Relationship between Communication Channels and Strategy Implementation among Parastatals / State Corporations in Kenya

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ABSTRACT: *Communication can be termed as the gate pass which describes the responsibilities and tasks that employees need to undertake in order to fulfil a company's business strategy. It becomes strategic when it assists top management in achieving the vision and mission and managing relationships with key publics in the organization's environment. This article therefore examines the relationship between communications channels and strategy implementation by focusing on the effects of formal meetings, internal publications, CEO address, communication through immediate supervisors, grapevines, strategic plans, Memos/emails/websites, seminars/workshops inbuilt employee work plans, notice boards and no communication at all on strategy implementation and specifically how each of the channels impacts strategy implementation. The study results reveal that there is a direct influence of communication channels on the implementation of business strategy among parastatals in Kenya leading to a conclusion that the communication channels used by organizations, as prescribed in the communication policy, are an important variable to be considered during implementation of business strategy. The findings also reveal that communication channels must be backed by other variables and resources to implement the formulated strategy in order to achieve any results*
Keywords: Strategic Communication, Communication Channels, Strategy Implementation

I. Introduction

Strategy implementation has been defined as the communication, interpretation, adoption, and enactment of strategic plans. Implementing a strategy is tougher and more time-consuming than strategy-making. Each implementation situation occurs in a different context, affected by diverse factors such as business practices and competitive situations, work environments, communication and cultures (Okumus, 2001; Yang Li et al. 2008).

Communication becomes strategic when it assists top management to achieve the vision and mission; and managing relationships with key publics in the organization's environment. It is vital for employees to be cognizant of how their work effort fits into the goals of the organization and management. Employees must be kept abreast with new changes implemented for them to remain enthused and interested in the organization for successful implementation of business strategy (Hamid, 2009; Ndiso, 2015). This can only be achieved through effective and sustained communication networks. The purposeful use of communication makes it strategic. This means that communication must then be aligned with the company's overall strategy to enhance its strategic position and successfully implement strategies (Argenti, 2005; Hallahan, 2007). Only through knowledge and understanding of the communication process are the parties in a communication process likely to achieve their objectives of influencing attitudes, knowledge and behaviour. Lack of well-planned communication results in insufficient information, delayed information, inconsistent and unclear information. With the aim of persuading, this is a critical reason why organizations need to communicate effectively with a strategic consensus.

Parastatals in Kenya continue to grapple with how to choose appropriate communication channels that would elicit feedback and not delay implementation of strategy resulting in poor delivery of strategic goals (MENWNR, 2014). There is still insufficient research explaining the importance of different communication mechanisms and channels for the transferring strategic information. This research fills that void by examining the relationship between strategic communication mechanisms and implementation of strategy. The objective of this study therefore is to evaluate the relationship between the types of communication channels used and their effect on business strategy implementation among parastatals in Kenya.

Theory and Hypothesis

This study was anchored on resource based view of the firm, communication theory and the systems theory.

Resource based view (RBV) theory

The theory posits that competitive advantage stems from firm-specific resources that a company owns and that assure its uniqueness in its sector (Rumelt, 1984; Barney, 1991), and that a sustainable competitive advantage requires the ownership of resources and the ability of a company to access, use, exchange and combine them (Teece & Pisano, 1994). Strategic communication as a resource in relation to this theory can therefore facilitate effective communication among colleagues; common trust and shared values enable knowledge creation which forms a basis of competitive advantage for the firm (Snell et al., 2001; Mazzei, 2010).

Communication Theory

According to Shannon and Weaver (1948) communication is the process by which individuals share meaning. It is a transactional process between two or more parties whereby meaning is exchanged through the intentional use of symbols; with information exchange an intentional and deliberate effort to bring about a response. This theory asserts that communication is a social process of interaction and/or interpretation that gives sense and meaning to social reality, organizational actions, events and organizational roles and processes (Mazzei, 2010). It also points out that employees sanction processes to negotiate meanings and make the organization operate, further suggesting that the responsibility of the strategic communication is not controlled only by managers but by all members of the organization through interactive work related assignments.

Systems Theory

The foundation of this theory is that all the components of an organization are interrelated, and changing one variable brings changes to other variables. Organizations are viewed as open systems continually interacting with their environment and in a state of dynamic equilibrium as they adapt to environmental changes.

Parastatals are like other open systems; they respond to the internal and external communication influences as they attempt to achieve their strategic objectives. Competitive organization behaviour is strongly linked to the capacity to recognize and manage functions and relationships, thereby establishing effective and reliable communication channels, organizing information flow, and rationalizing and harmonizing a firm's development aligned with all external relationships as the strategy is implemented.

Besides the three theories highlighted, Okumu (2001) strategy implementation framework and Noble's (1996) Framework for Strategy implementation were used to respectively inform communication and strategy implementation.

Okumus Strategy Implementation Framework

Okumus (2001) identified ten variables which have a direct impact on the strategy implementation process outcome. These variables are strategy development, organizational structure, environmental uncertainty, leadership, organizational culture, operational planning, resource allocation, communication, control people and the outcome. Under this framework, communication is classified under the strategic process. Communication is the mechanism that sends formal and informal messages about the new strategy. Issues considered here include communication materials like operational plans, training programs and incentives; use of clear messages when passing vital information to people, implications of using multiple modes of communication, problems related to communication and their causes; and the impact of organizational structure, culture and leadership on selling the new strategy. Through effective communications, organizations are able to control operations receive and give feedback which constitute the formal and informal mechanisms that allow the efforts and results of strategy implementation to be monitored and compared against predetermined objectives.

Noble's Framework for Strategy Implementation

Noble (1999b) identified five managerial 'levers' for strategy implementation. These levers are goals, organizational structure, leadership, communication and incentives. Communication plays a critical role because the details of the implementation must be communicated as early and as thoroughly as possible.

Consistent with the literature, we hypothesize that;
H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between communication channels used and implementation of business strategy

II. Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive exploratory approach survey design was used to examine the prevailing situation regarding communication and strategy implementation in parastatals in Kenya. This design was appropriate because it enable comprehensive description of existing communication methods and channels and the extent of

strategy implementation. It also enables the examination of the relationship between communication strategy and strategy implementation.

