

INFLUENCE OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGY ON PERFORMANCE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract: The performance of NGOs operating within Kenya has been a challenge due to the constant changing internal and external factors that hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of these organizations. Therefore, this study investigated the influence of communication strategy on performance of non-governmental organizations in Garissa County, Kenya. The research used a descriptive research design. The population consisted of 3 selected NGOs operating in Garissa County. Specifically, the sample size was 347 employees working in the selected 3 non-governmental organizations. Each stratum was represented by respondents selected through a simple random sampling method. The sample comprised 186 employees from three non-governmental organizations. All participants received questionnaires. From the three NGOs chosen in Wajir County, 18 individuals were selected for the pilot study. A content validity, criterion validity, and face validity were used in determining the validity. The reliability of the data was assessed using a Cronbach's alpha (α) test. Tables and figures were used to display the results of the quantitative data analysis, which made use of descriptive statistical techniques. Regression analysis and other inferential statistics were also carried out. The finding indicated that the communication strategy adopted by the NGOs within Garissa County, Kenya had contributed to a positive significant influence on their performance. The research concludes communication strategy employed by these NGOs has had a significantly positive influence on their overall performance. The recommendations made were that the organizations should enhance their employee training and development programs to enable the employees to learn the cultural backgrounds of various stakeholders they are serving within the County for effective communication.

Keywords: Communication strategy, Organizational Performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The level at which the organization performs is crucial factor to consider since it has a direct effect on its strategic goals and objectives achievements through streamlined efficiency and effectiveness making the organization to remain better positioned in meeting its targets, stakeholders needs and staying competitive within the market it is operating on (Kim, 2019). According to Gerrish (2022), better performing organizations frequently contributes significantly to the country's economic growth, creating employment opportunities and engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives and set standards for best and encouragement to other organization to enhance their performance. Therefore, it is very crucial for the organization's managers to consider effectively performance assessments and improvements in ensuring form sustainable success in a constant changing environment.

Lewis (2018) observes that ensuring effectiveness within an organization is fundamental since it is closely associated with the management of changes in enhancing performance. Moreover, these strategies assist in guaranteeing a smooth and efficient change management, minimizing disruptions and empowering employees to adapt to new work environment. As stated by Kimhi and Oliel (2019), the management of changes improves communication and partnerships encouraging

transparent communication on why the change has occurred, the expected results and the responsibility of each employee in managing such change. Therefore, proper management of changes builds trust resulting to making informed decisions and effective strategic implementation process.

The present economic downturn has caused significant changes within the business industry forcing all the organizations to reassess their operations and improve their structure with the aim of enhancing their performance (Owen, Mundy, Guild & Guild, 2021). According to Dewaal and Sivro (2022), accepting change is crucial for the success of an organization in current ever constant business environment as it enables organizations to be more adaptable and outperform their competitors. Therefore, organizations must ensure they effectively implement changes that are caused by the environment

The Non-Governmental Organizations' (NGOs) operating in Malaysia has enhanced their effectiveness through proper adaption to social, environmental and economic issues facing them. Moreover, these NGOs advocates for less privileged communities facilitating sustainable development and offering crucial services to the needs (Omar & Ismail, 2019). According to Hammad, Yaacob, Abdullah and Abubakar (2021), the major element of NGO's effectiveness with Malaysia is their capability in raising awareness and mobilizing public support through campaigns, events, and outreach programs to educate the community members on their rights such as human rights violations, environmental degradation, and poverty. This move has assisted in creating a highly informed and participatory approach.

The management of changes by NGOs in Russia has been hybrid since the country has been transforming its strategic approaches to align with the current market economic conditions (Levene & Higgs, 2018). Plantan (2022) indicate that the exploration of management of changes has enabled the NGOs in Russia to adopt various strategies that are in line with the demands of all the stakeholders. However, some NGOs are still using traditional approaches for change management such as coercion, authority exercising and forcing their employees to comply to the rigid strategic approach.

Obati, Awino and Ogutu (2018) observe that NGOs that are operating in Nigeria have embraced the need for proper management of strategies towards enhancing their performance as a result of varied and social, economic, and political landscape evolvement within the country. According to Bala (2022), the Nigerian NGOs are subjected to several factors emanating from both internal and external sources and plays a significant role shaping the NGOs success with the country. Therefore, a proper designed and efficient management of an organization has a more likelihood of attaining its goals and objectives.

