

## ESTABLISHING WHETHER FORMAL COMMUNICATION CHANNEL SIGNIFICANTLY INFLUENCES EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE AT ISILO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

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### **Abstract:**

*Employee's performance is one of the core values of the vision 2030 of public service delivery in Kenyan Government. Communication channels are drivers of employee performance in any organization. Formal communication channels exist in the National and County Government organizations hence this study sought to investigate the influence of communication channels on enhancing employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. The study was guided by the objective: Formal communication channels and its influence on employee performance. The study was guided by three theories, which are Symbolic Interaction theory, Social Presence Theory and Structuration theory. Literature review was from primary and secondary data as presented by respondents and literature materials available to the researcher. For the research methodology, a descriptive study design was used in this study. The population target in this study included all the 1370 employees at County Government of Isiolo comprising of ten departments. Stratified random sampling was used to select 125 respondents. A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages was estimated for quantitative variables and the qualitative data from the open- ended questions was analyzed using conceptual content analysis, presented in prose, and displayed in tables. It was found that distortion; leakage of information and unreliable information greatly affected employee's performance. The study concluded that formal communication channel had effect on employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. The study recommends that County Government of Isiolo should train staff on communication skills in order to enhance the performance of County employees on service delivery. The study also recommends that managers should make sure that appropriate communication channels are used in accordance to communication policy of the organization.*

### **Keywords:**

*Channels of communication, Employee performance, Formal communication channels, Informal communication channel, Performance, Productivity, Organization, Unofficial communication channel.*

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## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Performance of employees is one of the challenges facing Kenyan Government today and the causes include communication, which is the most important trait of any leader or manager in management of any organizations or institution (Mukasi, 2013). Performance can either increase or decrease according to the choice of communication channel used. The type of communication channel depends on the information intended to be conveyed by superiors to subordinates and subordinates to superiors in order to get feedback (Ray, 2015). Employees' performance is the execution of job duties and responsibilities evidenced through Business plans, review meetings, cost effectiveness, timeliness, quality and quantity delivered. Many organizations assess their employee's performance on an annual or quarterly basis in order to define certain areas that need improvement hence employee communication channel is a critical factor in organizational success and employee performance (Sumeya, 2016). Management and communication consultants found that more than 10% of United States (US) business enterprises failed every year primarily because of bad management and inefficient employees' communication channels. This is the most unfortunate since several studies linked communication channels with effectiveness to improved productivity in organizations.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem facing employees' performance in service delivery in County Governments (ICGs) is the way organization's information is transmitted and obtained. The Auditor General report on the staff establishment 2014/2015 outlined how County governments are engaging staff without proper communication channels. The report revealed recruitment irregularities and lack of sufficient evidence on selection due to inappropriate communication channels. The County government did not have any prominence reports from all departments for audit review due to use of in appropriate communication channels. In addition, scanty studies on communication channels have been done, but none of the researchers has investigated the effect or correlation between the communication channels and worker's performance in County Government of Isiolo. In organization context, several communication channels exists which influences employee performance. Information leaked at the wrong time, lack of secrecy maintenance may cause damage on workers' reputation and organization at large as evidenced by the current nurses' strike in the Health Service department GOK (2016). The nurses' strike was associated with inappropriate communication channels, which misleading facts could not be pointed and most information was distorted before reaching the audience (nurses) in reference to the Collective Bargaining Agreement referred by nurses. Increase in salaries and promotions among employees through hazy communication channels have led to some workers to disciplinary cases affecting their performance. In the organization, communication channels used do not conform to the organization behaviors' policy. It has been also established through empirical evidence that the county government (CG) employees in Isiolo County, are not performing their work as expected due to lack of chain of command, sanctions, policies and procedures and appropriate choice of communication channels in accordance to the organization's communication policy and goals of Vision 2030 of Kenya which is to increase service delivery to people, (G.O.K 2012). The issue is that unless measures are taken to address the problems facing employees, the standard of performance is going to be affected.