Population

The population of the study consisted of all the 187 parastatals (headquarters) in Kenya. This unit of analysis was chosen because in spite of public sector organizations having elaborate and well developed strategic plans, their performance has not improved significantly as expected towards attainment of Vision 2030. Secondly, headquarters were best placed to oversee the actual implementation of all strategies. From the target population, 378 employees at all levels were identified as respondents. The target respondents comprised top management, middle management and functional/operational managers in the parastatals in Kenya. These groups of employees were considered appropriate because of their position of accountability for strategic implementation in the different positions they hold. The distribution of the respondent parastatals is presented in Table 1

Table 1 Target population from the 187 parastatals

Table 1: *Parastatals in Kenya*	
Category	Population
Purely commercial	34
Strategic commercial	21
Executive agencies	62
Independent regulatory bodies	25
Research institutions, public universities & tertiary colleges	45
Total	187
Source: Kenya Gazette (2016)	

Sampling Procedure

Sampling serves the purpose of obtaining units to be studied from the whole population. A sampling frame is a list of all sampling units from which a sample is drawn. Probability sampling was used because it allowed calculation of precision of estimates and specification of sample error from the sample (Mugenda, 2008).

Stratified random sampling was also used to select the respondents for the top, middle and functional management levels. This is a technique that identifies subgroups in the population and their proportions and selects from each subgroup to form a sample (Sekaran, 2003; Gay, 1987). It groups a population into separate homogeneous subsets that share similar characteristics and selects from each subgroup so as to ensure equitable representation of the population in the sample.

Sample Determination

Sample size (n) of the study population based on monkey survey sample size calculator (2016) was 126 (one hundred twenty six) derived from a population of 187 parastatals at the confidence level of 95%, z- score of 1.96 and 5% margin of error.

Where, N = population, n =sample size, e= margin of error, z= z score and P= confidence level

$$\text{Sample Size (n)} = \cfrac{\cfrac{z^2 \times p\,(1\text{-}p)}{e^2}}{e^2 N \; \cfrac{1 + \{z^2 \times p\,(1\text{-}p)\}}{\rule{2cm}{0.4pt}}}$$

Strategic function= $\dfrac{21 \times 126}{187}$ = 14.14 = **14**

RI, PU&TC= $\dfrac{45 \times 126}{187}$ = 30. 32 =**30**

Executive agencies= $\dfrac{62 \times 126}{187}$ =41.77 =**42**

Total sample = 126 Parastatals

Sampling was done through identification of target respondents in each parastatal using stratified random sampling. In each parastatal, the population of managers from each stratum was identified for sample size determination. The researcher then developed the sample using proportionate stratification sampling strategy. This ensured that each subgroup characteristics was represented in the sample thus addressing the external validity of the study.

With proportionate stratification, the sample size of each stratum is proportionate to the population size of the stratum. This means that each stratum has the same sampling fraction (Stattrek, 2009). The sample was designed using population proportionate to size (PPS) to ensure that the sample from each category is proportionate with its population of parastatals. This was carried out using a random number generator. The proportionate distribution sample size from each stratum of firms was aggregated to come up with the total sample as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Study sample

Category	No. of sampled Parastatals	Top Level Managers	Middle level Managers	Operational level Managers	Total No.in each parastatal
Purely commercial	23	1	1	1	3
Strategic functions	14	1	1	1	3
Executive agencies	42	1	1	1	3
Independent regulatory bodies	17	1	1	1	3
Research institutions, public Universities & tertiary colleges	30	1	1	1	3
Total	126	-	-	-	378

Source: Researcher (2017)

Data Collection Instruments

Self-administered structured questionnaires were used to collect data from engineers in telecommunication firms. Saunders et al. (2003, 2007) suggest that a questionnaire is good since it provides the opportunity for the respondent to receive feedback and the assurance of the information validity. It guarantees a high response rate, and accurate sampling. Secondary data was collected from parastatals using strategic documents such as strategic plans, balanced score card performance contracts and annual reports.

A questionnaire containing both open-ended and closed questions, as well as 5-point Likert scales was used for collecting primary data. It was divided into seven sections; a general information about the responding parastatal and individual section, a section on background information on strategy implementation in the responding organization and six sections exploring the influence of the five variables under investigation on strategic implementation process in the responding parastatals.

The questionnaire included Likert scale psychometric constructs with a scale ranging from 1 to 5 where each respondent was required to rate each statement given describing a given variable. The scale ranged from 5=Strongly Agree, 4=Agree, 3=Neutral, 2= Disagree and 1=Strongly Disagree. Each item in the psychometric constructs was meant to measure a certain attribute of the main variable. These constructs were set in unambiguous terms allowing the respondents to react to them timeously. At the end of each Likert scale questions, open ended questions were included to allow the respondent give additional information that is not captured in the Likert scales questions. The instrument was appropriate for this study because the target population was largely literate and did not have difficulties with responding to questionnaire items.

Measurement of Variables

The psychometric instruments developed to measure variables in this study were based on the philosophy of pragmatism which focus on the what and how of the research problem. Several statements which attempt to establish the correlation between real objects or processes and the abstract concepts of the theory were developed as psychometric measures of the independent variable (communication activities) and dependent variable (implementation of business strategy) in this study. This is demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Measurement of Variables

Variable	Type of Variable	Measure	Level of Scale	Method of Analysis
Implementation of business strategy	Dependent	-Success/failure rate -Time taken -Understanding of strategy	-Nominal -Ordinal	-Inferential Statistics -Descriptive statistics
Communication channels	Independent	-Types/infrastructure	-Nominal	Inferential Statistics

		-Information flow -Feedback generation -Channel richness -Formality of communication	-Ordinal	

Pilot Testing

A pre-test was conducted on a different sample of similar characteristics to the actual sample (Orodho, 2004). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), the number of cases in the pre-test should range from 1% to 10%. Nine top level managers, nine middle level managers and nine functional level respondents of 3 parastatals in Kenya were used for the pre-test which was approximately 5.4% of the sample size. The 5.4% was obtained through purposive sampling.