Jackson (2019) observe that NGOs in South Africa have faced several challenges that affects their good governance such as lack of proper definition of role and responsibilities between the board and the management of these NGOs, poor communication, adherence to policy implementation and lack of adequate information. According to Dhunpath (2023), several NGOs in South Africa have complied to logical structures as the basis for assessments and documentations which they use as a guidance on their process of planning restricting them to fix timeliness and clear definition of objectives. However, they do not properly match with the complex and diverse nature of development nature.

In Kenya, Senjuur (2017) observe that the utilization of donor funding has significantly contributed to the country's development, with numerous projects such as roads, schools, and the health sector being attributed to these funds. . According to Maguta (2022), the primary approach employed in the donor funding systems in Kenya is the chain of principal relationship, whereby the funds are channeled to various ministries and non-government organizations that are directly responsible for their utilization and also implement programs focused on education, health, social welfare, and economic improvement, particularly among marginalized sectors.

Chepkemoi and Kisimbii (2021) observe that NGOs in Mombasa County actively engage with their stakeholders, including local communities, government agencies, and other organizations, to gather input and feedback on their programs and initiatives. According to Alande (2023) NGOs in Mombasa County collect and analyze data to achieve a better process of making informed decisions through conducting needs assessments, impact evaluations, and other forms of research for identifying areas that could need enhancement and measurements of program's effectiveness. Therefore, these methods assist NGOs in adapting to the ever changing situations, addressing developing issues and eventually achieving goals more effectively.

Currently, there has been an increasing acknowledgment of the necessity to revise and update change management approaches within NGOs in Garissa County, Kenya to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability through the recognition of the unique challenges and opportunities that NGOs in Garissa County face, adopting a more participatory and inclusive

approach and focusing on building internal capacity and resilience (Rotich, 2021). Hussein and Thuraira (2023) observe that NGOs in Garissa County are subjected to dynamic environment, with factors such as political instability, cultural diversity, and limited resources can impact their ability to implement change successfully. Therefore, by recognizing the unique context in which they operate, adopting a participatory and inclusive approach, and building internal capacity and resilience, NGOs can effectively navigate change and continue to make a positive impact in the communities they serve.

Performance is about general success and productivity in attaining goals and objectives and covers different areas of a company's activities, such as its financial results, efficiency, customer happiness, staff involvement, and creativity (Russell, Terborg & Powers, 2018). Ostroff (2020) observe evaluating the organization's output in relation to the inputs, such as labor, capital, and technology, to determine its productivity levels. Higher productivity indicates that the organization is utilizing its resources effectively and efficiently. Therefore, organizations can improve their performance and sustainability over time by consistently monitoring and enhancing organizational performance.

Change management strategy refer to set of methods employed in managing change within an organization or individual which offers an organized and orderly way of effectively planning, executing and monitoring change initiatives (Belias & Koustelios, 2019). According to Kavanagh and Ashkanasy (2022) change management strategy refers to the overall plan or approach that an organization or individual adopts to effectively navigate and implement change and involves identification for necessity for change, definition of objectives, developing a roadmap, and allocating resources to ensure successful change implementation. Bharadwaj (2019) observe that a well-developed communication plan guarantees that every stakeholder is aware of the emerging changes and its implications which helps to create a shared understanding and alignment among employees, managers, and other key individuals involved in the change process. Broms and Gahmberg (2021) observe that a communication plan facilitates two-way communication between leaders and employees which provide a podium for employees to voice their concerns and provide feedback. This open and transparent communication nurtures trust and engagement, as employees acquires a sense of belongingness and included in the change process.

In Garissa County, NGOs have been active since the 1990s and have been supporting underprivileged and marginalized populations in the area (Kabala & Njeri, 2023). The NGOs engage in various projects in addition to offering various services such as in health and education. Since then, the NGOs have supported a number of projects such as in education, human rights, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health through collaborations with other sectors. Among the most common NGOs operating in the area include CARE International, Woman Kind Kenya, VSF Belgium, World Vision International, Pastoralists Girls' Initiatives and GIZ among others (Garissa County Integrated Development Plan, 2022).

