


International Journal of Communication and Public Relations (IJCPR)


**Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction in Public Secondary
Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya**


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Article History

Received 22nd January 2024

Received in Revised Form 26th February 2024

Accepted 30th March 2024



How to cite in APA format:

Karingu, W., Mberia, H., & Ndati, N. (2024). Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction in Public Secondary Schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. *International Journal of Communication and Public Relation*, 9(3), 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.47604/ijcpr.2435>

Abstract

Purpose: Communication culture strength influences customer satisfaction of customers served by organizations such as public secondary schools. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County, Kenya. Communication culture strength involves important element of an organisational culture, with sharedness of values as the defining core of that culture as well as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes the strength of the prevailing value system.

Methodology: The study employed descriptive research design and examined both quantitative and qualitative data. The study population was 3588 students made up of both boys and girls and 12 principals or their deputies from 12 public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The students ages ranged from 14 years to 21 years and were in Form 2 to Form 4. A sample size of 369 students was used out of which 296 responded. This was a response rate of 80.22%. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to sample students from the target population. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the principals and or their deputies. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as data collection tools for quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Quantitative data was collected from the students while qualitative data was collected from the principals or their deputies. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. SPSS a software package for social sciences Ver. 25 was used to statistically analyse quantitative data. The analysed data was then presented using graphs, tables and charts. Qualitative data derived from the objectives was analysed thematically and presented in a narrative form. Inferential statistics used were descriptive, correlation, regression and ANOVA analysis.

Findings: The results showed that there existed a positive and significant relationship between communication culture strength and customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County ($r=0.409$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$). The findings indicated that communication culture strength has a positive effect on an organization's performance and therefore customer satisfaction. This showed that a unit improvement in communication culture strength would lead to a 0.429 improvement in customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. The relationship was significant as the P-value (0.000) was less than the significance level (0.05). The study concluded that communication culture strength had a significant influence on customer satisfaction public secondary school in Kenya.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study was anchored on Thibaut and Kelley, Social Exchange theory. This study contributed to theory because it links communication culture strength to customer satisfaction in public secondary schools. Additionally, the study recommends that communication culture strength should be enhanced in organizations such as schools since it influences organizational performance and therefore customer satisfaction. In addition, the findings from this study hopes that it will provide a source of information for policy makers to understand better the link between communication culture strength and organizational performance and therefore customer satisfaction.

Keywords: *Communication Culture Strength, Customer Satisfaction, Organization, Influence*

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INTRODUCTION

Communication culture strength has been regarded by researchers as an important element of an organisational culture, with sharedness of values as the defining core of that culture (Brashear et al. 2003; Subirats 2002). According to Schneider (2000), communication culture strength is viewed as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes the strength of the prevailing value system and the following cultural dimensions that communicate the underlying values of the organisation to its employees, stories, heroes, rituals, ceremonies, and the cultural network. The extent and dedication that members have towards principles and standards that exist in an organisation determine how strong or weak communication culture is. To explain this for instance, Kotter and Heskett (1992) noted that organisations which subscribe to strong communication cultures registered better performance in business. Likewise, Gordon and DiTomaso (2004) observed that insurance companies that prescribed to similar values had very effective processes which contributed to their performance.

Relatedly, customer satisfaction is an organisation's ability to attract and retain customers and to improve customer relationship over time (Ambro` & Praprotnik, 2008). Customer satisfaction particularly happens when a customer is satisfied with an organisation's services and products. Satisfaction is a function of relative level of expectations and perceives performance. The expectation may go as far as before the students even enter higher education (Palacio et al., 2002). In addition, Carey et al. (2002) observed that satisfaction in a school context, actually covers issues of students' perception in performance of national examinations and experiences during school years. Most importantly, it is deemed to be an essential ingredient for superior organisational performance (Cameron & Quinn, 1999). Closely, the school performance has been correlated with communication culture over the last 30 years (Deal & Kennedy, 2000), and having the "right communication culture" is still considered central in improving school and staff performance despite it being imperceptible (Connolly & James, 2009; Fullani, 2006; James et al., 2006; Stoll, 2009).

Similarly, Kotter and Heskett (1992) found that communication culture strength was usually based on the surrounding environment. They further noted that the performance of an organisation was purely based on the routines defined by the communication culture in place. Belak (2016) in enterprises in Slovenia, one of the most developed European post socialist transition countries whose purpose was to demonstrate how communication culture differs according to enterprise life cycle stage. The cultural strength based its type and how these two variables contribute to their success. The organisation culture strength is determined by its life cycle stage. This was in conformity with Schein (2002) who opined that organisations that have strong communication cultures are those that have been in the process of culture formation in the period between five and fifteen years. Subsequently, the study indicated that as an enterprise grows in its cycle; its culture strength becomes stronger with years of operation.

