Analyzing Internal Organizational Communication at the University of Nairobi Library System

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ABSTRACT
Internal organizational communication plays an important role in facilitating effective and efficient library operations and service delivery. However, over the years, the University of Nairobi library system, scattered across six campuses, has registered many complaints, both from the Library staff and users of information services due to poor internal organizational communication. The aim of this study was, therefore, to analyse the existing internal organizational communication at the University of Nairobi library system with the view of suggesting ways in which it can be enhanced. The objectives of the study were: to determine the effectiveness of the used forms and channels of internal communication on the execution of library operations and services; to establish the internal communication policy framework governing internal communication at the university library system and to suggest ways of optimising the use of forms and channels of internal communication to enhance library operations and services. The study population was composed of various cadres of University of Nairobi Library staff stationed at the six campuses. Out of 167 members of the library staff, 45 were purposefully and randomly selected to form the study sample. Data was collected using face-to-face interviews and documentary reviews. Data was analysed thematically and presented by use of descriptive statistics. The findings of the study revealed that internal organisational communication was largely inadequate due to variations in communication practices in the various branches of the Library and an inefficient internal communication policy. The study subsequently recommends a review of the existing communication policy and streamlining of the internal communication practices to improve library operations and Services.

Introduction
Internal communication is critical in the running of modern libraries. In the recent years, there has been emergence of trends essential in improving workability of libraries. Some of the emerging trends include use of intranet to enhance communication between different departments and floors of the library, mobile device usage in the access of catalogues, use of auditory and visual cues such as voice recording and drawing of pictures among others.

The relevance of the libraries in the 21st century continue to be measured by the degree to which they drive the teaching, research and training agenda of their affiliate institutions (Wawrzaszek and Wedaman, 2008). Yet, as noted by Ifidon and Ugwuanyi (2013), to effectively execute their tasks and maintain balance in such an environment, libraries must demonstrate proficiency and effectiveness in communication at all levels. Analysis of the literature shows notably gaps in library internal organizational communication research such as development of library internal communication practices, monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness of internal communication practices in libraries and communication channels and forms that lead to satisfactory functioning of staff in the both public and private academic library systems amongst others (Ifidon and Ugwuanyi, 2013).

Failure to address the gaps would lead to more slow development of effective library communication practices aimed at enhancing operations and service delivery. The argument therefore advanced by this study is that internal organisation communication practices is precedent to its effective execution of its services and operations.

Statement of the problem
The University of Nairobi has expanded from a one campus university to the current six campuses. Each campus is served with a campus library under the management of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library. Based on the growth in size and geographical distribution of the university library and the diversity of operations and services carried out and provided, internal communication of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library has faced a number of challenges. Analysis of the complaints and complement registers of the various branch libraries shows that over the years, the library has increasingly been receiving complaints of delayed or no feedback particularly from higher to lower cadre of staff. For instance, in circumstances when there are changes in opening hours of the library (whether temporary or permanent), or changes in the operational procedure of delivering a particular service, there has always been poor communication of such information (Internal and external ISO audits reports of 2009).
Cumulatively, these have contributed to dissatisfaction, demoralization and low rating of the library performance by both its staff and other stakeholders. Despite these indicators that point to gaps in the internal communication of the library system, empirical investigations to establish the root causes are yet to be undertaken. As a result of this the researcher found it wise to undertake the study.

Objectives
(i) To determine the effectiveness of the used forms and channels of internal communication on the execution of library operations and services.
(ii) To establish the internal communication policy framework governing internal communication at the university library system.
(iii) To suggest ways of optimizing the use of forms and channels of internal communication to enhance library operations and services.

Assumptions of the Study
The study was based on the following assumptions:
- Effectiveness of a library operation or service is dependent on the form and channel of communication used.
- The organisational communication policy does not explicitly address the international communication needs and practices of the library.

Significance
The findings and recommendations of the study can be used to provide practical solutions to the challenges found in the internal organizational communication of the University of Nairobi library system. In addition, research findings will inform directions for development of internal organizational communication policies at the University of Nairobi library system based on their operations and services. The study findings can be used in other institutions of higher learning to improve on their communication for better service delivery.

Literature review
This presents a review of the literature germane to internal organisational communication practices with special reference to staff operations in the delivery of library services. The research reviewed the effectiveness of the forms and channels of communication used by the staff at the University of Nairobi library system and the policy to enhance them. The channels to use at any one given time are many but in the case of this study were formal and informal either written, oral or non-verbal.