Piloting assisted the researcher to establish the validity and reliability of the instrument items. It helped to remove ambiguities of the questions and researcher bias as well as assessing the possible answers and the analysis of data to be collected. As a remedy, the items in the questionnaire were thoroughly revised to identify and isolate similar questions in different variables after which items were further subjected to reliability tests. The pilot sample was not included in the main research data.

Reliability

To establish reliability of the instruments, pre-testing was done during the pilot study. Internal consistency reliability was used to establish reliability where the instruments were tested on nine top level managers, nine middle level managers and nine functional level respondents of three parastatals in Kenya representing approximately 5.4% of the sample size.

Validity

Validity is the extent to which research results can be accurately interpreted and generalized to other populations. It is the extent to which research instruments measure what they are intended to measure (Oso & Onen, 2008). If validity is high, the inferences made based on such data will be accurate and meaningful.

Content validity or sampling validity was ensured by having a range of items that try to measure implementation of business strategy. To establish validity, the instruments were given to two experts to evaluate the relevance of each item on the scale of very relevant (4), quite relevant (3), somewhat relevant (2) and not relevant (1). Validity was determined using Content Validity Index (C.V.I). C.V.I= Items rated 3 or 4 by both judges divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire. This can be symbolized as $n^{3/4} / N$.

The pilot study results were used to refine the instrument to ensure content validity. Further, the examiners during proposal presentation and the supervisors gave expert judgment which helped to improve content validity. The necessary adjustments were then made on the instrument to enhance validity.

Data collection procedures

The study was conducted using self-administered questionnaires through the parent headquarters of parastatals in Kenya. . A questionnaire containing both open-ended and closed questions, as well as 5-point Likert scales was used for collecting primary data.

The target respondents comprised of top management managers, middle management managers and functional/operational managers in sampled parastatals in Kenya. These groups of employees were considered appropriate because of their position on accountability to strategic implementation in the different positions they hold.

Data analysis

Before processing the data, all the questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency and the incomplete ones were excluded from the analysis. Data was coded appropriately as per the responses to different questions. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distributions, mean score, mode, median, variance and standard deviations were used to analyze quantitative data. The results were presented in simple and cross tabulations, charts and frequency distributions.

Qualitative data was coded into different factors and analyzed through computer aided content analysis. The content analysis according to Berelson (1952) is an objective technique that ensures systematic, quantitative description of communication and information. The technique is able to detect the presence of concepts, themes and phrases and quantify them in an objective manner.

The mean score was used to analyze the Likert scale base psychometric constructs ranging from 1-5 and presented in a nominal scale and the Cronbach alpha was used to check the goodness of the data leading to consistency and reliability of measures in the Likert scale psychometric constructs (Cronbach, 1951). An Alfa

level 0.70 and above was used as an acceptable test for reliability and consistency and consistence in the items included in the questionnaire. Inferential statistics (Pearson's correlation analysis and Regression analysis) were used to test variable relationships and influences in the regression analysis.

Study Hypotheses
This studyutilized different testsforhypotheses as presented in Table4

Table 4:Study Hypotheses

Variable	NullHypothesis	TypeofAnalysis	Interpretation
Communication channels	**H0_1.** No significant difference	PearsonCorrelation	$P<0.05$rejectnull
		LinearRegression	$P>0.05$failtorejectnull

Besides the descriptive statistics linear regressionwas used topredicttheextentto whichthe communication channels (X,)influencedthe strategy implementation(Y)throughstrategy implementationinitiativesofthesele cted parastatals. TheinfluenceofXi,i=(4)and Y is expressed in the following functional relationship;

$Y=f(X,\varepsilon)$

Where:
Y is implementation of business strategy
X   is communication channels
Ɛ   is thestochasticdisturbance errorterm

III. Results and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the types of communication channels used and their effect on strategy implementation among parastatals in Kenya.

Response Rate
A total of 378 questionnaires were sent torespondents in 126 parastatals. Out of these, 66 were non responses or incomplete while 312 questionnaires were full answered and valid for data analysis representing a valid response rate of 82%.

Diagnostics Tests
Reliability of instruments. Reliability refers to the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials. According to Zikmund *et.al* (2010), Cronbach coefficient is often used to test reliability. Cronbach's Alpha test was carried out on the three variables so as to a certain their reliability. The measure ranges from 0 to 1 and the higher the coefficient, the more reliable or consistent the construct is. The reliability results are presented in Table 5**.**

Table 5 Reliability Statistics

Constructs	Number of items	Cronbach's Alfa
Implementation of business strategy	10	0.753
Communication activities	13	0.705

The reliability statistics were 0.753 for implementation of business strategy and 0.705 for communication activities both passing the minimum threshold of 0.70 and this meant that they were reliable paving way for full data collection.

Tests of Normality.This section showed the normality test of the residuals. In linear regression analysis, it is assumed that the residuals should be normally distributed. In this study, this assumption was tested using a normal probability plot where, if all the values tend to lie on the straight line cutting across the diagonal, then the residuals are assumed to be normally distributed.
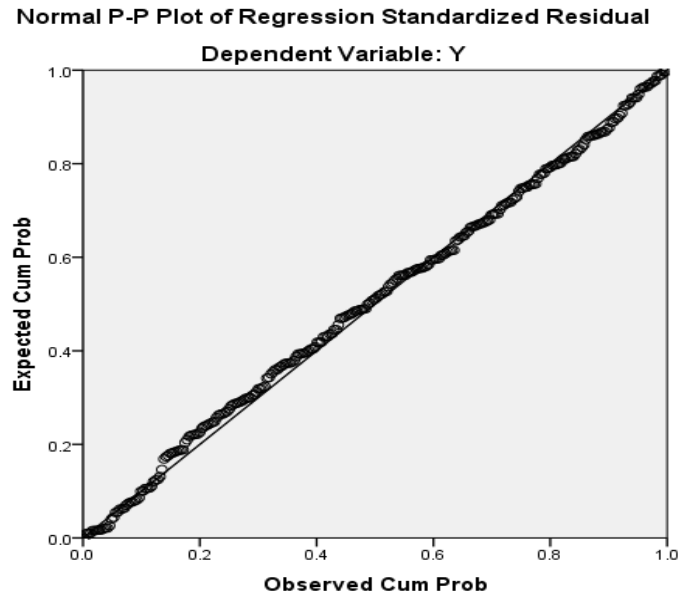
Figure 1: Normal Probability Plot
Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Figure 1show that the points tend to lie on the diagonal line indicating that the residuals were normally distributed hence there was no violation of normality assumption.