Therefore, it can be argued that growing organisations are more successful because norms, values, vision, mission and strategic goals are easily passed from top management. Such organisations are more compatible with the culture of the environment in which they function and are more focused on internal maintenance and are more flexible and consider employees needs more carefully and focus more on customer expectations (Belak, 2016). Similarly, Kent and Weese (2000) did a study in Canada that targeted sports organisations. The study found out that effective organisations were shaped by activities linked to communication culture. Further, Smart and Wolfe (2000) observed that communication culture played a role in making Penn State football program to have a competitive advantage. In addition, Choi and Scott (2008)

noted that the strength of communication culture had an impact on performance.

According to Subirats (2002) strong cultures are more effective than weak cultures because they are strong, congruent and supportive of organisational strategies. Some scholars maintain that the lack of culture strength manifests itself in variability in the culture (Dixon et al., 2003). Similarly, Deal and Kennedy (2000) further asserted that a strong culture has almost always been the driving force behind continuing success in many businesses. Further, Schneider (2000) viewed organisational culture strength as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes the strength of the prevailing value system and cultural dimensions that provide members with meaning. Further, strong cultures are conceptualized as those in which the values of the organisation are intensely held, widely shared, and provide an influential guide to the action and behaviour of employees which contribute to customer satisfaction (Schneider, 2000). However, a major challenge exists with strongly held values in that it becomes difficult for such members to notice any looming dangers in the current setting which might eventually affect the way things are done in the organisations (O'Reilly, 2014) thus affecting performance.

In the same breath, in organisations where members have strong beliefs might not notice when things change and by the time this is noticed it will have affected the organisation's effectiveness. Denison (2003) asserted that members in an organisation with a strong communication culture who have beliefs that are contrary to what is popular, are a lot of times not given the chance to be members. Such members distance themselves from giving any inputs to management and as a result they find it hard to get assimilated into the system and this impacts their effectiveness. Similarly, according to Schein (2004) organisations that are good at learning from their members and exhibit weak socialization pressures will have the most accurate understanding of a changing environmental reality and this will help them to adjust well to organisational procedures.

Denison (2003) further opined that a strong communication culture lacks variety which limits how an organisation becomes accustomed to new developments which eventually affect its performance because it follows very systematic procedures which are not easily changed. There is evidence to suggest that strong communication culture organisations may be less likely to reap the benefits of any exploration that does occur. However, innovation and change in organisational routines can be fostered by viable countercultures (Martin, 2003) but countercultures may be less likely to emerge and persist in strong culture firms.

Moreover, O'Reilly (2014) opined that even when countercultures can be sustained in strong communication culture firms, the transfer of new ideas and knowledge to the dominant culture is fraught with difficulty. O'Reilly (2014) further noted that, who an organisation is, cannot make it what it's not. This suggests that, other things being equal, strong communication culture organisations should have greater difficulty responding to environmental volatility than weak communication culture organisations. If environmental change sharply reduces the value of the organisation's existing routines, strong-culture firms should have greater difficulty regaining their footing. Short of such radical environmental change, however, strong culture firms should still maintain the internal organisational benefits identified by culture researchers: greater goal alignment, superior coordination and control, and higher motivation levels than weak-culture firms. In general, therefore, environmental volatility should diminish the performance benefits of strong cultures (O'Reilly, 2014).

According to Schein (2010) communication culture strength is a measure of an organisation's reliability and stability that makes it to adapt to changing circumstances. Consequently, employees that are well informed about their communication culture will appreciate where the

organisation is going as well as its current state. This then means that a well-articulated communication culture will work towards common goals and this will lead to effective service delivery because the employees share success-oriented ideals.

However, in organisations with strong communication cultures change becomes complex because employees become too familiar with a particular way of life to accommodate a different environment. This then means that employees take time to adjust to such environment therefore affecting organisational goals. Another challenge with strong communication cultures is that, such cultures do not give an opportunity to members with contradicting values and beliefs and as a result organisational common vision is affected. Schneider et al. (2002) found that strong communication culture boosted the relationship between aspects of communication culture for service and customer satisfaction, while Gonzales-Roma, et al. (2002) argued that strong communication culture strength intensifies the links between type of culture and outcome variables such as commitment and satisfaction. Unfortunately, strong communication culture is hard to change and can affect an organisation's performance thus affecting customer satisfaction.

On the other hand, in Africa several studies have been done to demonstrate the relevance of effective communication culture strength and how it influences performance which ultimately influences customer satisfaction. Mwebaza (2010) claimed that in Masaka District, Uganda, how communication culture was postulated through continuous assessment strategies that further influenced students' performance in final examinations. The researcher noted that communication culture strength in the schools influenced the way teachers carried out their roles by shaping positive behaviour towards assessment strategies which then influenced performance. In addition, communication culture in the schools helped to define a system of doing things whereby learners would be motivated to work hard, and effectiveness of teaching methods would be evaluated (Ituma, 2012) which resulted to better teacher and student commitment. All this was meant to influence the learners' performance in final examinations.

