization is influenced by the structuring of channels of communication.” Therefore, choosing the appropriate communication channels is the key to communication efficiency (Johnson & Lederer, 2005).

4.6.3 *Lack of ICT Skills Infrastructure*

Most of the respondents in the auxiliary level are lacking ICT skills causing them some difficulties in the use of computers and other electronic gadgets that would enable them communicate with ease. Some staff on the other hand are just ignorant of what is happening in the electronic era and are not interested at all.

You will find a staff having a computer at his/her disposal throughout since probably it's an extra equipment in that office, but he/she is not interested in knowing even how it's opened. Now, how would such an employee be assisted? Showing some interest on something also motivates implementation (R2 g).

The effective and efficient management of day-to-day activities in organizations depends heavily on ICT (information and communication technology) skills, which are in high demand. It is clear that ICT is important for organizational management globally (Empirica, 2006). ICT training is a valuable asset that every employee should have if they want to fulfill their duties effectively and efficiently. The goal of ICT integration is to raise the level of information delivery within an organization and increase its quality, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness. It also refers to networking benefits for addressing the challenges of current globalization (Albirini, 2006).

4.6.4 *Lack of equipment/working tools*

It is evident that it's pretty hard to find a functional computer machine relying idle in an office or an office mobile phone that is secluded for office communications only. This imparts to delayed opportunities for those with skills or are willing to self-train. A common controlled computer pool in KEFRI where staff would access their stuff would help in communication. With equipment, senior officers could cultivate a

culture of using electronic to convey messages to the junior staff and demand for reply through the same channel to make them conversant with them.

Resources and materials as well as tools and equipment are necessary in order to complete a task but regardless of the profession, no tasks can be done well without the right tools (Vallance & Duncan, 2017). Without the proper tools, employees are forced to rely on what is available to them, which can result in ineffective, slow work that could also lead to incorrect task completion, which is something that businesses would obviously prefer to avoid. One of the most common complaints of employees is that they lack the tools & resources to do their jobs effectively (Woods, 2018). Employees find it hard to meet the given expectation without the help of the proper tools. If a manager fails to ensure the employee's needs, the employee will lose its productivity. Employees might think that they spend their time dealing with the broken system leaving them unable to bring the value they can in the company (Woods, 2018).

4.6.5 Lack of Feedback

Lack of proper feedback is also a challenge that causes a gap. This is usually as a result of failure to understand the message, ignorance or not sure whom you are supposed to give a feedback. Responses serves a number of purposes, including assisting the communicator in assessing how well the employees have achieved their objectives and demonstrating how well they work with their teams, coworkers, and managers. Regardless of the quality of the feedback, it is crucial.

For management, it is important to not only receive feedback but to act on it. Surveys are useless if their results are ignored. The aim of collecting feedback should be to use it as a difference-maker as well as improvement enhancer (R1c).

Receiving some information that require feedback and failing to respond would appear as ignorance hence discontinuity of communication. Feedback to any communication is vital and lack of it definitely causes gaps (R1 d).

Effective feedback, both positive and negative, is very beneficial because it gives crucial information for future critical decisions. The best-performing businesses consistently use feedback to improve themselves, which is why they are the best-performing businesses. Employee feedback can be severely constrained by poor communication, which can also impede their work. Employees who receive little management feedback may not fully comprehend their current actions and continue to perform below the manager's expectations.

4.6.6 *An overload of information*

According to findings, there was a concern on overloads of information relayed especially by the top and middle managers. Some employees stated that they would literally wish to avoid some messages since they don't know how and what to respond. It is crucial for the person delivering the message to understand what information actually needs to be shared, when and with whom, and to filter it appropriately. Therefore, communicating specific information on specific channels is beneficial. The majority of organizations believe that as long as they are consistently communicating, a high information flow is sufficient. O'Reilly's (2006) research shows that an open flow of information within the organization is ideal. The recipients might not pay the attention necessary to the information, though, if the employees receive more information than is optimal. Information loss will result from this.

How a senior officer communicates to a junior officer is different from how a junior officer communicates to a senior officer. Likewise, the response that a senior officer would give to a junior officer is not the same response he/she would expect from the junior officer. Therefore, relevance in every communication is vital if appropriate feedback is expected (R2 c).