In view of the above arguments, the implication is that the existence of the communication channels in interpretation, delay, distortion, speed, circle groups are drawback to worker's performance and effective communication channel is a strategy in enhancing workers' productivity. Communication channels are found to be very essential in recruitment and selection of employees of any organization. These types of communication channels are used for reference in any level of management (Gitonga, 2016). In a census exercise carried on staff establishment most employees did not have, essential documents required (G.O.K, 2014). This lack of evidence affects employees in short and long run among County Governments Therefore,

the researcher of this paper investigated if channels of communication had any influence on employees' performance at the I.C.G. in Isiolo County.

### **Objective of the Study**

To establish whether formal communication channel significantly influence employee's performance at Isiolo County Government.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This section provides an extensive literature and research related to influence of communication channels on enhancing performance of County employee. Communication channels refer to the way the information flows within the organization and within other organization or a media through which a message is transmitted to its intended audience. Communication channel is a type of media which is used to transfer messages from one person to another such as flow of information from top management to subordinate by means of reports, policies, letters, circulars, road by massagers', small message service (SMS) memos, meetings etc. Thought must be given to what channels are used to complete various tasks because using inappropriate channel for a task or interaction can lead to negative consequences. Complex messages require richer channels of communication that facilitate interaction to ensure clarity (Williams, 2016).

Communication channels are ways through which communication takes place and gets the message to the intended audience. The process of communication channel begins with transmitter, which produces the message, and then the communication channel is chosen to get the message to the receiver who is the last destination of the message (Guest& Conway 2012). According to William (2016), communication between human resources and the employee base is important to sustain employee satisfaction and morale. When little or no communication between human resources and workforce exists, decline in productivity and performance may be seen because employees feel they are unappreciated and undervalued. Human resource communication channel include guidelines, policies, notices and procedures that help organization to manage their workforce (Williams 2016).

Communication channels exist in organizations, which influence employee performance. The formal type of communication channel consists of the hierarchical structure which transfers the information from the top management of the organization to the lowest level in the organization. In the formal type of communication channel, the top management passes the information and instructions to the middle level management and then the information is passed down to the lower level; the middle level management is the communication channel between the top and lower level management (Smiriti, 2015). Informal communication channel does not follow the hierarchical structure of the organization; the lower person can directly communicate with a person in the top level of management, which accelerates the communication process in the organization. Unofficial communication channel does not consist of any structure and the information spreads from one level of management to another without any documented proof or chain of command (Smiriti, 2015). With unofficial communication, the information does not reach every part of the organization. Once top management encounters unofficial information, which is false, management can deal with the false information on time. Communication channels are a very important aspect of any organization, and it is important that the organization utilize the most correct communication channel in order to benefit the organization in the best manner.

Face-to-face is the most effective and clear type of communication channel used in County Government of Isiolo which exist in circle groups, gossips, water cooler talk, lunch time gatherings and review meetings.

Face-to-face is the easiest and the least time consuming communication because it allows both the parties to have face-to-face discussions. The only drawback to the face-to-face communication channel is that if there is an argument between the two parties, the argument can get heated up. Another communication channel that is mostly used is telephone and cell phones but this is a communication channel that does not have benefits of facial expressions which does not make the communication personal. Emails are another communication channel in the organization that have the advantage of including documents but the disadvantage is that it does not necessarily allow instant communication to occur (Smiriti, 2015).

Every employer-employee's communication channels can be used in different ways. Researchers argue that improper use of communication channels might bring more harm than good to Employer-employees relationship. Employer might over control the channels to enhance their own influence; conversely, a small group of employees might over-post their opinions and interests to influence the employer's decision-making process (Wang and Lim, 2011). From the employer perspective, the objective of encouraging employee participation is to improve the efficiency, acceptance and legitimacy of service delivery processes (Wang and Lim, 2011; Ray, 2015). By providing interactive features such as discussion boards or email facilities, employers in county government would be able to have formal two-way symmetrical communication with their employees. Yet study show that employers prefer to use their websites to distribute information rather than having interactive communication with workers (Wang and Lim 2011). County government channels with interactive potential are often used only for a one-way asymmetrical communication. For example, employers use Bulletin Boards Systems (BBS) or websites to inform employees what decisions have been made instead of listening to employees regarding their opinion on pending decisions.

Formal communication channel is the means of communication normally controlled by people in positions of authority in an organization. Hence, it is also referred to as an organization's 'main line of operational communication' (Smiriti; Ray, 2015). All the reports and other forms that supply working information to various parts of an organization are included in the formal channel of communication. These channels of communication do not function automatically. A good business organization will ensure that these are carefully planned and designed to its needs not to disrupt employees while discharging their duties.

