

KABARAK UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE

**TITLE: EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATION AND LEADERSHIP
STYLES ON INFORMATION FLOW IN PUBLIC
UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA:
A CASE OF MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY**

By

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ABSTRACT

This research was carried out to determine the effects of communication and leadership styles on information flow in public universities in Kenya our case being Maasai Mara University. The objectives were to find out the channels through which information reaches the staff within the university, to indentify the methods of communicating to students on matters affecting them directly, to determine the leadership styles in use at Maasai Mara University. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the various target population, analyze and present the findings.



ABSTRACT ...cntd

The findings show that communication is key in leadership in the sense that it influences it a lot and for there to appropriate leadership style, communication is essential. Information flow in Maasai Mara University is mostly downward in the sense that the top management does not give chance to the people ranked lowest in hierarchy to air their views that is through the decision making process. Most universities in Kenya tend to use autocratic or authoritarian type of style especially on students at the expense of their rights. This has frequently led to rampage among university students.



Statement of the problem

Communication is the process of sharing meaning and it is very crucial in the running of day to day activities in our daily lives. In relation to this, communication and leadership styles has a great impact on the smooth running of any given organization. This seems to be a problem in our public universities because of the frequent conflicts. This study is aimed at establishing the effects of communication and leadership style on information flow in Maasai Mara University following the previous frequent rampages thus earning titles like “A striking University” which according to my Public Relations skills is negative publicity.



Objectives

- a) To find out the channels through which information reaches the staff within the university.
- b) To indentify the methods of communicating to students on matters affecting them directly.
- c) To determine the leadership styles in use at Maasai Mara University



Significance of the Study

This study is likely to benefit the government in the sense that it will help her come up with guiding principles on the kind of communication and leadership styles to be used in the managing of public universities so as to eliminate the problem of rampages thus saving the country's resources.

This study is also likely to benefit the student fraternity in the sense that their views will be aired and feedback will reach them on time so as save the many fracas among them thus saving their family resources since many have been forced to pay for damages caused after the riots.

This study is also likely to benefit the Kenyan universities' management in the sense that they will be able to establish proper communication and leadership styles to adopt so as to curb the increased rampages in their institutions thus creating a conducive learning atmosphere for their students as well as a conducive working atmosphere for their staff.



Theoretical framework

Situational theories propose that leaders choose the best course of action based upon situational variables. Different styles of leadership may be more appropriate for certain types of decision-making. For example, in a situation where the leader is the most knowledgeable and experienced member of a group, an authoritarian style might be most appropriate. In other instances where group members are skilled experts, a democratic style would be more effective.

For the any organization to work well, various types of leadership styles ought to be put in place considering that many issues rise at different points in the organization and you find that there are different ways of responding to each of the in aspect brought to light

Let each situation be handled effectively basing on its demands thus proper n smooth running of the organization.



methodology & sample design

The respondents were chosen using purposive sampling, because the researcher already knows the research subjects.

This study is an attempt to analyze the effects of communication and leadership styles on information flow in public universities in Kenya, a case of Maasai Mara University. The study used questionnaires to collect data from various persons within the organization.

The researcher has a target of 30 undergraduate students of which 10 will be second years, 10 third years and 10 fourth years and a target of 20 staff members who will be preferably non-teaching staff. The non-teaching staff will cut across various departments within the university.



Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive (frequency tabulation and the following findings were obtained:.