Similarly, according to the District Education Officer of Makadara District the strength of communication affects the KCSE performance of a school. Most schools in the district do not have strong communication cultures. This has led to the poor performance of the District in national examinations. Poor performance ultimately influences customer satisfaction (Basement, 2014).

A cross-sectional survey of secondary schools in Hong Kong was conducted by Cheng (2003). Cheng conducted a comparison of the efficacy of schools with strong communication cultures and weak communication cultures. It was shown that the perception of organizational success and the strength of communication culture are related. Members of staff in schools with strong communication cultures reported that their institution was very productive, flexible, and adaptable. Cheng also examined the impact of cultural strength on final test pass rates in order to connect this perceived efficacy with the real performance of schools. The pass rates for mathematics, English, and Chinese were considered for this purpose, along with a composite metric derived from these three rates. The results of the research showed a strong correlation between students' pass rates and the strength of the communication culture in place in those schools. This evidence confirms that communication culture strength has an influence on schools performance.

Furthermore, a number of other writers have conducted studies that show the impact that a strong communication culture has on performance in establishments like educational institutions (Calderón & Serna, 2009; Lee & Louis, 2019). Studies show that a strong

communication culture fosters high performance standards and a clear focus. It also fosters unity and a shared goal, all of which have an impact on behavior, role clarity, and performance. Additionally other scholarly and popular sources have investigated the effects of strong cultures on school effectiveness in great detail (Bipath & Adeyemo, 2014; Lee & Louis, 2019; Lubis & Hanun, 2019). Strong communication cultures are associated to better performance because they are more flexible in response to changing circumstances, as noted by Wahyuningsih (2019) and Lubis & Hanun (2019). Strong communication cultures can also encourage greater ethical standards. According to Cheng's (2003) research, schools that have strong and successful communication cultures stand out from those that don't because of their distinct organizational characteristics.

Statement of the Problem

Communication culture strength continues to be recognized for the critical role that it plays in shaping customer satisfaction with sharedness of values that help to define the performance of an organization such as a school. Although knowledge on communication culture strength continues to evolve and despite this fact, a gap exists in empirical research that extensively probes the association between the presence of shared values, their intensity and the practices that collectively influence customer satisfaction. It was on this basis that there was need for a study to be conducted to provide relevant scientific data to be used for decision making and hopefully come up with appropriate interventions when dealing with the strength of communication culture and customer satisfaction in schools in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture strength has been regarded by researchers as an important element of an organisational culture, with sharedness of values as the defining core of that culture (Brashear et al., 2003). Theorists and practitioners alike emphasize that communication culture that is strong, congruent, and supportive of the strategies of organisations is more effective than a weak, incongruent, or disjointed culture (Schneider (2000; Salvaggio & Subirats, 2002). Some scholars maintain that the lack of communication culture strength manifests itself in variability in the culture (Dixon, Spiro, & Forbes 2003). Further, Thommen (2002) organisations that thrive on strong communication cultures have remarkable agreement levels and closely knit values among members which are consistent. Thommen further noted that organisations with strong communication culture have a clear picture of reality, untroubled communication and a faster decision-making process that help to impact on the corporates' performance.

Arguably, strong communication cultures are those whose values are intensely held, widely shared, and provide an influential guide to actions and behaviour (Chonko et al., 2002). Strong communication cultures help to define consistent behaviour among employees in a firm. The consistency of such behaviour helps to shape the way teachers and students in a school context interpret the routines and processes in their schools thus impacting their effectiveness. What is more, is that Schein (2010) emphasized the fact that strong communication cultures set standards and principles that define how members behave in the work place. A school environment that promotes group meaning affects the way those in the school do their work and improves on their effectiveness thus affecting customer satisfaction positively.

Additionally, authors such as (Belak & Milfelner, 2012; Huczynski & Buchanan, 2007; Thommen, 2003) argued that a correlation exists between the effectiveness of an organisation and the communication culture therein. In their opinion, a well-developed and business specific communication culture in which management and staff are thoroughly socialized can underpin

stronger organisational commitment, higher morale, more efficient performance, and generally higher productivity, consequently leading to a higher level of enterprise success. Hermalin (2001) argued that organisational leaders are less likely to face unpredictable situations when they subscribe to strong communication culture and are able to react appropriately to situations that enable them to align to goals. O'Reilly (2014) further observed that there is harmony in organisations when members share the same objectives as this goes a long way in business positioning. In addition, customer satisfaction is enhanced when members agree on common values. This eventually influences the way members deliver services.