Giving back is caring. Employees' respect for one another, the workplace environment, and communication all automatically improve when they are encouraged to share their experiences. Imagine a workplace where employees don't share; that must be extremely dangerous, even to the staff members' lives (R2 e).

When a junior officer talks to a senior officer and he/she listens without interjecting the junior officer feels half way assisted, honoured and respected. But if they are not given an opportunity to even explain themselves, sincerely they get demoralized and feel neglected. It's important to give equal opportunities to staff when it comes to communication (R3 e).

KEFRI needs capable communicators if they are to succeed. Organizations depend on their members' ability to communicate effectively and efficiently, according to research on organizational communication. The most sought-after abilities by those in charge of organizations are good oral and written communication, according to several surveys (Davis & Miller; Holter & Kopka; Perrigo & Gaut).

4.7 Suggestions on improving the organizational communication at KEFRI

An organization's internal communication is crucial to achieving its goals and objectives. The term "organizational communication" refers to both formal and informal interactions between and among employees as well as communications from employees to management (Karanges et al., 2003). Theoretically, businesses should implement directives that allow for precise information to be transmitted and received by employees in order to facilitate effective communication. As a result, in order for an organization to succeed, it must develop comprehensive policies for communicating with all parties involved in carrying out day-to-day business operations. Effective organizational communication is directly related to employees' motivation and performance, according to a 2016 study by Ramadanty and Martinus. Organizational communication and business strategy go hand in hand, and consistent and efficient business operations are a significant driver of performance and

profitability. According to Jiang and Men (2016), an organization's effective communication channels boost employee morale, convey messages consistent with its culture, vision, and mission, and establish a solid reputation as an employer brand.

Respondents noted that for communication strategies to succeed in KEFRI, they must be demand driven, people focused, integrated, flexible, transparent and easy to understand. Attitude should also change in that utterance out of hatred or disgust should be avoided since this is what brings wars and misunderstandings. Respect (which should be two-way) ought to be core in every communication. The senior staff/management should know how to handle junior staff while they weigh how and what they communicate to them since they can also cause problems. Communication is two-way and there must be the sender, receiver and of course feedback, this is core. Generally, adopting proper communication channels and patterns in the institute would arrest all the problems.

“Let’s make good use of the Institute’s organogram” that’s why it is in place to guide staff on how among other things communication should flow. If not so, some of the staff will fall victims of intimidation and feel undermined or underrated (R2 c).

4.8 Summary

This chapter presented the findings based on the research objective, which formulate my research questions as were: How is the organizational communication of KEFRI conducted; what are the perceptions of employees on organizational communication at KEFRI; and how can the existing organizational communication in KEFRI be improved. Below is the summary of key findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Overview

This chapter presents summary of key findings, conclusions and recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations drawn are based on each specific objective and research questions of the study. Areas for further research that were identified are also captured in this chapter.

5.1 Summary of key findings

This study investigated the employee's perceptions of organizational communication at KEFRI. By analyzing the results, the following were the key findings:

The study found that organizational communication in KEFRI has an internal communication strategy to address the day-to-day means of disseminating information among staff members within the Institute. These include Telephone calls, memos, circulars, emails, and internal meetings. To ensure that all its clients continue accessing information, products, and services, KEFRI has established a Communication Strategy to guide the institution in internal and external communication. This Communication Strategy acts as both framework and basis for the Institute's entire communication effort to support KEFRI's corporate strategy, including its mission, vision, and core values.

The Institute has identified communication goals, key objectives, and potential communication methods. The intention, first, is to improve KEFRIs' visibility through

the adoption of communication fronts that strengthen information flow and knowledge exchange between KEFRI and its stakeholders. Secondly, to enhance working relationships, engagements, service delivery, and monitoring and evaluation mechanism. Thirdly, ensure all stakeholders are reached, and all key messages are communicated effectively. This strategy also outlines communication approaches that the Institute will apply in undertaking research and disseminating information to meet stakeholders' needs and dynamics and contribute to the realization of Vision 2030 aspiration. The principles shall also be used across KEFRI in the regulation, production, processing, and marketing functions by those who seek or deliver products and services.