The formal communication usually takes written or a recorded form of communication (Tourish & Hargie, 2009). Memos, Reports, Minutes are the forms of written communication used in the university of Nairobi library system. Informal Forms of Communication was the one which does not follow any set rules. This describes the interleaving branches of a total unofficial communication system which has been constructed informally and which is constantly changing. It involves spontaneous gatherings, exchanging informal or sending information. This form of communication can be achieved through various means that includes: Telephone conversations, oral Interviews, public address among others. Nonverbal Communication reinforces oral communication in most cases. It provides additional visual stimulus and simplifies the written or spoken word. It provides ideas in a number of forms, illustrates techniques and procedures and provides visual record in one’s mind. It Use signs like University librarian coming very early in the morning and standing on the door, frowning on the face shows one is angry or decertified with something among others.

Internal Organizational Communication Policy Framework
Byrne and LeMay (2006) noted that a good internal organizational communication policy should address both downward and upward communication in the organization. With regard to downward communications, Shaw (2004) points that, the policy should ensure that every employee receives formal communications such as a copy of the strategic plan, employee handbook, a set of procedures for how routine tasks are conducted, yearly performance reviews among others. These help in streaming organizational message downwards to help in its implementation and adherence. Again, Gabbott and Hogg (2001) note that, the policy should have defined provisions for upward communications. Watson and Belanger (2007) note that such a policy should ensure employees give regular reports to their superiors. In support of this position, Shaw (2004) opines that organizations that operate without putting in place proper internal organizational communication framework in place leaves room for grapevine even on matters that are central such as organizational strategic plan.

In addition, Markus (1994) points that lateral communication need to be catered in the policy framework to promote communication across employee in the same cadre and how seniors relate with their juniors. For instance, communication between supervisor and his or her junior employees is critical in building the synergy that is fundamental in advancing the core objectives of any organization (Cees, 2005). According to Cees, supervision is often considered to include designing the job, hiring someone to fill the job, training them, delegating to them, guiding them via performance reviews, helping them develop their career, noting performance issues and firing them if needed. For all these activities to succeed in the best interest of an organization, it is important that internal communication policy should adequately address how every activity should be communicated to the parties involved.

Further to that, it was pointed out by Meissner (2010) that an internal organizational communication policy framework should have a provision that provides for a communications plan. According to Meissner, whether planning for internal or external communications, it is important to develop a communications plan that should be formal. In support of this position, Salmon and Joiner (2005) notes that such a plan should consider key messages to be conveyed, key stakeholders do be targeted by the messages for instance clients, funders, community leaders, service providers among others and the best approach to be used in reaching out to each key stakeholder by having a well spelled policy frame work addressing all the issue hence a guideline. According to Salmon the study was based on a business set up to bring together all parties, improve on their business and avoid conflict. In this study such literature will be paramount to reduce conflict among the University of Nairobi library staff and strengthen their communication hence improve their services.

Improving Internal Organizational Communication Practices
To improve on internal communication there is need to increase employee’s engagement, improve company competitiveness to build strong team using online means. For effective communication at work, employees must be able to easily find the information they need and know exactly what actions they required to take at any one given time.
There are a number of strategies that can be employed on an organization to improve internal organizational communication practices. Gabbott and Hogg (2001) provides that a successful internal communication to be attained, it is important to develop mutual trust among stakeholders. For the smooth functioning of an organization and for higher productivity there must be mutual trust between the management and the employees to realize successful internal communication.

In addition, Watson and Belanger (2007) provide that motivation of employees is paramount in the realization of effective internal communication in an organization. However, it is important to appreciate that motivation is closely related with internal communication. This is ascribed to the position of Markus (1994) that to be able to provide proper motivational measures management, there is need to have a clear view regarding the attitude of the employees which cannot be brought into context without continuous internal communication.

On the other hand, Salmon and Joiner (2005) acknowledges that participation of the employees in the decision making process not only increase the quality of decision but also ensure the better implementation of decision and also enhances internal communication. This is ascribed to the fact that employees feel part of the system and hence, they become free in communicating their feelings in a correct manner. Finally, Gabbott and Hogg (2001) pointed that the high level of transparency in organizational processes promotes internal organizational communication. A transparent working environment assures stakeholders that any process is undertaken above board thus feeling free to share freely in their internal communication processes.