Closely, Schein (2004) emphasized that strong organisational cultures are good avenues of providing members in a group with a way of giving meaning to their daily lives, setting guidelines and rules for how to behave, and most important, reducing and containing the anxiety of dealing with an unpredictable and uncertain environment. Schein (2004) suggested that communication culture ultimately reflects the group's effort to cope and learn and is the residue of learning processes. Schein further claimed that strong communication cultures are strongly influenced by shared experiences in the organisations' early history and that, once established and taken for granted; the corporates basic assumptions are difficult to change. Communication breakdown and poor coordination can be experienced in organisations' whose communication cultures are weak as opposed to those organisations that have strong cultures. Strong cultures ensure that people subscribe to common values that prescribe the way things are done, how people behave and how services are delivered.

According to Sadri and Lee (2001) a strong communication culture could provide immense benefits to the organisation, and thereby a leading competitive edge over other organisations in the industry. A strong communication culture in schools ensures that values are widely shared therefore influencing behaviour positively. However, a negative communication culture in schools could have a negative impact on the performance as it could deter the adoption of required strategic or tactical changes thus impacting negatively on how service delivery especially how knowledge is impacted thus affecting customer satisfaction.

Finally, Weick and Sutcliffe (2007) observed that operations in an organisation can be shaped through communication culture by aligning values and norms to fit an organisation setting. relatedly, Schein (2010) asserted that an organisation should be aware of whom it is and its values and objectives should be communicated to all members for them to understand their roles. Jesper (2002) further claimed that organisations with weak values become less effective when compared with those that subscribe to strong cultures. On the other hand, efficient and consistent firm functioning in the face of environmental change depends on both appropriateness and coordination: employees must respond to events by deploying the right routines at the right time and in the right sequence e.g. when teachers agree with school's goals they are able to take appropriate actions that influence how they teach their students thus influencing their performance.

Prior research on the subject of communication culture and organizational performance has advanced significantly as evidenced by studies done by Uddin et al. (2013 and O'Reilly et al. (2014). However, the impact of strong communication cultures on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools has not been quantitatively assessed in many research. To address the missing gaps more research needs to be done to provide further insights on how the intensity of shared values, presence of shared values and the practice of shared values impact the various aspects of an organization especially in different school contexts.

Theoretical Framework

This study was supported by the social exchange theory which was applied to assess the influence of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County.

The Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory is a social psychological and sociological perspective that explains social change and stability as a process of negotiated exchanges between parties. Social exchange theory (SET) was introduced in 1959 by *Thibaut and Kelley*. They focused their studies within the theory on psychological concepts, the dyad and small group. This theory is based on the premise that people are social beings and, in any social relation, there are exchanges between the parties involved. The theory puts emphasis on social structures as the framework within which exchange processes play out. It further opines that individuals are attracted to others if they expect that their association will be in a way rewarding for him or herself and his/her interest is the expected social enticement that draws him or her to others. When employees have a feeling that their organisation provides them with value then they feel obliged to behave positively (Blau, 1964).

Relatedly, Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) claimed that behaviours displayed and attitudes formed are purely based on the social exchanges. Further, Masterson et al. (2000) asserted that these social relationships are cognitive in nature and have long lasting behavioural impacts which influence how they interact with each other especially in the work place. Positive social exchanges result to both positive behaviour and positive attitudes (Blau 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). In addition, (Gersick et al., 2000 & Masterson et al., 2000) noted that the nature of relationships in the work place defines a members' life in the organisation. In addition, they noted that how members interact with each other in the work place determines their performance. This is also in agreement with Gersick et al. (2000) who assert that the work place helps to determine the kind of fulfilment one gets from a job thereby influencing his effectiveness and performance.

On the other hand, Colquitt and Rodell (2011) showed that stakeholders are willing to be vulnerable when they perceive that an institution provides justice at the work place. In other words, experience of justice obligates employees to reciprocate by trusting the institution and being willing to be vulnerable offering their best in their jobs. Using the social exchange theory, the give and take rule dictates the relationship that service staff have with the institution (Colquitt & Rodell, 2011). When an organisation engages its employees through its communication culture, employees are able to assimilate the organisation's mission, direction, structures, policies and processes, and as a result the employees will feel obligated to reciprocate by engaging themselves in the job and the organisation processes (Punjaisri & Wilson, 2007).

Moreover, Slatten and Mehmetoglu (2011) argued that when employees are kept informed about the organisation's mission and other operations, they become more engaged in the job which eventually impacts on service delivery. Similarly, King (2010) observed that the stakeholders' good understanding of the brand which happens through effective communication culture reduces confusion about the job and helps employees engage in brand supportive behaviour. Employee engagement and commitment which is determined by the strength of communication culture is a way of returning the favour to the institution that treats employees as valued stakeholders in the institution.