The study found that most participants were neither aware of the existence of the strategy nor the content of the KEFRI communication strategy. They expressed their desire to know what it entails and follow the correct communication patterns set in the Institute. According to findings, this strategy emphasizes encouraging customer feedback, staff being one of them. The plan also calls for effectiveness, clarity, efficiency, transparency, and integrity in handling communications. It further advocates for high levels of accountability and responsibility in communicating and supporting recipients' feedback. Bringing the staff to full knowledge of the strategy would enable them to follow the set patterns comfortably and conveniently.

The organogram guides communication in KEFRI. While all official communication should be addressed to the Director, it stipulates the communication flow, which would be either upwards, downwards, or horizontal. KEFRI, a research Institution whose mandate is to disseminate research findings, has well-established communication channels. The Institute is committed to successfully implementing a

communication strategy that integrates various communication channels and methods to communicate research findings to the internal and external public successfully. Communication at KEFRI is usually done through letters, telephones, memos, emails, social media (WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter), SMS, publications, reports, newsletters, and meetings.

KEFRI has developed state-of-the-art infrastructure on ICT and adopted the use of emails as one of its critical communication channels. As long as you have an internet connection, emails are typically quick, easy, allow for easy referencing, and are accessible from anywhere. They are therefore the best option. Emails can be sent and received from any computer with internet access, no matter where it is.

The findings also demonstrate that KEFRI regularly engages in face-to-face communication for both formal and informal purposes. Employees use face-to-face communication to convey information that is related to the official business of the Institute (Feedback on reports etc.). Employees prefer face-to-face as there are fewer chances of misinterpretation or misunderstanding. The study further found that it is a convenient and cheap way of passing information to employees. The findings suggested that verbal communication also helps clear up an issue faster without so many back-and-forth explanations, thus connecting the employees and removing the gap of understanding between them. In addition, verbal communication helps to solve problems quicker and amicably.

In KEFRI, departmental meetings are convened to evaluate performances and discuss work plans, among other department issues. The sessions are scheduled mainly quarterly or when the need arises. Departmental seminars are beneficial since they

allow information exchange, announcements, or departmental decision-making. However, if they are used to obstruct others, demonstrate status or power, or encourage work avoidance, they could be harmful. (by meeting just because the meeting has been scheduled) (R1 d).

At the junior staff level, findings indicate that most respondents know all possible communication channels within the Institute. However, most employees receive a lot of information through the grapevine. They suggested that a defined communication pattern is essential to avoid a mix-up of communications. At KEFRI, some of the challenges that exist in contact are; shortage of awareness of the existing communication strategy, lack of knowledge of the Institute's organogram, lack of ICT skills and lack of equipment/working tools to execute communication, and sometimes lack feedback and an overload of information.

Most of the respondents in the auxiliary level lack ICT skills, causing them difficulties in using computers and other electronic gadgets that would enable them to communicate efficiently. On the other hand, some staff are just ignorant of what is happening in the electronic era and are not interested at all. You will find a team having a computer at their disposal throughout since probably it's an extra piece of equipment in that office, but they are not interested in knowing even how it's opened. Now, how would such an employee be assisted? Showing some interest in something also motivates implementation (R2 g).

Lack of proper feedback is also a challenge that causes a gap. This is usually a result of failure to understand the message, ignorance, or not being sure to whom you are supposed to give feedback. Response is important on many levels because it not only helps the communicator assess how well the employees have achieved their objectives

but also demonstrates how well they work with their teams, coworkers, and managers. Regardless of the quality of the criticism, it is crucial to act.

According to findings, there was a concern about overloads of information relayed, especially by the top and middle managers. Some employees said they would wish to avoid some messages since they don't know how and what to respond. The conveyer of a message needs to filter information according to what information needs to be shared, when it needs to be shared, and where it needs to go. Therefore, sharing specific information on specific channels is beneficial.

The specific objectives of the study were; to establish the nature of organizational communication at KEFRI, to assess employee's perception to organizational communication at KEFRI and determine gaps and challenges in the organizational communication at KEFRI and ways of improving it.

5.1.1 Objective one: To investigate how communication is carried out at KEFRI.

The channels of communication in KEFRI were well understood and known to employees especially due to the fact that they are the day to day ways of relaying information. However, employees had different views on the patterns of communication. Some had a feeling that the nature of communication is effective and efficient, while others felt that some improvement ought to be done. There was an expression of engaging more than one communication patterns to try and suit all employees at all levels. However, basically there was a common argument that patterns of communication depend entirely on what an organization feels suits it most.