Demographics and Descriptive Statistics
In this part we present the demographics of the respondents and the descriptive statistics which show the characteristics of the responses.
Level of education. The distribution of respondents depending on their highest level of education is presented in Table 6

Table 6: Education Level of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
Diploma	44	14.1
Bachelors	139	44.6
Masters	120	38.5
PhD	9	2.9
Total	312	100.0

Source: Research data (2017)

The results of this study in Table 6shows that majority of the respondents were bachelor's degree holders (44.6%), closely followed by master's degree holders (38.5%), diploma holders at 14.1% and the lowest percentage was for the Ph.D. holders at 2.9%. Quite a number of the total respondents were well educated and had a basic understanding of the importance of strategic management practices. Therefore, they were better placed to give adequate and reliable information based on their daily encounters on the past and present strategy implementation experiences from a communication perspective.

Years of Service. Table 7 shows the number of years the respondents have worked in their respective organizations.

Table 7: Respondents working experience

	Frequency	Percent
Below 3 years	61	19.6
4-7 years	112	35.9
8-11 years	65	20.8
12-15 years	21	6.7
Over 16 years	53	17.0
Total	312	100.0

Source: Research data (2017)

The results showed that majority of the respondents (35.9%) had worked between 4-7 years, while the 20 % had working experience ranging from 8-11 years, 19.6% had worked for less than 3 years, 6.7% of the respondents worked between 12-15 years and 17 % above 16 years. This information was important to this study because, experienced staff were assumed to have past and present knowledge of the parastatals strategic plans and implementation activities that determined success of failure of strategy implementation efforts.

Job Designation of Respondents. This section indicated the cadre of the respondents and the results are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Levels of Management

	Frequency	Percent
Senior Managers	62	19.9
Middle Level Managers	118	37.8
Operational/Functional Level Managers	132	42.3
Total	312	100.0

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 8 imply that majority (42.3%) of the respondents were operational/functional level managers; this was followed by middle level managers at 37.8% and the senior managers at 19.9%. It was critical for this study to incorporate all the managers at all the three levels of management because strategy implementation takes place in the entire organization and these respondents were best placed to give relevant and correct information regarding communication about strategy implementation process.

A Cross-tabulation of Gender, Education level and Years of service. The results in Table 9 are a cross-tabulation of Gender, Education level and Years of service for the respondents.

Table 9: A Cross-tabulation of Gender, Education level and Years of service

Years of service	Gender		Education Level				Total
			Diploma	Bachelors	Masters	PhD	
Below 3 years		Male	3	17	11		31
		Female	9	13	8		30
	Total		12	30	19		61
4-7 years		Male	4	39	18	3	64
		Female	10	20	18	0	48
	Total		14	59	36	3	112
8-11 years		Male	4	10	19	2	35
		Female	1	15	14	0	30
	Total		5	25	33	2	65
12-15 years		Male	1	1	6		8
		Female	2	6	5		13
	Total		3	7	11		21
Over 16 years		Male	5	9	12	2	28
		Female	5	9	9	2	25
	Total		10	18	21	4	53
	GRAND TOTALS	Male	17	76	66	7	166
		Female	27	63	54	2	146
			44	139	120	9	312

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 9 reveal that 61 respondents had worked for a period of less than three years with the majority being male. It was also found that majority, 30, of them had bachelors as their highest education level followed by those who had Masters and those with diplomas respectively. Again, in the category of those who had a working service of four to seven years, there were a total of 112 respondents. Majority of them, 64, were male. It was also found that majority, 59, of them had bachelors as their highest education level followed by those who had Masters being 36 followed by those with diplomas and finally those with PhDs were the least of all. This category had the majority of the respondents as compared to all the others. In the category of the respondents who had worked for a period of 8-11 years, 65 in total, 30 were female. It was also found that majority, 33, of them had Master's Degree as their highest education level followed by those who had bachelors, followed by those who had diplomas and finally those who had PhDs. For the category of those who had a working service of 12-15 years, they were 21 in total. It was also found that majority, 11, of them had Master's Degree as their highest education level followed by those who had bachelors, five, followed by those who had diplomas, three. Finally on the category of the respondents who had a working service of over 16 years, 53,

male were 28. Again, those with master's degree were found to be the majority, followed by those with bachelors, diplomas and PhDs in that order.

In conclusion, majority of the respondents were male and majority of the respondents had Bachelors degree as their highest education level. It was also observed that with increase in the number of working years, education level also increases. This accumulated experience was critical for these respondents to give the correct information regarding strategy implementation in relation to communication.

A Cross-tabulation of Gender, Education level and Level of Management. The results in Table 10 are a cross-tabulation of Gender, Education level and level of management for the respondents.

Table 10: Gender, Education and Level of Management: Cross-tabulation

Level of Management			Education Level				Total
			Diploma	Bachelors	Masters	PhD	
Senior		Male	4	4	29	4	41
		Female	1	7	12	1	21
	Total		5	11	41	5	62
Middle		Male	3	23	27	2	55
		Female	10	29	22	1	62
	Total		13	52	49	3	117
Operational		Male	10	49	10	1	70
		Female	16	27	20	0	63
	Total		26	76	30	1	133
		Male	17	76	66	7	166
		Female	27	63	54	2	146
	Total		44	139	120	9	312

Source: Research data (2017)

The study results in Table 10 infer majority of the respondents, 133, were operational managers followed by middle level managers and lastly senior managers. Among the senior managers, it was found that majority of them, 41, were male while female were 21. It was also found that majority of the respondents, 41, had their highest education level being a Master's degree, followed by those who had bachelor's degree, 11, followed by those who had diplomas and PhDs. Among the middle level managers, it was found that majority of them, 62, were female while males were 55. It was also found that majority of the respondents, 52, had their highest education level being a bachelor's degree, followed by those who had master's degree, 49, then by those who had diplomas, 13, and finally those with PhDs, 3. Finally, among the Operational level managers, it was found that majority of them, 70, were male while female were 63. It was also found that majority of the respondents, 76, had their highest education level being a bachelor's degree, and followed by those who had master's degree, 30, followed by those who had diplomas, 26, and finally those with PhDs, was one.