**Research methodology**

The research design was a case study of University of Nairobi Library System. Stinchcombe (2005) defines a research design as the scheme, outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. The research design was preferred because case study methods were sufficient by themselves to capture the trends or the complexity of study problem (Creswell, 2003). The study employed a case study research design and its procedures for collecting, analyzing, and presenting data in the study process. This research design was used because of its ability to obtain detailed information about internal organizational communication channels and their effectiveness at the university of Nairobi library system.

The study was Qualitative research, which often involves a smaller number of participants (51 out of 167 for this study).

This was because the methods used in-depth interviews which are time and labour intensive but also because a large number of people are not needed for the purposes of statistical analysis or to make generalizations from the results.

Primarily, the methodological approach to this study parts with the “conventional view that qualitative studies are only good for exploratory forays, for developing hypotheses and that strong explanations including casual attributions can be derived only through quantitative studies” and instead takes as its major assumption the stand taken by Miles and Huberman (1994) that qualitative evaluation research is capable of identifying causal mechanism, dealing with complex local networks and sorting out temporal dimension of events. Thus, this approach was adopted because of its ability to obtain nuanced aspects of internal organizational communication practices at the University of Nairobi Library System.

**Study population**

The study population comprised of 167 members of staff in the University of Nairobi Library System. They included University Librarian (1), Deputy University Librarians (3), Senior Librarians (14), Librarians (23), Senior Library Assistants (44), Library Assistants (53) and Library Attendants (29) and Deputy Vice chancellor (Administration and Finance). The number of other staff from small libraries which were not sampled for the study but used in the pilot study were; 4 senior library assistants, 3 library assistants, and 9 library attendants. The following was the distribution of the population in the six branch libraries as shown in Table 1.

**Study sample size**

Connaway (2010) states that it is advisable to use a large sample size as the rule of the thumb in research in order to ensure better presentation as the study population and also in statistical analysis and accuracy. The study sample size composed of 51 respondents. The sample was selected from the six branch libraries as shown in the Table 2. The researcher used both probability sampling technique to select University Librarian, Deputy University Librarians, College librarians, Head of Sections and non-probability sampling technique to select Non- Management staff to arrive at this sample as shown in Table 2.

**Sampling**

This is a process of choosing sample frame. It is a method of studying from a few selected items, instead of the entire big number of units to pick a sample as a representative. Kothari (1990) argues that if well chosen, samples of about 10% of a population can often give good reliability.

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**Table 1. Study population.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch Libraries</th>
<th>D.V.C(Adm &amp; Fanance)</th>
<th>University librarian</th>
<th>Deputy U.Librarians</th>
<th>Senior Librarians</th>
<th>Librarians</th>
<th>Senior L.Assistants</th>
<th>Library Assistants</th>
<th>Library Attendant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art&amp;Design Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiromo Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabete Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Study sample size.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch Libraries</th>
<th>Deputy Vice Chancellor( A &amp; F)</th>
<th>University librarian</th>
<th>Deputy U.Librarians</th>
<th>College Librarians</th>
<th>Head of sections</th>
<th>Non-Management staff</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kikuyu Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art&amp;Design Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiromo Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kabete Library</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On the other hand, Stinchcombe (2005) notes that sample size selection to a great extent are judgmentally. However, the study used the recommendation of Bell (1993) that one-third sample size is an adequate representative of the population that is less than 1000. This resulted to a study sample of 51 respondents.

The researcher used both probability and non-probability method based on the nature of the study and selected sample. Probability was used to address this study because the stratum were grouped according to their seniority hence had common characteristic. In the study strata was extracted from each stratum to make a representation, Example University Librarian, Deputy University Librarians, College Librarians, Head of Sections, Non Management Staff and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration and Finance). This method (probability) was used to select senior staff only. On the other hand, Non-probability sampling method was used to select junior staff based on their strata because of their great number as opposed to senior staff.

The study population was based on six University campuses. The study used Purposive sampling technique to select samples from Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration and Finance), University Librarian, Deputy University Librarians, College librarians and Head of Sections were the key informants of the study thus purposively sampled.