Formal channels are considered the more effective of channel of communication especially with organization constantly growing in size. They are better in monitoring employees' performance and responsibilities (Smiriti, 2015; Anene, 2006). This is because an organization can design formal channels to suit its specific needs. This can help to monitor organizational activities and ensure that problems are solved without too much delay. This type of channel has its drawback. Formal communication channel deters a free flow of information. Formality demands that the information flow takes a specific route only hence delays information to be acted upon which may lead to workers' grievances (Anene 2006).

Communicating with subordinates is also a form of encouragement and inspiration (Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). The informal channel of communication is often discouraged or looked down upon in an organization and is not officially sanctioned. Employees tend to relax and tend to speak loosely or lightly with their associates wherever they may be. Time to time they feel the need to be freed from the necessity to stick to logic or truth (Chand, 2015; Neves & Eisenberger, 2012). In addition, as people go about their work, they have casual conversation with their friends in the office. This lead to conversations deal with both personal and business matters. This result in the generation of a rumor mill, which is a grapevine hence, may affect employees' performance. The advantage of this channel is feedback. According to Smriti (2015), feedback is much faster than in a formal channel of communication. The reaction to the decisions, policies, directives and

directions often reach managers faster through this channel than formal one. The drawback is that it creates trouble among management and employees.

Unofficial communication does not fall in the official chain of command. This type of communication channel is known as grapevine. It satisfies the social needs of employees leading to more relaxed human relations, serves to fill the possible gaps in the formal communication, and links even those people who do not fall in the official chain of command (Neves & Eisenberger 2012).

Employees' performance is the execution of job duties and responsibilities. Many organizations and Isiolo county government not an exceptional assess their employees' performance on an annual or quarterly basis reports in order to define certain areas that need improvement. Employees' communication is critical factor in organizational success and employees' performance. Luarn & Huang (2015) studied the factors influencing government employees' performance and found that upward communication in formal communication channel did not have significant relationship with employees' performance. However, Orpen (2012) contends that lack of multiple communication channels was a challenge since subordinates have limited ways to reach their managers. This can force employees to apply ineffective communication channel in delivering messages to their management.

Capacity gaps at various technical levels within the Public Service structure particularly at middle and higher levels is due to inadequate succession management, which adversely affects communication channels. The concept of communication has become part of organization's mechanism of survival. There is need for everyone with talents to communicate effectively in order to compete in the global economy (GOK, 2018). The County Government, as an organization entrusted with the provision and maintenance of essential services, cannot afford to be divorced from this era of globalization. Any difference in opinion between management and employees are due to misunderstanding which have arisen because of communication channels within the organizations which are not good enough. Communication channels affect how inefficient or efficient the flow of information is within a company. This lack of communication could cause employees to lack the knowledge of what the organization expects of the, leaving them uninformed. Without an effective communication channel, employees lose focus on the big picture and lose their organization mind, which goes on to affects their decision making and productivity in the workplace (Williams, 2016). The International Communication Association Audits and (research on communication channels found that employees required more contact with managers, but managers rely more and more on machines instead of human contact (Goldhaber, 2015). In a research on communication channels, it was found that machines are only companions of communication channel, which need to wait a long time for feedback (Goldhaber, 2015). Luarn & Huang (2015) studied the factors influencing government employees' performance by information systems. The study was based on the task-to-performance chain and data was collected from employees of the Taipei City Government. Task-technology fit, computer, self-efficiency and utilization that are very important component of communication. The study concluded that downward and upward and peer-peer communication directly contributes to employees' performance. In a study in Vietnam (Witherspoon, 2012) observed that employees' performance was affected by leadership, coaching, empowerment, participation, organization culture, close supervision and training.

In Somali, Sumeya (2016) conducted a study on the influence of Internal communication channels on employees' performance at Help lead to Hope (an NGO in Somalia). The study results established that peer-peer communication had a significant relationship with employees' performance. In Zimbabwe, Tinofirei (2012) studied the unique factors affecting employee performance in non-profit organizations. The research revealed distinctive performance elements which included demoralizations due to the absence of spontaneous promotions for extraordinary performing employees; openings for the development of

employees through a strategy of competitive employment and development opportunities of subordinate staff who can apply for managerial positions in the organization.