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The NGOs operating in Garissa County faces many difficulties adversely affecting their performance. For instance, statistical data indicate that majority of the NGOs lack adequate finances with more than 60% of NGOs operating below 50% of the estimated set budget for them which has limited their capability of implementing various projects effectively, about 30% of those who are directly benefiting from various programs offered by these NGOs get the benefits and 70% of projects introduced by these NGOs does not have a proper follow-up strategy leading to lack of long term effect and engagement of community members. Moreover, majority of NGOs in Garissa County lacks proper trained workforce accounting for 50% and 65% of NGOs operates solely without any partnership which could limit their resource capability (World Bank Report, 2024).

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Theory of Change

Kurt Lewin developed the theory of change in organizations in 1940. Lewin's change theory highlights the significance of recognizing and controlling the forces that influence organizational change, such as the necessity for well-defined objectives, efficient communication, and stakeholders' involvement within the process of transformation. Lewin's work laid the basis for present management of practices for change and has also a great influence with the area of developing an organization. Kurt (1940) indicates that theory provides a structure for assisting organizations in articulating their goals, strategies and expected outcomes and provides a roadmap for how an organization plans to create social change and achieve its mission. When applied to organizational development and management, the theory of change can have several practical applications.

According to Mayne (2017) the theory of change provides a proper guidance to the organizations in designing programs and strategies through identification of interventions by identifying basic assumptions and the process that connects activities to the expected outputs. According to Zand and Sorensen (2021) the theory presents a significant tool for learning and adaptation. By regularly reviewing and updating the theory of change, organizations can stay responsive to changing circumstances, emerging evidence, and stakeholder feedback. This iterative process of reflection and adjustment can lead to more effective and sustainable programs over time.

The theory can assist NGOs by offering a clear articulation of their goals, proper identification of crucial processes in achieving their goals and continuously measuring progress. Through utilizing this framework, NGOs in Garissa County can effectively navigate the complex landscape of development work and implement changes that will enhance their performance and impact.

Empirical Literature Review

In Zanzibar public institutions, Salim (2022) conducted a study on how internal communications impact organization performance. The study that involved 150 questionnaires, interviews and observations schedules. The results have verified that the performance of the company and the internal communication technologies used are related. Companies using various internal communication tools can improve performance by engaging scattered employees. In this scenario, face-to-face interactions through conferences and mobile phones are favored over internal memos and emails due to inadequate ICT resources.

Kibe (2019) examined how communication strategies impact organizational performance. The study investigated how communication strategies impact the performance of KPA. The sample group included 200 individuals who were employees of the corporate service division, with a focus on the corporate development department. The research discovered that companies that have a clandestine culture of communication exclude individuals, which hinders engagement and leads to missed ideas and chances. Employee participation presented a great influence in enhancing their happiness and achievement.

A study by Murimi and Anyieni (2023) examined the effects of Safaricom Limited's corporate communication strategy on the company's success in Kenya. 207 respondents were the target population of this census-based study. To collect data, structured questionnaires were used. Descriptive data indicated that respondents believed the performance at Safaricom limited was influenced by the company's communication strategy. Regression analysis signified that significantly enhanced performance. The results indicated a strong and positive correlation with corporate communication strategy.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research used a descriptive research design. The population consisted of 3 selected NGOs operating in Garissa County. Specifically, the sample size was 347 employees working in the selected 3 non-governmental organizations. Each stratum was represented by respondents selected through a simple random sampling method. The sample comprised 186 employees from three non-governmental organizations. All participants received questionnaires. From the three NGOs chosen in Wajir County, 18 individuals were selected for the pilot study. A content validity, criterion validity, and face validity were used in determining the validity. The reliability of the data was assessed using a Cronbach's alpha (α) test. Tables and figures were used to display the results of the quantitative data analysis, which made use of descriptive statistical techniques. Regression analysis and other inferential statistics were also carried out.

5. FINDINGS

The descriptive statistics were obtained from the respondents' level of agreement on each statement and the findings are presented in Table 1.