Descriptive Statistics

This section sought to descriptively analyze choice and use of communication media/channels and their effect on implementation of business strategy.

Communication channels that help to improve work performance. Table 11 shows whether the organizations had up to date communication media/channels that help respondents to improve their work performance in order to meet their targets.

Table 11: Communication channels that helps to improve work performance

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	265	84.9
No	47	15.1
Total	312	100.0

Source: Research data (2017)

The results from Table 11 revealed that the majority of the respondents, 84.9% agreed that the organizations had up to date communication media/channels that help improve the work performance and hence enabling meeting of the targets while 15.1% of the respondents said that there is no up to date communication media/channels. Communication channels need to be highly visible in the workplace using scorecards, dashboards, flowcharts and the tools for problem solving and strategy implementation. The goal of visible management is to balance detail with relevance, then to balance resources and accountability and to measure actual progress and performance.

Ways in which employees receive information on strategic objectives during strategy implementation. This section describes how employees receive information on strategic objectives during strategy implementation. The results are presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Ways in which employees receive information on strategic objectives during strategy implementation

	Frequency	Percent
Formal Meetings	76	24.4
Internal publications i.e. Circulated report, Newsletters	29	9.3
CEO Address	5	1.6
Through immediate supervisors	20	6.4
Grapevine	4	1.3
Strategic Plan	11	3.5
Memos/Emails/website	141	45.2
Seminars/workshops	20	6.4
Inbuilt in employees work plans	3	1.0
Notice Boards	2	.6
No Communication at all	1	.3
Total	**312**	**100.0**

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 12 revealed that 45.2% of the respondents indicated that employees receive strategic information through memos/emails/website, followed by 24.4% who said that employees receive information through formal meetings, 9.3% of the respondents indicated that information is received through internal publications (circulated report and newsletter), 6.4% indicated that employees received information through immediate supervisors and seminars/workshops, 3.5% said that information is received through strategic plan, 1.6% of the respondents said that information is received through CEO address, 1.3% of the respondents said that information is received through grapevine, 0.6% said on notice board and 0.3% of the respondents said that there was no communication at all.

These findings are in agreement with Snyder and Lee-Partridge (2013),Berger and Iyengar (2013)who assert that employee use of specific communication media is influenced by what other employees opine about the channel and if they use them as well. Most employees choose to use face-to-face in form of meetings and electronic mail to share sensitive work detail. This is because these media have a low percentage of miscommunication and allow one to direct information to specific targets sometimes through encrypted e-mail. Based on the study findings, the results indicate that group meetings are reported as effective communication channels in most organizations. Such forums allow coherent and effective information exchange. However, the choice of communication channels is also influenced by a channel's ability to provide security and privacy.

These findings also concur with those by Anyieni and Areri (2016) that meetings and electronic media form the main channel of communication for receiving strategic objectives. The findings also are in line with other scholars' findings including Kandie (2004) and Robinson and Pearce (2004) who concluded that effective strategic plan implementation require clear channels of communication inculcated into the culture of the organization.

Therefore, it is noteworthy that that different communication channels have diverse features in terms of their appropriateness and efficacy. The emergence of latest technology has dominated the techniques, methodology and procedures of delivering and passing information. Rich communication channels such as face to face dialogue, memos and group meetings are preferred in comparison to notice boards and newsletters. Therefore the greatest challenge for managers is to make efforts to consistently communicate the strategic intent to all employees. This can be done via the usage of rich communication channels that elicit feedback for proper implementation and monitoring.

Communication with fellow employees regarding strategy implementation activities. This section statistically describes how the frequency with which respondents communicates with fellow employees regarding strategy implementation activities they are involved in. The results are presented in Table 13.

Table 13: Frequency of the respondent's communication with fellow employees regarding strategy implementation activities

	Frequency	Percent
Hourly	2	.6
Daily	42	13.5
Weekly	60	19.2
Monthly	140	44.9
Yearly	49	15.7
Never	19	6.1
Total	**312**	**100.0**

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 13 revealed that 44.9% of the respondents said that communication was done monthly, followed by 19.2% who said weekly, 15.7% said yearly, 13.5% said daily, 6.1% of the respondent said that communication was never done and lastly 0.6% of the respondents said that communication with fellow employees on strategy implementation activities was done hourly. Advances in technology have led to the explosion of channels of communication such as teleconferencing, videoconferencing, Internet, fax, mobile phones, etc. These channels, like their predecessors vary in their ability to adequately convey communication richly. Communication is the means by which people are linked together in an organization to achieve a common purpose, and in this regard group activity is impossible without communication. Certainly, communication is a prerequisite to coordination, collaboration and organizational change management.

Channel richness can be appraised by the ability to handle numerous information signals concurrently and expediting speedy feedback. If communication sent by managers lacks clarity then it becomes difficult for employees to deduce meaning. Prompt feedback denotes that a channel allows employees to give instant feedback in the form of questions, clarifications or corrections therefore proper business strategy implementation.

Thomson (1997) found that good internal communication is necessary to empower employees to build a shared commitment to success. Every part of that process needs to be communicated effectively, so that people are able to take part and understand the reasons behind likely changes in procedure.