Kombo (2006) supports stratified random sampling technique as he says that it helps to produce estimates of overall population parameters with greater precision and ensures a more representative sample is derived from a relatively homogeneous population without biasness. Due to those facts then, the technique was employed in this study to select respondents randomly sampled from their respective stratum that is Senior Library Assistants, Library Assistants, and Library Attendants.

**Data collection methods**

The study used interviews and documentary reviews methods for data collection. The study employed face to face interviewing method to all the fifty one (51) respondents in the sample. The data collection instruments included structured interviews. The reason for selecting the interview as the main data collection instrument was its superb ability to obtain in-depth information.

Documentary review was used to obtain information in documented records. In this study there were document with information about internal organizational communication but for the whole University but not for the library system. There was no policy neither to cater for the same. The information which was provided in the documents, University websites and downloads was about policy in relation to plagiarism, copyright, public relation among others to the entire university. Documentary reviews were used but did not give sufficient information as compared to interviews.

**Data Collection instruments**

The quality of a study is determined by how well the research design was well understood and formulated. Based on this assertion, the study used qualitative research design where interviews and documents were preferred data collection instruments. Interview schedule and documents were used in collecting data from library staff and one Senior Administrator (Deputy Vice chancellor Administration and Finance).

**Interview schedules**

The researcher used semi-structured interviews, based on interview guide. Semi-structured interview guide are flexible as they contain both open and closed-ended questions thus allowed for in-depth and comprehensive information to be gathered. The interview schedule were useful in leading questions but additional questions were asked where clarification was needed, or otherwise was required during the interview sessions as the need arose (Too, 2014).

**Findings of the study**

**How Forms and Channels of Internal Organizational Communication helped to improve on Library Operations and Services.**

The study found that there forms and channels that has helped to improve on library processes and operations. The question was asked on “how these forms and channels had helped the library system to improve on their services” The study finding was presented as in the Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5. How Forms and Channels of Internal Organizational Communication helped to improve on Library Operations and Services.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Communication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardize operations</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building teamwork</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating/Awareness</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 4.5, majority of the respondents acknowledged that these forms of internal communication have a number of benefits to the university library in a number of ways. For instance, 42.2 % noted that they help to educate and carry out awareness on library operations and services, 33.3 % noting that they help in advancing customer satisfaction, 17.8% held that they help to standardize library operations while 6.7 % held that they help in building teamwork. All these contributions of various specific forms of communication contribute to improvement of library processes and services.

In addition, the study sought to determine how the University Librarian, Deputy University Librarians and College Librarians determine which communication channels or forms they use to relay information to other members of staff. In the words of the one Deputy University Librarian, “Specific information to be relayed and the intended audience for the message determine to a great extend the channel and form of communication to be used in the Library System. In addition, being an ISO certified organization, there is a library operating procedure that guides official internal communication again depending on the kind of the information to be relayed”. (R.10)

On the other hand, the six College Librarians provided a number of factors that are considered in choosing channel and form of internal communication in the University Library System. This is illustrated in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6. How to Determine Channels and Forms used in Internal Organizational Communication in the Library System.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to Determine Channels and Forms used in Internal Organizational Communication in the Library System</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on the Standard Operating Procedure</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type Target Audience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Message/Information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of responses</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 4.6, it was determined that the channel and the form of formal internal organizational communication in the University Library is largely determined
by the standard operating procedure of the University Library and the type of message or information as all six College Librarians mentioned them as key factors. In addition, four College Librarians pointed that the type of target audience is also a factor that is considered in the determining the channel or the form of communication to be used in the internal formal communication.

Again, the study sought to establish which form of communication the University Librarian, Deputy University Librarian and College Librarians receive information from subordinates. The finding of the study established that subordinates communicate to their senior using various forms of communication. As quoted from the one of the Deputy University Librarian said:

“memos are widely used form of formal internal communication and hence junior staff uses them more often.” (R.11) to add on this, one of the College Librarians said that: “juniors communicate to their seniors in form of reports on a number of library activities”. (R.12) Thus, the results were as illustrated in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7. Forms of Internal Communication used by Library Assistants and Library Attendants to University Librarian, Deputies, College Librarians and Librarians.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of Internal Communication used by Library Assistants and Library Attendants to University Librarian, Deputies, College Librarians and Librarians.</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memos</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>41.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minutes</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As illustrated in Table 4.7, it was established that memos and reports were the most commonly forms of internal formal communication that are used by the subordinate staff in the university library to communicate with their senior as five respondents mentioned them. On the other hand, minutes were also used as a form of formal communication especially following meetings as two respondents mentioned them during the interviews.