Nyarangi (2012) conducted a study on the factors affecting performance of staff of Local Authorities in Kenya, with a focus on Kisii Municipal Council. Teamwork was found to be a vital feature in job achievement and decreasing rate of accidents in the organization. In addition, motivation was found to be a strategic tool in ensuring high levels of performance, Leadership and technology was very significant factor in pursuing high performance. A study by Sokoro (2012) sought the factors that influence employees' performance in Kenya Wildlife Service. The findings of the research indicated that organizational factors such as the organizational structure, work environment, intangible incentives and individual factors such as knowledge, skills, attitude and rewards influence employee performance. Guest & Conway (2012) noted that there is a robust correlation amongst effective employee communication channels and superior performance by the employees.

Ray (2016) defined communication channel as a type of media that is used to transfer a message from one person to another. In business specifically, communication channels are the way information flows in the organization within, and with other companies. Communication channels affect how inefficient or efficient the flow of information is within an organization. This lack of communication could cause employees to lack the knowledge of what the organization expects of them, leaving them uninformed (Williams, 2016). Without an effective communication channel, employees lose focus on the big picture and lose their company mind, which goes on to affect their decision-making and productivity in the workplace and harms the overall organizational objectives (Williams, 2016; Jacques, 2014). For an organization to be run effectively and efficiently, a good manager should be able to communicate to their employees what is expected of them, make sure they are fully aware of organization's policies and any upcoming changes. Therefore, an effective communication channel should be implemented by managers to optimize workers' productivity to ensure the smooth running of the organization. Thought must be given to what channels are used to complete various tasks because using inappropriate channel for a task or interaction can lead to negative consequences. Complex messages require richer channels of communication that facilitate interaction to ensure clarity (Williams, 2016). Over the past few years, technology advancement has significantly increased the number of communication channels. Many new types of channels exist today including video conferencing, mobile technology, and electronic bulletin boards and fax machines.

In addition, it has been established that capacity gaps at various technical levels within the Public Service structure particularly at middle and higher levels is due to inadequate succession management, which adversely affect communication channels. High staff turnover in critical technical skills, negative work culture and attitude and staff imbalance between support and technical personnel all affect communication channels that may influence employee performance (G.O. K., 2018). Choosing the type of communication channel is very important hence the research study is based on formal communication channels, and how they influence employees' performance.

Formal communication channel transmits information such as the goals, policies and procedures of an organization. Messages in this type of channel follow a chain of command. This means information flows from manager to his subordinates, which gives employees as well as the clients a clear idea of the organization's goal and vision. This also includes the transfer of information with regard to memoranda, reports, directions and scheduled meetings in the chain of command. A business plan, customer satisfaction survey, annual reports, employer's manual, review meetings, policies are all formal communication channels (Jacques, 2014) with (William, 2016). Formal communication, no matter the format, uses the hierarchical

structure of an organization to spread information or directives from the top of the organization down and subordinates are informed of policy changes, announcements or other information pertaining to the organization by their direct supervisors. Middle management receives the communication from upper management, and then turns around and delivers the information to the lower levels of the organization. Formal communication channel is very official, reliable; secrecy is maintained and as the communication is generally, written, documentary evidence is present. On the other hand, it is slow and time consuming. In any organization, this type of communication channel exists and the researcher would like to find out how it influences employee's performance on service delivery at Isiolo County government.

### **Empirical Review**

Communication has been defined as the process or act by one or more persons of sending or transmitting messages or information to other persons/organizations and ensuring the message is received, understood and necessary feedback is obtained (Kunal, 2015). He emphasizes that communication is a two-way process. It occurs when one person or an organization transmits a message to another. When communication is successful, the message sent and the message received are the same.

According to Smiriti (2016) communication channel is a process of passing on or transmitting information/message from one end to another with the aim to inform, influence or activate. Ray (2015) concurs with Smiriti (2016) adding that communication channels are types of media through which message is sent and received. The communication channels can flow down from superiors to subordinates, up from subordinates to superiors or across from and to co-workers of the same hierarchical level of authority.