Further, Salminen & Kankaanranta (2013) opined that communication culture role in an organisation is to create a sense of togetherness that helps to bring employees, management and their clients to work in harmony to achieve the organisational goals. Similarly, Hume and Leonard (2013) noted that goals in an organisation can only be achieved when members in an organisation work together through the social relationships in the work place often shaped by communication culture that ultimately impact on the quality of service offered thus influencing customer satisfaction.

Similarly, communication culture plays an integral role in the management function due to its ability to provide value to an organisation's internal and external customers (Zahay & Peltier, 2008). According to Smith (2011) it is important that issues concerning the way services are delivered be passed on the employees. Corporates must communicate their objectives to their members on day-to-day basis. Indeed, Welch (2012) claimed that social exchange are important because members are able to appreciate the roles and responsibilities that each has and how all the parties involved can work together and improve their organisation's performance. Duck (1994), asserted that eventually, communication culture is a critical element in defining social relationships.

Furthermore, Rich, Lepine & Crawford (2010) stated that when employees subscribe to a popular communication culture, the culture brings about increased employee engagement. Employee engagement on the other hand contributes to increased service delivery and as a result effective business success. Several studies have been done using the social exchange theory. Shakil (2012) claimed that in Pakistan the way organisational values impact on an organisation's performance, is through commonly shared values within social relationships and has a remarkable impact on its processes.

Indeed, Islam et al. (2014) examined the influence of learning communication culture in organisations on customer satisfaction, in key service industries in Malaysia. The scholars found that customer's perception of service quality a lot of times was determined by how well employees learn new skills and practice them that ultimately enhanced their commitment as well as their job satisfaction. Additionally, employee behaviour and attitudes are highly influenced by the capabilities that they have, their skills and their level of commitment (Islam et al., 2014) within the social environment.

Consequently, in a dynamic environment the success of an organisation is determined by how fast employees are able to learn new skills that will enhance customer satisfaction. The learning process happens through a social exchange process whereby employees easily influence the learning process through social interactions and interpersonal relationships. The study found out that learning communication culture not only directly influenced customer satisfaction, but also has an indirect influence through normative commitment (Islam et al., 2014).

Further, Balthazard et al. (2006) noted the way organisational culture strength is manifested in behavioral norms and expectations, and also how the behavioral norms impact the organisation's performance in various state government ministries in America. The Organisational Culture Inventory (OCI) was used to assess communication culture postulated through the way employees behave and its impact on organisational performance. The positive impact of constructive cultural styles form strong cultures (strong relationships), and the negative impact of dysfunctional cultures that do not have well nurtured relationships that contribute to team work and collaboration which result to weak cultures and how they drive organisational performance. There is a link between the dysfunctional cultural styles (weak cultures) to deficits in operating efficiency and effectiveness which is caused by lack of

teamwork and common vision and mission (Balthazard et al., 2006).

Additionally, decreased efficiency and effectiveness impacts on the customer negatively Pierre et al. (2006) observed. When organisations understand their cultures in terms of expected behaviors and norms it becomes easy to explain why some organisational units or the entire organisation exhibits dysfunctional behaviors that are counter to the organisation expressed values or missions which eventually impacts negatively on an organisation's efficiency and effectiveness thus affecting customer satisfaction (Pierre et al., 2006).

Finally, Nyongesa et al. (2011), claimed that there is an effect due to communication culture on how educational institutions performed. Different educational institutions have different communication cultures and those cultures determine employees' attitudes which in return determined their effectiveness and thus affected customer satisfaction. This is because communication culture is acquired through a learning process. When employees do not learn about the culture in the organisation, they end up doing things differently from what is expected and this affects performance and thus impacts on service delivery. Nyongesa et al. (2011) observed that social relationships are important to organisational performance and effectiveness.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed descriptive research design and examined both quantitative and qualitative data. The study population was 3588 students made up of both boys and girls and 12 principals or their deputies from 12 public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The students ages ranged from 14 years to 21 years and were in Form 2 to Form 4. A sample size of 369 students was used out of which 296 responded. This was a response rate of 80.22%. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to sample students from the target population. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample the principals and or their deputies. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as data collection tools for quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Quantitative data was collected from the students while qualitative data was collected from the principals or their deputies. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse quantitative data. SPSS a software package for social sciences Ver. 25 was used to statistically analyse quantitative data. The analysed data was then presented using graphs, tables and charts. Qualitative data derived from the objectives was analysed thematically and presented in a narrative form. Inferential statistics used were descriptive, correlation, regression and ANOVA analysis. The sample size for the study was determined by Yamane (1973) formula as indicated here below:

The Yamane formula for determining the sample size is given by:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where;

n = corrected sample size, N = population size, and e = Margin of error (MoE), e = 0.05 based on the research condition.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size

N = Population

e = reliability 0.05

$$\begin{aligned} n &= 3588 & n &= 3588 \\ \frac{1+3588(0.05)^2}{1+3588(0.0025)} & & \frac{1+3588(0.0025)}{1+3588(0.0025)} & \\ & = 359.8 = 360 \text{ Respondents} & & \end{aligned}$$

The study allocated 360 respondents proportionately which was determined by the number of students per class per school.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study collected data from 12 public secondary schools in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi County. Out of the 369 questionnaires issued, 296 questionnaires were successfully filled and returned and later analyzed. An 80.22% response rate was realized which is above the fifty percent considered as adequate for data analysis and reporting.