Frequency with which communication channels are used preferred. This section descriptively analyzes the communication channels preference and usage in the organization in the implementation of strategy. The results were presented in Table 14

Table 14: Communication channels preference in the implementation of strategy

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Formal meetings/briefings	312	4.2308	.76370
E-mail (memos)	312	4.5000	.69449
Bulletin boards/notice boards	312	3.5321	1.09027
Telephone	312	3.9583	1.06154
Loudspeaker	312	1.8109	1.07566
Company newsletter	312	3.0545	1.21363
Informal meetings	312	3.2660	1.18256
Grapevine	312	2.5897	1.39532
Videoconferencing	312	2.1506	1.22398
Intranet	312	3.2917	1.38951
Annual reports	312	3.5128	1.10239
Social media	312	3.2724	1.24214
Seminars/workshops	312	3.7821	1.00989
Communication channel	**312**	**3.3234**	**.44228**

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 14 shows that majority of the respondents, said that the most used communication channel preference is done through E-mail (memos), (M = 4.5, SD = 0.69449), followed by frequently used communication channels which was indicated as formal meetings/briefing, bulletin boards/notice boards, telephone, annual reports and seminars/workshop, grapevine communication channel was seldom used. The communication channels which were least used as reported are loudspeaker and videoconferencing. On average, the communication channels were seldom used, (M = 3.3234, SD = 0.44228) It can be argued then that competent channels should possess attributes of creating clear messages which are reliable, understandable, elicit feedback and trustworthy; support the existing or changing organizational culture and enhance knowledge-sharing through dialogue and participation to successful implementation of strategy. Hence, communication is the conduit by which employees exchange knowledge and information to achieve a common goal. Teamwork is therefore impossible without communication. Undoubtedly, communication is a necessity for coordination, partnership, and strategy implementation.

Management's Choice and use of Communication Channels. This section sought to describe the management level opinions on usage of different communication channels and the results are presented in Table 15.

Table 15: Management level management Choice of and usage of different communication channels

CA	SENIOR			MIDDLE			OPERATIONAL		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Formal meetings/briefings	62	4.1774	.80009	117	4.3077	.70051	133	4.1880	.79915
E-mail (memos)	62	4.4839	.78389	117	4.4957	.66467	133	4.5113	.68109
Bulletin boards/ notice boards	62	3.6613	1.15862	117	3.4872	1.03070	133	3.5113	1.11203
Telephone	62	3.8871	1.16090	117	4.0085	1.02969	133	3.9474	1.04675
Loudspeaker	62	2.0161	1.22129	117	1.6581	1.00140	133	1.8496	1.05526
Company newsletter	62	2.9194	1.20516	117	3.0256	1.22799	133	3.1429	1.20694
Informal meetings	62	3.2903	1.15072	117	3.0684	1.07259	133	3.4286	1.26901
Grapevine	62	2.6129	1.31017	117	2.4957	1.41192	133	2.6617	1.42429
Videoconferencing	62	2.1129	1.28171	117	2.0342	1.23128	133	2.2707	1.18787
Intranet	62	3.3065	1.47758	117	3.3590	1.41093	133	3.2256	1.33494
Annual reports	62	3.4032	1.12293	117	3.5299	1.09523	133	3.5489	1.10417
Social media	62	3.4194	1.20855	117	3.0855	1.22173	133	3.3684	1.26415
Seminars/workshops	62	3.8387	.89064	117	3.7009	1.06078	133	3.8271	1.01885

Source: Research data (2017)

The results from Table 15 show that among the Senior managers, Emails/memos were the most common preferred communication channel and were used frequently in their organizations in the implementation of strategy (Mean = 4.4839, SD=0.78389). This was followed by Formal meetings/briefing (Mean = 4.1774, SD=0.80009) followed by Telephone (Mean = 3.8871, SD=1.16090) followed closely by Seminars/workshops (Mean = 3.8387, SD=0.89064), followed by Bulletin boards/notice boards (Mean = 3.6613, SD=1.5862). The results also indicated that social media, annual reports, intranet, informal meetings, company newsletter, and grapevine were seldom used as indicated by mean values of 3.4194, 3.4032, 3.3065, 3.2903, 2.9194 and 2.6129 respectively. Finally, it was found that Videoconferencing (M=2.1129, SD=1.28171) and Loudspeakers (M=2.0161, SD=1.22129) were the least used among the senior managers as indicated by means. Further, there was high variability in the responses regarding the use of these two communication channels (SD>1.00).

Among the Middle level management, Emails/memos and briefings were the most preferred communication channels and were used frequently in their organizations in the implementation of strategy (Mean = 4.4957, SD=0.66467). This was followed by Formal meetings/briefing (Mean = 4.43077, SD=0.70051) followed by Telephone (Mean = 4.0085, SD=1.02969) followed closely by Seminars/workshops (Mean = 3.7009, SD=1.06078), followed by annual reports (Mean = 3.5299, SD=1.09523). The results also indicated that Bulletin boards/notice boards, social media, intranet, informal meetings, company newsletter, and grapevine were seldom used as indicated by mean values of 3.4872, 3.0855, 3.3590, 3.0864, 3.0256, and 2.4957 respectively. Finally, it was found that Videoconferencing (M=1.6581, SD=1.00140) and Loudspeakers (M=2.0342, SD=1.23128) were the least used among the senior managers; the high standard deviations also indicate high variability in the responses from the senior managers.

Finally, among the operational managers, Emails/memos and briefings were the most common preferred communication channel and were used frequently in their organizations in the implementation of strategy (Mean = 4.5113, SD=0.68109). This was followed by Formal meetings/briefing (Mean = 4.1880, SD=0.79915) followed by Telephone (Mean = 3.9474, SD=1.04675) followed closely by Seminars/workshops (Mean = 3.8271, SD=1.01885). This was followed by annual reports (Mean = 3.5489, SD=1.10417). Bulletin boards/notice boards follow closely (Mean = 3.5113, SD=1.11203). Videoconferencing and Loudspeakers were the least used among the senior managers as indicated by mean values of 2.2707 and 1.8496 respectively.

It can be then deduced from earlier research that when employees choose the right channel for the message, it results in effective organizational design and behaviour and consequently successful strategy implementation. Furthermore, when employees are aware of criteria to select communication channels, they are likely to choose appropriate channels to communicate strategic messages and therefore improved performance. As a result, it is in the advantage of organizations that they have good communication infrastructure to facilitate proper strategy execution right. Communication channels that are chosen to deliver the strategy message should equally motivate employees for successful implementation of business strategy. However, even more imperative is choosing the right channel for the right message because channels have different strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the nature and capability of communication media used can enhance or misrepresent the message as well as influence the receiver's interpretation of the message to take apposite action for successful strategy implementation.