Table 1: Representing the frequency of Communication Channels

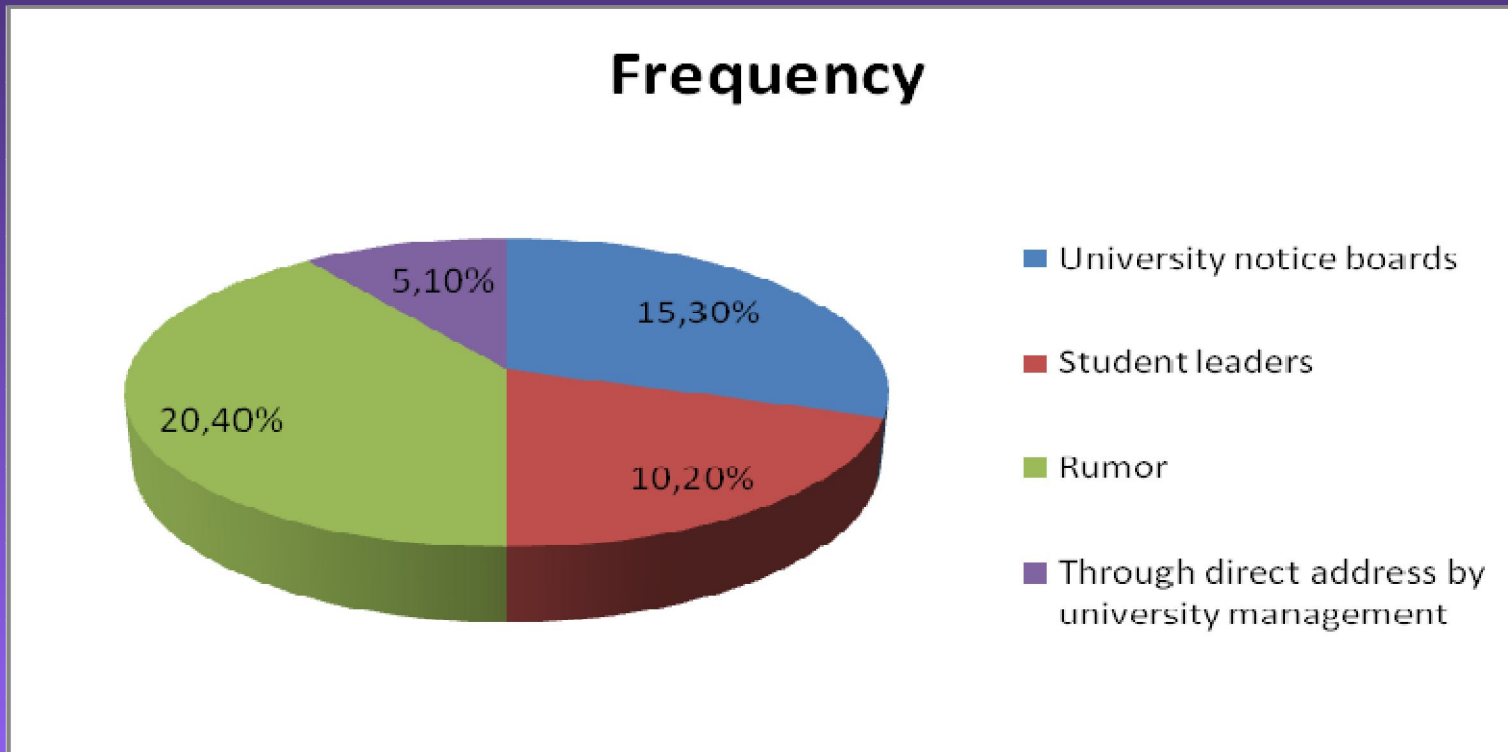
Category	Frequency	Percentage
Memos	16	32
Verbal communication	9	18
Phone call	15	30
E-mails	10	20

The findings indicate that the most frequently used channel of communication to pass information to staff in the organization is memos (32%). This is followed by Phone call (30%). The use of e-mails accounts for 20 per cent and Verbal communication accounts for 18 % of transmission of messages.



Data analysis.....Ctnd 1

Figure 1: Frequency of communicating crucial matters to students



The findings indicate that vital messages affecting students directly tend to reach them through rumor at 40 per cent followed by university notice boards at 30 per cent. The use of student leaders is at 20 per cent and the least used method is through direct address by university management at 10%.