5.1.2 Objective two: To determine how employees perceive to organizational communication. Employees in KEFRI felt like communication in the organization is not really based on patterns but on how different levels of employees relates with each other. There was also a feeling that the approach to whom you communicate to or with depends on seniority and how well managers are relating with junior officers. According to some employees if a manager whether top or middle has confidence with his/her junior officer, communication could flow more easily and it could be stronger. However, if employees could be made more informed on the patterns of communication in place, then relaying of information would be efficient and very effective.

Downward communication serves to provide employees with directives, policy statements, and performance feedback (Katz & Kahn, 1966), while upward communication allows employees to point to the internal contradictions and problems that beset their organizations (Tourish, Craig, & Amernic, 2010). It influences personnel and operational decisions, as well as adjustments in policies and strategy (Glauser, 1984). Therefore, it's important that employees learn to adopt the communication pattern in place.

5.1.3 Objective three: To determine the challenges affecting organizational communication in KEFRI. Communication and collaboration go hand in hand and sometimes organizations need a tune up to maximize the talking and open conversation amongst employees and teams. By taking steps in the right direction, you'll be on your way to creating a work environment where communication propels collaboration and, in turn, results. Jillian Phipps (2014). KEFRI experience some challenges and gaps in organizational communication ranging from; lack of proper

feedback due to either failure to understand the message, ignorance or not sure whom to respond to. Emails are also at times too many causing an overload, hence communication overload; this might cause delays or improper feedbacks. Some managers also become aloof causing barriers to communicators and disrespect; this not only breaks communication but also relationships.

5.2 Discussion

Understanding employees' perceptions to organizational communication in organizations is essential to effective attainment of goodwill and a license to efficiently meet needs of stakeholders. The study specifically used a case study of the Kenya Forestry Research Institute to identify the main difficulties organizational communication faces as a management tool in organizations (KEFRI). At KEFRI, a number of significant problems were discovered that prevented effective communication;

5.2.1 Nature of Organizational Communication

5.2.1.1 Communication strategy

Communication within KEFRI is guided by among other things the KEFRI Communication Strategy 2014, which aims at enhancing information flow and feedback to adequately meet the needs of both the internal and external stakeholders. This Communication Strategy acts as both framework and basis for the Institute's entire communication effort to support KEFRI's corporate strategy, including its mission, vision and core values. Further the strategy gives guidelines on how communication both internal and external ought to be carried out. The study found out that most the respondents were neither aware of the existence of the strategy nor the

content in the KEFRI communication strategy. Lack of knowledge of the communication strategy leads to poor visibility through adoption of communication fronts thus weakening information flow and knowledge exchange between KEFRI and its stakeholders. Poor understanding of the strategy leads to poor communication within the institute consequently leading to the institute being unable to realize its second mandate of dissemination of research findings. The staff require a core narrative that consistently places strategy within the context of the organization's mission and vision (Sanchez 2004). They become more a part of the group as a result of this. According to Moorcroft (2003), the most important factor is whether this information reaches and wins the support of employees in order to achieve its maximum effectiveness, regardless of how brilliant the business strategy may sound. The strategy may not be fully understood, which could result in poor staff relationships and conflicts.

5.2.1.2 Communication patterns

The lines of communication in an organization are represented by communication patterns, which are structures. They depict the flow of messages within an organization and between an organization and other organizations. Communication in KEFRI is guided by the organogram. Organogram is an important management tools within organizations which shows the command structure as well as guide on communication flow. Results from this study showed that most employees at KEFRI were not aware of its existence of the organogram. This was it was evidenced by this respondent who said: *What is an organogram again? This is a new term and for sure am not aware of what it is. This are some of the things that need to be impacted in us like injections so that we are able to follow and avoid going contrary (R3 f).* Poor

understanding of the organogram leads to poor communication among staff at different levels. This may lead to misunderstanding between officers at different levels. The results of the study demonstrate that KEFRI's organizational information flow had a gap. According to research by Abugre (2011), Goldhaber (2008), Goris & Petit (2002) across a variety of American organizations, the flow of information from top management down and the level of employee knowledge are directly related to employee effectiveness in task completion as well as job satisfaction. Therefore, when it comes to employee communication effectiveness, vertical information flow, which includes top-down and up-down communication, horizontal information flow, and diagonal information all have their own unique advantages.