Weaknesses of communication channels/media used in the organization. This section descriptively analyzes the gaps/challenges of communication channels/media in the organization and the results were presented in Table 16.

Table 16: Challenges of communication channels			
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Too many rules and policies affect communication channel choice and use	312	3.6635	1.14771
My organization has up to date communication infrastructure	312	3.7564	.98132
Employees do not possess skills to use communication channels in the organization	312	2.3846	1.07267
Wrong use of media affects communication of strategic objectives	312	3.6635	1.13078
Communication channels used provide feedback mechanism	312	3.7244	1.00848
Communications channels are not effective in disseminating strategic information	312	2.7660	1.22661
All employees have access to prescribed communication channels	312	3.5577	1.16066

Source: Research data (2017)

The results from Table 16 shows that majority of the respondents agreed that too many rules and policies affect communication channel choice and use, the organizations have up to date communication infrastructure, wrong use of media affects communication of strategic objectives, communication channels used provide feedback mechanism and all employees have access to prescribed communication channels. Some disagreed that Employees do not possess skills to use communication channels in the organization while the rest said that they are not sure whether the Communications channels were ineffective in disseminating strategic information. Communication challenges are reported more recurrently than any other type of barriers, such as organizational structure barriers, learning barriers, personnel management barriers or cultural barriers. Wandjiva (2011) indicates that there are numerous types of communication problems (without specifying what they are). Communication challenges may be influenced to some extent by the organizational structure and many a times slowdown the strategy implementation process. When vertical communication is frequent, strategic consensus (shared understanding about strategic primacies) is enhanced and an organization's performance improves. Organizations where employees have easy access to management through open and supportive communication climates tend to outperform those with more restrictive communication environments.

Wuolanne (2010) findings are in line with findings of this study that the communication function still has challenges during the strategy execution. The challenges include: inability to formulate concise messages and choice of the appropriate communication channels; challenges to the communication function for example multiple languages used, cultures and challenges related to the use of technology in communication. Feedback is significant to stimulate the employees and allow them to have a better focus. It can be argued that parastatals therefore need to put in place two-way communication systems which promote a prompt flow of information in the organization. Therefore, in order achieve organizational corporate objectives, employees must be fully engaged to take action through constant information sharing minimizing communication challenges. Managers should ensure that the strategy drivers are communicating the strategic intent, drives and action plans.

Perception of weaknesses of communication channels/media by level of management. The study also analyzed the weaknesses of communication channels/media in the organization based on the management levels and the results were presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Communication challenges based on the different management level opinions

CHALLENGES	SENIOR			MIDDLE			OPERATIONAL		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Too many rules and policies affect communication channel choice and use	62	3.5000	1.25123	117	3.6752	1.1584	133	3.729	1.0880
My organization has up to date communication infrastructure	62	3.9032	.88168	117	3.7778	.99231	133	3.669	1.0129
Employees do not possess skills to use communication channels in the organization	62	2.1935	.98910	117	2.4274	1.1088	133	2.436	1.0755
Wrong use of media affects communication of strategic objectives	62	3.5484	1.21030	117	3.6752	1.2235	133	3.706	1.0059
Communication channels used provide feedback mechanism	62	3.9032	.91812	117	3.6752	1.0324	133	3.684	1.0252
Communications channels are not effective in disseminating strategic information	62	2.3548	1.00974	117	2.8889	1.2441	133	2.849	1.2702
All employees have access to prescribed communication channels	62	3.6935	1.12481	117	3.5214	1.1714	133	3.526	1.1715

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 17 show that the senior managers, the middle level managers and the operational managers, the respondents slightly agreed that too many rules and policies affected communication channel choice and use ($3.5 < M < 4.0$, $SD > 1.00$. There was agreement by all levels of managers that the organizations had up to date communication infrastructure, the senior managers, middle level managers and the operational managers all agreed. This was indicated by mean values of 3.9032, 3.7778 and 3.669 respectively and standard deviations of 0.88168, 0.99231 and 1.0129 respectively. Managers at all levels reported that employees did not possess skills to effectively use communication channels in the organization (Senior managers: M=2.1935, SD= 0.9891; Middle level managers:M=2.4274, SD=1.1088; Operational/ functional managers: M=2.436,SD=1.0755). On whether the "wrong use of media affects communication of strategic objectives", there was agreement by all management levels ($3.5 < M < 4.0$). All managers also agreed with the statement: "Communication channels used provided feedback mechanism" (senior managers: M=3.9032, Middle level managers: M=3.6752 and Operational managers: M=3.684)

On whether the communications channels were effective in disseminating strategic information, the senior managers, middle level managers and the operational managers agreed the channels were effective because they disagreedwith the contrary statement that the existing communication channels were not effective by reporting a mean less than 3 (Senior managers: M=2.3548, Middle level managers: M=2.8889 andOperational managers: M=2.849).

Finally, on whether the all employees had access to prescribed communication channels, the senior managers, middle level managers and the operational managers all agreed. This was indicated by mean values of 3.6935, 3.5214 and 3.526 respectively.