Communication Culture Strength

The first specific objective of the study was to establish the influence of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. Communication culture strength was measured by looking at; presence of shared values, intensity of shared values, and practices guided by shared values and how these aspects influenced customer satisfaction. Both descriptive statistics analysis and inferential statistics were used to determine the relationship that existed between communication culture strength and customer satisfaction. For inferential statistics, correlation, regression and ANOVA analysis were worked out to determine the influence of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction. The results were further merged with the findings derived from the interviews.

The Influence of Communication Culture Strength on Customer Satisfaction

In this study, the students were requested to indicate their level of agreement on various statements relating to communication culture strength and customer satisfaction. A 5-point Likert scale was used where by 1 symbolized strongly disagree, 2 symbolized disagree, 3 symbolized neutral, 4 symbolized agree and 5 symbolized strongly agree. The results were depicted in Table 1.

Presence of shared values was indicated by a mean of 4.139 (std. dv = 1.014), where the students agreed that the environment in the school was one of collaboration that helped them to work together for success. In addition, as shown by a mean of 3.723 (std. dv = 0.987), students agreed that they shared values of consensus (agreement) that contributed to team work.

Under intensity of shared values, students agreed that they were satisfied with the high degree of courtesy or respect that they displayed with each other in school. This was shown by a mean of 3.578 (std. dv = 1.032). With a mean of 3.861 (std. dv = 0.938) the students further agreed that they were satisfied with the high degree of cooperation that they had with each other. According to the study, under practice guided by shared values, as shown by a mean of 2.213 (std. dv = 0.974) the students disagreed with the statement indicating that students in the school were encouraged to be innovative. In addition, as indicated in the findings, the students agreed that the efficient examination practises influenced performance in the school. This was shown by a mean of 4.216 (std. dv = 0.957).

Table 1: The Influence of Communication Culture Strength on Customer Satisfaction

	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am satisfied with the high degree of courtesy or respect that students display with each other in school	3.4	10.8	30.4	35.5	19.9	3.578	1.032
I am satisfied with the high degree of cooperation that students have with each other	2.0	6.4	20.3	45.9	25.3	3.861	0.938
I am satisfied that the environment in my school is that one of collaboration that helps us to work together for success	1.7	6.4	15.9	28.4	47.6	4.139	1.014
I am satisfied that students in my school share values of consensus (agreement) that contribute to teamwork	2.0	9.5	25.7	39.9	23.0	3.723	0.987
I am satisfied that student in my school are encouraged to be innovative	1.4	6.1	12.5	30.1	50.0	2.213	0.974
I am satisfied with efficient examination practices that influence performance in my school	1.7	4.7	12.8	31.8	49.0	4.216	0.957

Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction

The findings in Table 1 indicated that students in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County agreed that they had widely shared values in their schools. Similarly, the principals /deputy principals were requested to indicate in their own view on the influence of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in the school. The findings below were corroborated with Schein (2004) who argued that organisations who have commonly and widely held values have strong cultures which give meaning to members thus influencing the way they do things in their organisations. In addition, Sadri and Lee (2001) share the same opinion and agrees that employees who work in organisations where there are common values have a competitive edge over other organisations in the industry. From the results, the principals/deputy principals indicated the following;

Principal 1: *Yes, communication culture is present in our schools. Some of the widely shared values include, values of courtesy, cooperation, collaboration, consensus, discipline and hard work among others. These values help us to work together towards a common goal.*

Principal 3: *Yes, we have communication culture in our school with widely shared values that include; integrity, accountability, professionalism, teamwork, commitment and humility, collaboration.*

Principal 4: *yes, we do. Our widely shared values include; diligence, hard work, collaboration. Accountability, loyalty, innovation, quality.*

Principal 5: *Yes, we do have a communication culture. Our shared values include; handwork, honesty, humility, honesty, courtesy, loyalty, collaboration.*

According to results derived from qualitative findings, the respondents confirmed that some of the shared widely shared values included values of collaboration and consensus, teamwork, respect, courtesy, cooperation which were most popular in the schools. However, they observed that students in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County were not very innovative. In addition, from the findings the interviews revealed that innovation value was not a common

value. Only one principal mentioned the fact that their school was innovative. This finding was in agreement with the findings from the quantitative data that showed that students were not encouraged to be innovative.