Data analysis.....Ctnd 2

Table 2: Frequency of role played in decision making process among staff members

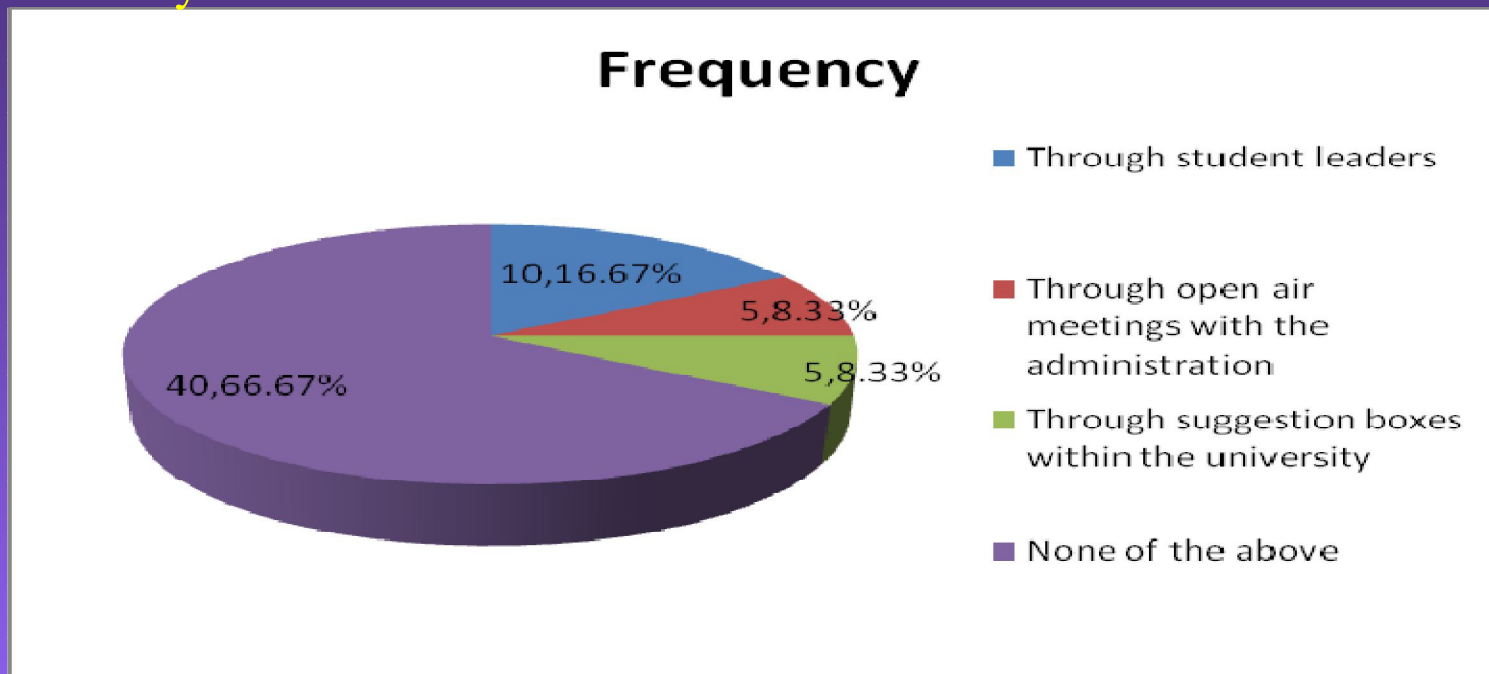
Category	Frequency	Percentage
Dean of the school	30	50
Chairman of the school	15	25
Heads of various section within the school	10	16.7
Everyone's view	5	8.3

The findings indicate that the process of decision making within the university at the school levels is heavily reliable on the dean of the various schools with a percentage of 50, followed by the chairmen of the schools at 25%, followed by heads of various sections within the school at 16.7 % and finally everyone's is at 8.3% recording the lowest percentage.



Data analysis.....Ctnd 3

Figure 2: Student's role in the decision making process within the University



The findings indicate that students are not involved in the university's decision making process with a percentage of 66.67; this is followed by 16.67 per cent which indicates that students' representation within the university's decision making process is done by the student leaders. Whereas open air meetings with the administration and suggestion boxes within the university accounts for the lowest percentage rate of 8.33 each.

Summary of the Findings

The frequently used channel of passing information to the staff members within the university is the memos.

Students heavily rely on rumor for sourcing out the vital information directly affecting them.

Non-teaching staff members do not directly participate in the university's decision making process but rather depend on the decision made by their leaders. Whether is it in favor of their grievances or not, their opinion is not prioritized and so are the students. They play no role at all in the decision making process of the university in as much as whatever is being discussed could be affecting them.



Conclusions

In as much as technology has led to improved communication in various organizations, universities still relies on old means of communication like memos whereas e-mails has taken over in terms of communicating both internally and externally. This could be influenced by the kind of leadership style in place as well in the sense that, if the university management is not willing to purchase computers for her employees as well as subscribe to intranet services for employees within the organization, communication via e-mails will be almost impossible.

According to the findings in chapter four above, students heavily rely on rumor as source of information especially on matters affecting them directly. This is an indication that the university does not embrace the presence of modern technology like social media communication.



Conclusions...cntd

Students play no role in the University's decision making process. This brings to light on the type of leadership style in practice at Maasai Mara University as authoritarian or autocratic leadership style because Authoritarian leaders: sets goals individually, engages primarily in one-way and downward communication, controls discussion with followers, and dominates interaction.



Recommendations

1. I would recommend that the universities' top management should ensure that both staff (non-teaching) should play a role in the university's decision making procedure. This is mainly aimed at ensuring that decisions made within the university do not go against the rights of the minority some may call them considering that they the lowly ranked in the hierarchy.
2. The universities' top management should exercise a variety of leadership style not only rely one which is autocratic or authoritarian for effective service delivery. This will not only lead to proper service delivery but also satisfaction among subjects in the sense that they will feel that they are well represented. A style like laissez faire can work well with support staff especially when their proper or adequate representation at the top management with minimum supervision at their specific areas of work.



Suggestions of further research

I would suggest that researchers should focus on how leadership styles practiced in public universities in Kenya affects student behavior.



*****END*****



Thank you

Q's & A's