Test of Hypothesis
The null study hypothesis was:
H_0 – *There is no statistically significant relationship between communication channels and implementation of business strategy. (H_0: $\beta = 0$ vs H_1:$\beta \neq 0$).*

First, the association between communication activities and implementation of business strategy was examinedusing a scatter diagram (Figure 2).
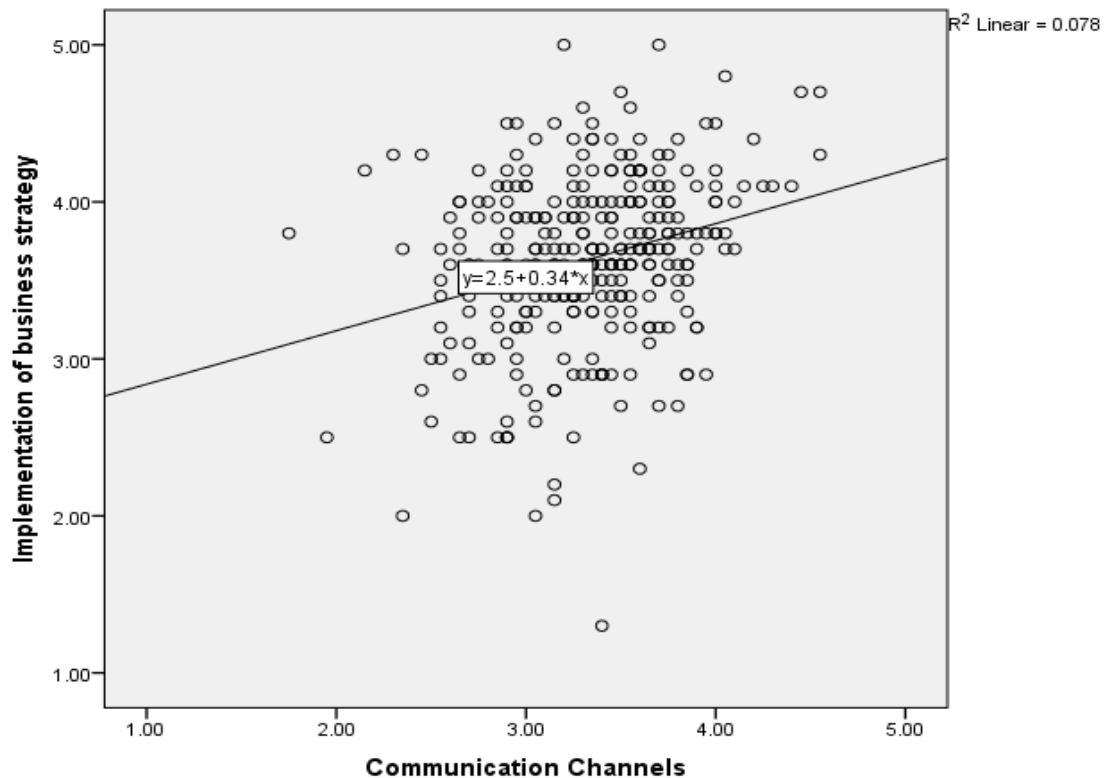
Figure 2: A scatter plot of Implementation of business strategy against communication channels

Figure 2 shows a scatter graph of communication channels and implementation of business strategy among parastatals in Kenya. The diagram indicates a positive gradient which is an indication that communication channels affect implementation of business strategy. Based on the scatter graph and the t-statistics, the null hypothesis was thence rejected since the graph indicates a positive linear relationship

From the scatter plot, it is discerned that there is a positive correlation between communication channels and implementation of business strategy among parastatals in Kenya. Based on this finding, the hypothesis was tested using linear regression analysis. A simple linear regression was performed with Implementation of business strategy as the dependent variable and communication channels as the independent variable. Table 18 shows a model summary table which is used to test for the goodness of fit of the model.

Table 18: Model summary of communication channels

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.279ª	.078	.075	.52047
a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication channels				

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 18 deduce that communication channels were found to explain 7.5% of the variation in Implementation of business strategy as indicated by a coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.075.An ANOVA was also performed to test for the significance of the whole model. The results were presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Communication Channels ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	7.073	1	7.073	26.110	.000ᵇ
Residual	83.976	310	.271		
Total	91.048	311			
a. Dependent Variable: Strategy implementation					
b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication channels					

Source: Research data (2017)

The results in Table 19 denote that the model is statistically significant at 5% significance level with communication channels as the predictor variable. Communication channels significantly predicted

Implementation of business strategy with a P value (sig) *p*= <0.0001 which is less than 0.005 and *F*=26.110. Table 20 shows the model coefficient Table.

Table 20: Communication Channels Model coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.498	.224		11.165	.000
Reciprocal square of communication channels	.341	.067	.279	5.110	.000
a. Dependent Variable: strategy implementation					

Source: Research data (2017)

The results indicate that there exists a statistically significant relationship between communication channels and Implementation of business strategy. Communication channels significantly predicted Implementation of business strategy at 5% level of significance. This was indicated by a significant p-value (*p*<0.001 less than 0.05).

The study intended to test the null hypothesis:

H_0: *There is no statistically significant relationship between communication channels used and implementation of business strategy. (**H_0**: $\beta_1= 0$, vs **H_1**:$\beta_1\neq 0$)*

Based on the results in this study, the hypothesis is not supported hence the decision to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between communication channels used and implementation of business strategy in parastatals in Kenya.

IV. Discussion

The null hypothesis in this study was that: *There is no statistically significant relationship between communication channels and implementation of business strategy (H_0).* The study hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between communication activities and implementation of business strategy. The study results found that there was a direct influence of communication channels on the implementation of business strategy among parastatals in Kenya. Statistically, there exists a significant relationship between communication channels and implementation of business strategy if all other factors are held constant as evidenced by the bivariate regression models. Though communication channels significantly explained (R-square = 0.078, p<0.001) about 8% of variation in strategy implementation, they cannot be used independently for strategy implementation. This finding is not surprising since communication channels on their own without the presence of other variables and resources to implement the formulated strategy cannotachieve any results. The study findings are therefore consistent with Anyieni and Areri, (2016) and the observations made by other scholars who also established significant link between communication channels and implementation of business strategy.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study established that there is direct influence of communication channels on implementation of business strategy among parastatals Kenya. However, it also provides statistical evidence from the bivariate regression that that beside communication channels, other factors could play a role in ensuring effective implementation of business strategy in parastatals in Kenya.

Since an organization's communication channels are equally embedded on other factors influencing implementation of business strategy, it can be concluded that the communication channels used by organizations, as prescribed in the communication policy, is an important variable to be considered during implementation of business strategy. It provides a guideline on which channels of communications are used, how information flows in the organization, ensures two way communication to elicit feedback and prescribes the formality of how communication is done.

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