According to the findings derived from the interviews, communication culture strength influences role clarity and behaviour conformity. This is because when organisational members share the same values and those values are intensely shared, they enhance goal alignment due to the fact that rules are clear which facilitates coordination and collaboration in the work place. Clear rules provide less room for debate between different parties about the organisation's best interests (Hermalin, 2001). Further, this influences performance in national exams because members are adequately motivated and they therefore perceive that their actions are freely chosen and so they go out of their way to do their best. In addition, communication culture strength was found to create a positive environment hence improving performance of students in the national exams.

Hermalin (2001) argued that organisational leaders are less likely to face unpredictable situations when they subscribe to strong communication culture and are able to react appropriately to situations that enable them to align to goals. O'Reilly(2014) further observed that there is harmony in organisations when members share the same objectives as this goes a long way in influencing performance positively and ultimately business positioning. In addition, customer satisfaction is enhanced when members agree on common values. This eventually influences the way members deliver services which ultimately influence customer satisfaction.

According to the social exchange theory; Thibaut and Kelly (1959) members in a social relationship evaluated their relationships based on the cost benefits they feel they might receive from the relationship. Therefore, when teachers and their customers subscribe to the shared values of consensus, collaboration, cooperation and teamwork, a sense of belonging is developed that makes them achieve a common goal thus influencing performance, role clarity, behavioural conformity and therefore customer satisfaction. This sense of belonging ensures that the teachers will support the students to perform well in their examinations because they believe that they are respected and appreciated while the students are guaranteed of good performance. In essence therefore, communication culture strength influences customer satisfaction.

These findings are in agreement with Schneider (2000) who observed that organisations that have widely shared values and intensely held values provide an influential guide to the action and behaviour of employees which contribute to customer satisfaction. This assertion is also corroborated by Choi and Scott (2008) who noted that communication culture strength influenced customer satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis for Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction

The results showed that there exists a positive and significant relationship between communication culture strength and customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County($r=0.409$, $p\text{-value}=0.000$). The findings concurred with Burt et al. argument that Communication Culture Strength has a positive effect on an organisation's performance and therefore customer satisfaction. Performance of organisation is purely based on the routines defined by communication culture in place.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis for Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction

		Customer Satisfaction	Communication Culture Strength
Customer Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.409**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	296	296
Communication Culture Strength	Pearson Correlation	.409**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	296	296

Regression Analysis

The study used a univariate analysis to investigate the effect of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. The null hypothesis stated:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County

As indicated in Table 3, the r-squared for the relationship between communication culture strength and customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County was 0.167. This showed that communication culture strength could explain 16.7% of the customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. This implied that 83.3% of the customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County was accounted for by other factors not considered in the model.

Table 3: Model Summary for Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.409 ^a	.167	.164	.54110

a. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Culture Strength

As shown in Table 3, the F-calculated (59.063) was greater than the F-critical (3.84) and the p-value (0.000) was less than the significance level (0.05), which implied that the model was a good fit for the data and hence could be used to predict the effect of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County.

Table 4: ANOVA for Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	17.293	1	17.293	59.063	.000 ^b
1 Residual	86.081	294	.293		
Total	103.374	295			

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

b. Predictors: (Constant), Communication Culture Strength

From the results (Table 4.) the regression model was;

$$Y = 2.362 + 0.429X_1$$

The findings, as depicted in Table 4, showed that customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County would have an index of 2.362 when communication culture strength was held constant. In addition, the Beta coefficient was 0.429 for the relationship between communication culture strength and customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi County. This showed that a unit improvement in communication culture strength would lead to a 0.429 improvement in customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. The relationship was significant as the P-value (0.000) was less than the significance level (0.05). Therefore, we could reject the null hypothesis that “communication culture strength has no significant effect on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County”. These findings are in line with Kent and Weese (2000) findings that communication culture strength has a positive effect on customer satisfaction in telecommunication industry. In addition, Choi and Scott (2008) noted that the strength of communication culture had an impact on performance.

In addition, Schein (2010) pointed out that strong communication cultures set standards and principles that define how members behave in the work place. He noted that school environments that promote group meanings affect the way members in the school carry out their duties and this influences their effectiveness thus impacting on the customer positively. However, an organisation’s performance and results can differ depending on the communication culture strength.