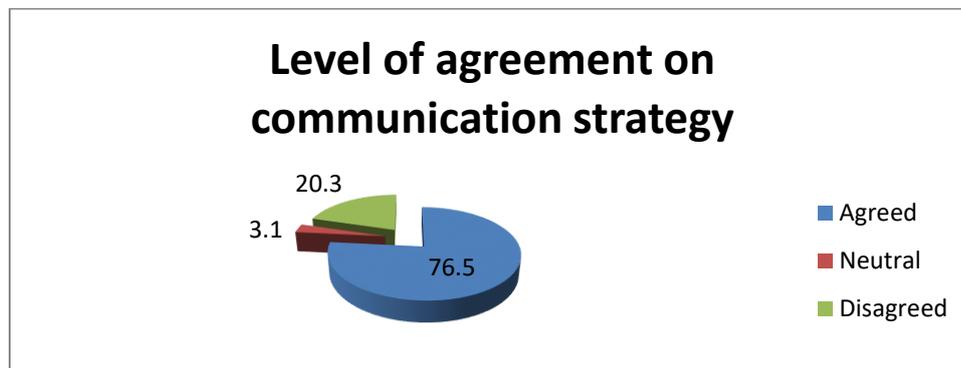
Table 1: Communication Strategy

Statements	SD %	D%	N%	A%	SA%	M	St.Dev
Communication channels improve team coordination, enhancing organizational efficiency.	10.2	5.3	1.2	40.6	42.7	4.16	0.84
Using various communication channels aids in constructing robust relationships with all stakeholders.	9.5	5.6	3.1	32.1	49.7	4.24	0.76
Feedback on employees performance makes them feel valued which improve their performance	12.6	21.3	0.0	25.9	40.2	3.99	1.01

Efficient feedback promotes transparent communication within team members.	3.4	4.9	2.2	50.1	39.4	4.52	0.48
Sharing the goals and objectives helps stakeholders coordinate their efforts effectively.	5.1	10.3	3.7	33.6	47.3	4.46	0.54
Informing all stakeholders about goals and objectives allows for them to be responsible for their performance.	21.5	12.3	8.4	23.4	34.4	3.51	1.49
Aggregate score	10.4	9.9	3.1	34.3	42.3	4.15	0.85

Source: Research Data (2025)

Based on average results, every statement received respondents agreement offered to examine how the communication strategy affected performance ($M=4.15$; $SD=0.85$). This was on average agreed by 76.5% of the respondents, 3.1% indicated neutral and 20.3% disagreed as shown in Figure 1.



Source: Research Data (2025)

Figure 1: Communication Strategy

The finding shows that communication strategy was viewed by the respondents as to have contributed to a significant improvement on the performance of NGOs. The finding agree with Kibe (2019) The research who discovered that companies that have a clandestine culture of communication exclude individuals, which hinders engagement and leads to missed ideas and chances.

Multiple Regression Analysis Results

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.891	0.794	0.751	1.0032

Source: Research Data (2025)

The R adjusted value .751, indicating a 75.1% variation performance influenced by implementing communication strategies. Additionally, this shows a 24.9% gap that represents unstudied factors. These findings suggest that additional variables influencing organizational performance need further investigation.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	0.591	0.315		1.876	0.003
	Communication strategy	0.705	0.224	0.0541	3.147	0.004

Source: Research Data (2025)

The following regression equation was produced using the data in Table 3;

$$\text{Performance} = 0.591 + 0.705(\text{communication strategy}) + \epsilon$$

The findings indicate that the communication strategy adopted by the NGOs within Garissa County, Kenya had contributed to a positive significant influence on their performance ($\beta=0.0541$, $t=3.147$, $p=0.004$). The improvement on communication strategy would improve the performance by 0.705 as indicated by the regression coefficient when other variables are kept constant. This growth is due to better outreach, clearer messaging, and stronger stakeholder engagement, resulting in more efficient program execution and greater community impact.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The research concludes communication strategy employed by these NGOs has had a significantly positive influence on their overall performance. The NGOs that listen to the views of and the perceptions of the community members are able to design their programs that meet the demands of these members. A two-way communication assists NGOs to establish strong trust and create stronger empowerment to the community enabling for effective partnership approach in solving problems. Moreover, when NGOs share their goals, improvements and also the issues facing them they become more credible and enhance more engagement from the community members.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

The NGOs should enhance their employee training and development programs to enable the employees to learn the cultural backgrounds of various stakeholders they are serving within the County for effective communication. The NGOs should identify a strong way of providing feedback to enhance the process of community members to air their views for proper design of training and development programs. The NGOs should embrace use of technological devices that can enable the employees' access more learning resources and share knowledge across different experts.

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