Also, the study sought to determine from the University Librarian, Deputy University Librarian and College Librarians if lack of adequate information or delivery of untimely information affect their efficiency when performing their duties. From the results obtained, all the respondents affirmed that in deed delay in delivery of information affect their effectiveness in performance of their duties. In the words of the one of the Deputy University Librarian, “Delay in the delivery of information will hamper an activity to which the information relates to. For instance, if a report that is supposed to be used by the University Librarian in the senate meeting is delayed, it paints the entire library in a negative way as inefficient”. (R.13)

When asked whether organization structure or hierarchy affect the communication within the library system, it was agreed by all the respondents that the hierarchy has an impact on communication. One of the college librarians said that: “The University follows a bureaucratic form of management where communication has to follow hierarchy which delays information reaching the top management”. (R.14)

This has a net effect that information takes a long time before reaching the top as any information originating from lower cadre staff has to go through the reporting channel. However, the deputy vice chancellor on administration and finance noted that the internal communication channels have benefited the University staff in a number of ways which included; sharing experiences, information and knowledge, implementation of internal working processes among others. The study established that effective internal communication channels are vital to enhancement of Library operations and services. The study found out that deciding on how best to communicate a message to audience can be tricky, but with proper forms and channels of communication there will be smooth flow of information.

### 4.5 Internal Communication Policy Framework and Library Service Functions

The research question for the objective was ‘Is there any policy in relation to internal organizational communication in library service functions?’

Through the documentary review the researcher found out that lack of a formal structure for how the internal communication was carried out at Library system led to confusion in the communication. The management had not integrated communication within the strategic planning. If the information cannot flow effectively, employees can neither receive horizontal information from co-workers in regards to their work, nor vertical information from management in an efficient manner. There was a mixed reactions between the Senior Staff (University Librarian, Deputy University Librarians, College Librarians) and Junior Staff (Library Assistant and Library Attendants) when the seniors said there is policy while the juniors said there was no policy put in place. When the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration and Finance) was asked if there was any policy governing the use of internal communication system within the University set up, it was revealed that there pieces of policies that guide internal communication in the University. The Deputy Vice Chancellor owns words said that:

“The University of Nairobi being an ISO certified organization, each department, school and college has a policy and standard operating procedures that guide them including internal communication”. (R.15)

![Figure 4.4. Policy in relation to Internal Organizational communication.](image)

The findings show that although the university has written information materials to guide the staff on strategies of good communication, they have not sensitized their employees adequately about their existence. When the question of policy was asked only the University Librarian, Deputy University Librarians, College Librarians, and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration and Finance) were aware of the policy in relation to internal communication within the University set up. The other staff had an idea but they could not state where it was documented. Those who were aware stated the following documents that contain the policies; Service charter, service guide, code of conduct, organizational structure, and even University website among others. The question was asked in relation to policy and one of the Deputy University Librarian said that,
“Yes there is policy but it’s for the whole university and is more of public relations in work place and marketing of the institution.”(R.16) continued to say:

“The document does not cover things to do with library services yet is one of the core facilities that facilitate teaching and learning as stated in the University of Nairobi objectives.”(R.17)

The study findings reviewed that non-management staff were not aware of existence of policy in relation to communication within the Library System. One of the respondents had this to say when asked about the internal communication policy:

“According to my understanding there is no policy in relation to internal communication.”(R.18)

To conclude the researcher stated that there was policy for the entire University set up but some of the staffs are not aware, thus there was need to have one for the library alone and be communicated to all the staff so as to be effective to serve the purpose.

5.3 Conclusion

The study revealed that the existing communication channels and forms in the university library system were not adequately serving the staff. However with the introduction of electronic-based internal communications, it was shown that it was possible to develop a systematic and integrative approach toward knowledge management and employee development.

The use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) was also identified in this study as providing an effective solution for organizations to improve the efficacy of communication channels, hence the need for the development of an active approach toward training and skill development. Effective and credible communications is essential to build and maintain a knowledgeable, supportive, and productive work force and to keep lines open with external publics.

Another key conclusion from the study is that most of the difficulties in achieving an effective internal communication within Library staff are to a large extent related to geographical distance of the branches, ethnocentrism and language skills among the staff. The interrelatedness among the barriers implies that the consequences of the barriers have some similar aspects so if one is addresses it will lead to greater achievement.