5.2.1.3 Channels of communication

Communication channels are the means through which people in an organization receive/send information. KEFRI being a research Institution whose mandate is to disseminate research findings has well established communication channels. The research found out that internal communication channels at KEFRI are mainly through letters, telephones, memos, emails, social media (WhatsApp, facebook, twitters), SMS, publications, reports, newsletters and meetings. However, letters, telephones, memos, emails were the most commonly used. This is mainly attributed to the factor that they are the conventional methods applied in most Government institutions in the country. There is already an established infrastructure, culture, easy to use. The above results are a clear pointer to the fact sometimes it takes long for newly introduced technological changes to be taken up. There is a need for the institute to improve on infrastructure on the use of social media for staff at the lower levels. WhatsApp is becoming critically important at all levels both for official and unofficial communiqué.

5.2.2 Perceptions of employees on organizational communication at KEFRI

Perception is the tendency to which someone comprehends, assesses, or rates something. In this instance, it refers to how KEFRI employees perceive or comprehend the institution's use of communication channels and patterns. KEFRI has three distinct levels of management: operational management, middle management, and low management. The top management is responsible for creating institutional policies, establishing rules and strategic goals, as well as offering leadership and guidance for the organization's quality management system processes. Middle-level managers are in charge of carrying out organizational plans that adhere to corporate policies. Additionally, they serve as a liaison between upper-level and lower-level management. While the low-level staff concentrates on completing tasks and producing results, keep the workspace safe and organized, monitor safe item usage, general office cleanliness, safe item usage, and equipment maintenance. The study's findings revealed that the three levels of management had different perspectives on organizational communication. This is mainly attributed to their cadre, level of exposure, knowledge, and skills.

Results from the study showed that top management understands the communication strategy and organogram as they played a critical role in the development this document. In addition, they are conversant and frequently use all communication channels within the institute. Findings showed that the middle managers believe that proper communication to the upper and lower cadres is important for delivery of outputs and smooth running of the institute. They highlighted that if the communication strategy is well followed, it would provide better understanding of

how communication within the organization should be carried out. According to Pettit et al. (2002:81), an employee's perception of a supervisor's communication style, tone, and accuracy as well as the communication structure within the company will, in part, affect how effective the employee is and how satisfied the employee is with his or her work.

The junior level typically had some issues distinguishing between communication channels, organizational patterns, and organograms; this was primarily caused by ignorance and a lack of exposure. Similar to the upper level, the lower level appears to be at ease using traditional communication channels and methods (letters, memos, telephones). According to the study's findings, low-level management was more at ease using the grapevine. According to Barnard (2008), the official organizational structures have failed to adequately address some important aspects of communication in an organization. It is important for leaders to have the guts to hear what is being said within the company. Employees can express their emotions through this type of communication. It would offer a method for the management to understand the atmosphere within the company. So that there is no misunderstanding within the company, management is able to respond with feedback that is accurate and reliable (Stevenson and Gilly 2006).

5.2.3 Challenges facing employees in organizational communication at KEFRI

Results showed that there are several challenges facing employees in communication at KEFRI. These include lack of awareness of the communication strategy as well as the Institute's organogram. In addition, the results showed other challenges as inadequate ICT skills, lack of equipment/working tools, lack of feedback and overload of information. Many of the employees are not aware of the existence as well as the

content of a communication strategy. This was evident through a respondent who suggested;

“We need sensitization of the communication strategy; it could even be printed into small handbooks that one can carry along for familiarization purposes. Further translation into Kiswahili could be done for better understanding of it and that way proper communication would be a sure bet”.

Lack of ICT capacity by some employees in KEFRI is another barrier to effective communication and especially the junior officers. Training and capacity building on basic use of computers and other ICT accessories would ease communication flow. Building the capacity of junior staff in the use of ICT and provision of ICT equipment, will could cultivate a culture of using electronic media to effectively communicate to other staff members. Lack of proper and timely feedback was reported to be a major challenge leading to communication breakdown. It was evident that feedback is important as a respondent who stated that;

Receiving some information that require feedback and failing to respond would appear as ignorance hence discontinuity of communication. Feedback to any communication is vital and lack of it definitely causes gaps (R1 d).