Table 5: Regression Coefficients for Communication Culture Strength and Customer Satisfaction

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.362	.223		10.591	.000
	Communication Culture Strength	.429	.056	.409	7.685	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Customer Satisfaction

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

This study concluded that communication culture strength has an influence on customer satisfaction through organizational culture of public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. In addition, the study confirmed that communication culture strength being the visible manifestations and processes that include the mission statements, logos, systems and procedures that exist in an organisation form the basis of organisational behavior and though they give implicit cues to members about the meaning of the place and norms expectations they actually help to determine behavior in the workplace. Members who are able to identify with the mission statements, logos and the processes in the organisation adhere to rules and guidelines and as a result they become effective in their role performance thus impacting on the customer positively. On the other hand, in order to ensure success, principals must endeavour to consistently model behaviour, give explanations when need be and demand from their members a new way of believing, acting and thinking.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concluded that there is a direct and significant relationship between communication culture and customer satisfaction in secondary schools in Kenya. This means that the strength

of communication culture, corporate artefacts, espoused values and underlying assumptions have a significant impact on customer satisfaction. The presence of intensely shared values guide the way things are done in an organization such as a school.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology

Recommendations offered to the ministry of education recognise the critical role that communication culture through communication culture strengths plays on the performance of both principals and other teachers in schools. These teachers should be provided with the relevant training on communication culture strengths to help them gain relevant skills to be able to translate their communication culture strengths such as the intensity of shared values, presence of shared values, and the practice guided by shared values so as to achieve the desired performance, behaviour conformity and role clarity.

The Teacher Service Commission (TSC)

TSC should come up with induction programmes whose aim is to train teachers on communication culture strengths and how as members, they can be able to adjust to new environments with different communication cultures.

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD)

KICD should come up with a curriculum that will integrate communication culture strengths aspects including as the intensity of shared values, presence of shared values, and the practice guided by shared values in schools. School principals should then be trained on the importance and meaning of communication culture strengths and how it contributes to their school's success. Overseeing the implementation of this curriculum will ensure that the schools adjust to the right communication cultures which will then influence performance, role clarity and behaviour conformity and ultimately customer satisfaction.

Recommendations to Principals and Teachers

Principals and teachers should ensure that they are well versed with the communication cultures strengths in existence in their schools. Most importantly they should ensure that they understand the meaning and application of the cultural strengths such as the intensity of shared values, presence of shared values, and the practice guided by shared values existing in their schools and how they influence customer satisfaction. To ensure that this happens, the principals should ensure that they first articulate the schools core values. The understanding of these core values ensures that teachers will align themselves to the goals and objectives in their schools that lead to quality performance, role clarity and behaviour conformity. The presence of shared values will act as a guideline that will transform both students and teachers' mind sets and behaviour thus influencing performance, role clarity and behaviour.

In addition, to be able to build cohesiveness among members through common values, both the school principals and the teachers should build a cultural network of transmission which will serve as a channel where members can learn and share their experiences and expectations as they work towards goal achievement. Additionally, schools should also be able to define their values, norms and beliefs. Further, the principals should encourage the socialization and integration of individual member's goals and those of the school. This way the schools will be able to come up with shared meanings that ensure that members work together to achieve their goals. Similarly, principals and teachers should encourage school meetings and assemblies where students can raise issues and concerns that they might have. These meetings and assemblies will provide an avenue to discuss issues affecting students' which would otherwise

affect performance, behaviour and role clarity. Feedback regarding such issues will also be communicated.

Based on the above, it is important to acknowledge the importance of communication culture as a form of communication and how it influences performance of students in examinations and how roles for both the students and teachers influence how they behave in their institutions thereby influence their performance. In addition, the role of communication culture on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools is reinforced. As a result, therefore, it is recommended that communication culture should be recognized as a critical aspect that contributes to customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Kenya.

Recommendations to students

First and foremost, students should make sure that they internalize the communication culture in existence in their schools and act accordingly. Having the school logo engraved on school uniforms with the mission and vision statements will become a constant reminder of their schools' values and will go a long way in influencing their performance, behaviour and role clarity. The schools should also put notices on school values and goals in strategic places where the students will easily notice them.

Suggestions for Further Research

From the study, the researcher gave the following further research areas;

1. This study was conducted on the influence of communication culture strength on customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. Having been limited to public secondary schools only, the findings of this study cannot be generalized to private secondary schools. The study therefore suggests further studies to be conducted on the effect of communication culture strengths on customer satisfaction in private secondary schools in Kenya.
2. The study also suggests that a study can be done to explore the role of communication culture strengths and customer satisfaction among other stakeholders such as parents, sponsors among others in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County.
3. This study in addition relied mainly on what was reported by both the students and their principals in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County rather than how participants in the study conducted themselves in their environment. To be able to understand communication culture strengths and how it functions, one requires to have a one on one interaction in the actual environment for a certain period of time to really learn how communication culture strengths work. For this to happen, future research can use other research design methodologies such as ethnography to be able to capture how communication culture strength functions in a school environment.
4. The study found that communication culture strength could only explain a significantly reduced part of customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Nairobi City County. This study therefore suggests research on other factors affecting customer satisfaction in public secondary schools in Kenya.

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