5.3. Recommendations

The study recommends the following short term and long term measures on the based on the study findings, which if taken into consideration could help University library system to improve its internal organizational communication:

5.3.1 Recommendations for Immediate Implementation.

(i) A Transparent Internal Communication

The study established that communication particularly from junior to senior staff is often censored. This has resulted in to some communication breakdown between the two levels. Thus, the study recommends that communication between senior and junior staff should be transparent. An open internal communication can be cultivated to display sound management integrity, which can in turn contribute to effectiveness and efficiency of employees for better library operations. This brings coherence to the workplace, and allows better coordinated actions. This can be achieved through open communication policy where any staff can communicate to another irrespective of the chain of command and team building activities among others.

(ii) Promotion of Downward Communication

In addition, the University Library management needs to: Ensure every employee receives a copy of the strategic plan, which includes the organization’s mission, vision values statement, strategic goals and strategies about how those goals will be reached. Ensure every employee receives an employee handbook that contains all up-to-date personnel policies. Ensure every employee has a copy of their job description and the organizational chart.

Regularly hold management meetings, even if there's nothing pressing to report. If meetings are held only when there is an emergency, then communication will occur only when management has something to say – and communication will be one way, and ultimately the organization will suffer. Hold full staff meetings frequently to report how the organization is doing, major accomplishments, concerns, and announcements to staff among others. University Librarian and other seniors should encourage face-to-face contact with employees at least once a Month, quarterly among others.

(iii) Promotion of Upward communication

The University Library management needs to: Ensure all employees give regular status reports to their supervisors. Include a section for what they did last week, will do next and any actions/issues to address. Ensure all supervisors meet one-on-one at least once a month with their employees to discuss how it's going, hear any current concerns from the employee among others. Even if the meeting is chitchat, it cultivates an important relationship between supervisor and the employee. Use management and staff meetings to solicit feedback. Do around table approach to hear from each person. Act on feedback, write it down, and get back to it by saying you can't do anything about the reported problem or suggestion among others.

5.3.2 Recommendations for Long-Term Implementation

(i) Setting Basic Structures and Policies to support Effective Internal Communication

Although the University of Nairobi has an institutional communication policy, this has not been cascaded to the library. This has contributed to uncoordinated forms of communication within the library systems that contributes to the library’s communication problems. Therefore, it is important that proper structure inform of library’s communication policy and procedure should be developed and adopted by the library. The policy provides the regulatory environment under which internal communication can be undertaken while the procedure defines and outlines how communication within the library should be undertaken on daily basis based on its operations.

(ii) Recommendations to Address Communication Barriers

As determined by the study, there were a number of communication barriers that inhibit the UoN Library effective internal communication. To be able to address this, a number of strategies can be adopted. These include:

(a) Use of Modern Forms of Communication

In order to decrease the problems resulting from the geographical distance in terms of the Library branches/departments not receiving the same amount of vertical information, the existing communication channels should be utilized more efficiently. The Internet is an example of a channel that could be made better use of and can be effectively be used to address issues of relating to geographical challenges.

(b) Institutionalization of a more Cohesive and Inclusive Culture

There is need to increase the contacts over the various branches and departments across the University including having more personal contacts in order for employees to get to know each other.
To diminish the presently weak feeling of togetherness, which partly has its explanation in the fact that the majority of documents and publications are in English, it should be of top priority for University Library staff to increase the amount of information that is translated into Kiswahili. This is the most obvious way to reduce the barrier that language creates. During meetings and official communication to employees both English and Kiswahili languages should be used.

(c) Formal Structure

In order for Library staff to achieve an effective internal organizational communication between its employees, it would be advantageous to establish a communication strategy. There is a need to have a plan for its internal communication. It is useful to consider Mead's (1998) standardization communication plan. This plan has three parameters:

• The key messages to be conveyed
• To whom key staff members want to convey the message
• What's the best approach to reach out to its staff, how should the message be conveyed?
• What medium is appropriate?

(d) Improving Staff Communication

The University Library should introduce measures that enhance the ability of employees to participate fully in the coordination of work. For instance, use of e-mail as means to improve the participation of employees in shop-floor decision making or training and personal development can be adopted and promoted to improve internal communication.

References