Results also showed that there was an overload of information mainly through emails social media-mainly. This was mainly observed at the midlevel management. Too much information coming from the top management as well as inquiries from the lower levels some leads to confusion as well as stress. According to Gold Haber (2008), successful organizations and businesses prioritize a small number of key messages. Management in these organizations always communicates clearly and consistently, and they confirm that everyone involved understands the objectives and how to achieve them. The majority of organizations believe that as long as communication is constant and information flow is high, that is sufficient. Unrestricted

information flow within the organization is ideal, according to studies done by O'Reilly (2006). However, if this information is given to recipients in excess of what is necessary, they might not pay it the necessary attention. This would lead to the most crucial information occasionally being overlooked. Consequently, leadership should exercise extreme caution in order to grab workers' attention without endangering a productive line of communication (Pettit and Vaught 2000). In order to avoid what the respondents noted as not being able to understand all of the information, management should always filter out information that needs more explanation. Employees in an organization may experience communication overload or underload, according to Goris & Vaught's 2007 study. Both scenarios could have a negative impact on their ability to perform their job.

5.3 Conclusion

The research concluded that, the channels of communication at KEFRI were well understood and known to employees especially due to the fact that they are their day to day ways of relaying information. However, employees had different views on the patterns of communication. Some had a feeling that the nature of communication is effective and efficient, while others felt that some improvement ought to be done. Majority had an expression of engaging more than one communication pattern which they felt that it suited all employees at all levels. Employees at KEFRI were of the opinion that communication in the organization is not really based on patterns but on how different levels of employees relate with each other. There was also sentiment that the kind of approach you apply to communicate enhance how well managers relate with junior officers. According to some employees if a manager whether top or middle has confidence with his/her junior officer, communication flows smoothly and

has a personalized touch. However, if employees could be sensitized on the patterns of communication, then relaying of information would have more effective. Employees at KEFRI experience some challenges and gaps in organizational communication ranging from; lack of proper feedback due to either failure to understand the message, ignorance or not sure whom to respond to. Emails are also at times too many causing an overload, hence communication overload; this might cause delays or improper feedbacks. Managers could consider surveying employees under them regularly and get to know whether they are obtaining the knowledge they require. Most people require multiple exposures to a message in various formats before they fully comprehend it. A culture of distributing messages electronically ought to be adopted so as to keep all employees on toes hence build their urge for ICT literacy.

5.4 Recommendations

As much as improving organizational communication won't happen overnight, to maintain a dynamic corporate communication culture, and internal communication for effective synchronized message delivery, KEFRI could take the following steps;

- i) Sensitize employees more on the patterns of communication particularly one that is used in KEFRI to avoid the different views on the patterns between the different levels of management. Due to the desire by some employees to have more than one communication pattern, inclusion in policy and strategy making could be important.
- ii) The organization should plan to sensitize staff on the importance of communication strategy and proper patterns of communication. These would help clear the notion by the employees that communication in the organization is not necessarily based on any pattern but on how managers are relating with the

managers. The strategy could also be translated into Kiswahili language to make it easier for all staff at all levels to understand.

- iii) The challenges of communication at KEFRI that cause gaps ought to be addressed. These could be poor feedback as a result of probably not understanding the messages, ignorance or not sure whom to respond to. Information overload causing delays in responses ought to be addressed.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

Ideal communication strategy practices play a pivotal role to employees since it is the backbone of every organization. The factors analysed included: patterns of communication, channels of communication, perception of employees towards the organizational communication in place and the challenges therein. The relevance of the study is to improve, motivate, enlighten and change the way people think and take communication hence improving the relationship between employees. Having worked in Corporate Affairs and Communications office has exposed me to work related challenges that enabled me to gain vast knowledge and experience in the field of communication studies. It is against this background that extreme care was undertaken to ensure that no external interference infiltrated this study. Handling of more critical and analytical issues in the field of communication studies has greatly been impacted in me. This study has empowered a lot of experience through field work hence enabling broader horizons in terms of conducting in-depth interviews, observations and document analysis.

With KEFRI as a case study, this study was restricted to state-owned organisations in Kenya. It is possible to conduct a similar study in other state corporations to see if the same outcomes will be attained.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. SENIOR MANAGEMENT

- i. What is the nature of organizational communication at KEFRI?
- ii. What are the adopted channels of organizational communication in the institute?
- iii. What are the predominant patterns of communication in the organization?
- iv. What is the policy on organizational communication at the institute?
- v. How is communication policy implemented in the organizations?
- vi. What are your perceptions about organizational communication at KEFRI?
- vii. What challenges or gaps do you feel exist in organizational communication at KEFRI?
- viii. How can the existing organizational communication at KEFRI be improved?

2. MIDDLE MANAGEMENT

- i. What channels does the top management use in communicating with the middle managers?
- ii. What channels do you use in communicating with the top managers?
- iii. What channels do you use in communicating with the junior employees?
- iv. What are your feelings about the channels of communication?
- v. What patterns of communication are commonly used in the organization?
- vi. What are your feelings about the patterns of communication?
- vii. Overall, what are your views on organizational communication at KEFRI?
- viii. What gaps do you feel exist in organizational communication at KEFRI?
- ix. How can the existing organizational communication at KEFRI be improved?

3. JUNIOR EMPLOYEES

- i. How do you normally communicate with fellow employees in the organization?
- ii. Are there policies on how you should communicate within the organization?
- iii. What channels does the top management use in communicating with you; and what channels do you use in communicating with your seniors?
- iv. What are your views about the channels of communication in the organization?
- v. What are your views about the patterns of communication in the organization?
- vi. Overall, how do you feel about the communication within the organization?
- vii. What gaps do you feel exist in organizational communication at KEFRI?
- viii. How can the existing organizational communication at KEFRI be improved?

APPENDIXII. NACOSTI RESEARCH PERMIT



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/19/64797/26523**

Date: **17th January, 2019**

Margaret Wambui Njenga
Moi University
P.O Box 3900-30100
ELDORET

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Employees perceptions to organizational communication. A case study of Kenya Forestry Research Institute”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu County** for the period ending **17th January, 2020**.

You are advised to report to the **Director, Kenya Forestry Research Institute, the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kiambu County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The Director
Kenya Forestry Research Institute.

The County Commissioner
Kiambu County.



**MOI UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL INFORMATION SCIENCES
NAIROBI CAMPUS**

Tel: (053) 43153

P.O Box 63056-00200
NAIROBI
KENYA

Fax: (053) 43153

MU/NRB/IS/SA/14

22nd October 2018

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
Utalii House
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH PERMIT
MARGARET WAMBUI NJENGA – SHRD/PGC/044/16**

This is to confirm that the above named is a Postgraduate student of Moi University, School of Information Sciences, Department of Communication Studies. Ms. Njenga is pursuing a Master of Science in Communication Studies course offered at Nairobi campus.

The student successfully defended her proposal and is due to proceed for her research data collection. The research Title is – **“Employee perceptions of organizational communication: A Case of Kenya Forestry Research Institute.”**

The student is in the process of obtaining a research permit to enable her visit the identified research centers. The University shall highly appreciate any assistance accorded to her.

Yours faithfully,


**DR. JARED OBUYA
COORDINATOR, COMMUNICATION STUDIES
NAIROBI CAMPUS**



KENYA FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Tel: +254 20 2010651/2
+254 722 157 414
+254 724 259 781/2
+254 734 251 888
Email: director@kefri.org
Website: www.kefri.org



P. O. Box 20412
00200, Nairobi
KENYA

Ref: ..KEFRI/1/09/VOL.I/(85).....

Date:20th November 2018.....

Margaret Njenga
Kenya Forestry Research Institute
P. O. Box 20412 – 00200
NAIROBI

Dear Ms. Njenga

RE: ACCESS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR INSTITUTE

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 2nd November 2018 in relation to the above mentioned subject.

I am pleased to inform you that your request to conduct research at Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) has been approved.

Please avail a copy of your results to KEFRI once you complete your research to enable us improve on our communication systems.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Jane W. Njuguna (PhD)
Ag. DIRECTOR – KEFRI

PLAGIARISM REPORT

SR/240



ISO 9001:2015 Certified Institution

EDU 999 THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

MARGARET WAMBUI NJENGA

SHRD/PGC/044/16

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for thesis: STAFF PERCEPTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE with a similarity index of 5% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Awarded by:

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu

CERM-ESA Project Leader Date: 07/08/2023