According to Smiriti (2016) in his research on channels of communication found that formal communication channel is considered the more effective channel of communication. He reiterated that as organization constantly grow in size; formal channels help to bridge the gap in the communication process. Oneil (2016) concurs with Smiriti (2015) adding that it is a readily available means to reach through to every corner of an organization.

According to Sumeya (2016) information sharing amongst employees' leads to better employees' performance and teamwork fosters sense of purpose and a unity of direction among the employees and teams. Kalla (2015) concurs with Sumeya (2016) that upward communication is encouraged in organizations as it enhances work performance by employees. This implies that when upward communication is missing, employees' performance suffers due to lack of feedback.

Makuri and Nwachukwu (2014) adds that communication channel consist of all the processes by which information is transmitted and received. The chain of command minimizes indiscipline among employees and sanctions observed at all times. According to Smiriti (2016) formal communication channels improve relations between organization/businesses and their customers, suppliers and the government. It also facilitates harmony in the operations of various departments, effective management, enabling relevant information that formal communication facilitates effective use of resources such as human, time and money. For example, managers pass on their decisions to the subordinate through written documents and telephone calls thus reducing physical movement. Another authority Orpen (2012) adds that communication helps in creating better performance by employees as they understand organizational goals and work towards achieving them. Orpen (2012) further adds that communication facilitates coordination of activities of the organization to get and distribute relevant information enhancing productivity in organizations. The right people have to receive accurate information at the right time and in the best way, (Jennifer, 2016; Makuri and Nwachukwu 2014).

Sumeya (2016) found out that imparting a common idea or understanding to another person creates

openness and reduces gossips in an organization. Goals are set, policies are adhered to and procedures followed minimizing sanctions in the organization. Luarn & Huang (2015) contends that goals and policies guides employees' performance while sanctions improves employees' behaviour. Formal communication channel is a two-way process in which there is an exchange of thought, opinions or information by speech, writing, or symbols towards a mutually accepted goals or outcome.

Every organization is established to achieve set objectives, upward and downward communications facilitate information transmission from superiors to subordinates and vice versa (Orpen, 2012). Not left behind Nzuve (2013) contends that good employee - employer relationship enhances productivity. Makuri and Nwachukwu (2014); Linda (2015) contended that communication channels are at the root of personnel administration. It is the transaction, interpretation of information for the efficient operation of an enterprise. Makuri and Nwachukwu (2014) further stated that effective communication requires three climates' that promote the exchange of ideas as well as one that permits every member of the organization to actualize his views with fear.

Kidombo et al (2010) adds that management is concerned with the direction and control of an enterprise and involves planning and the direction of the work of others, their managerial functions cannot be successfully carried out in the absence of effective communication channel. According to Peretomode (2010), effective communication channels support organizational performance. He said that the manager has a specific tool – information. He does not "handle" people he motivates, guides and organizes people to do their own work. His duty is to use spoken or written words no matter whether the manager's job is an engineering, accounting or marketing kind. Every manager needs skills in getting his thinking to offer across to other people as well as skills in finding out what other people are after.

Effective communication channel is essential for business or organization to prosper. It provides both customers and employees with the necessary tools to succeed with satisfaction. When communication channel is not effective, the result is an increase in production time and a decrease in the bottom line. Effective communication channel practices can help an organization avoid such an outcome. Smart business managers know that happy workers are productive and ultimately benefit their organizations. Studies have shown that different aspects of effective formal communication channel, such as high frequency, openness and accuracy, performance, feedback and adequacy of information about organizational policies and procedures are positively related to employees' feelings of happiness in the work place and job performance (Orpen 2012; Neves & Elisenbeger, 2012; O'Reilly and Roberts, 2005). A strong relationship has been found between managerial communication, perceived organizational support (POS) and employee performance by (Allen, 1992; 2005; Nerves & Eisenberger, 2012). POS was found to improve employees' sense of well-being, happiness and job satisfaction (Nerves & Eisenberger, 2012).

Lesikar, Pettit, & Darsey, (2010) concur with Nzuve (2013) who adds that the office provides the means by which an organization achieves its objective. It is primarily concerned with communication. He reiterates that office is a place of receiving and giving information as well as maintaining records and extracting and processing information. Effective communication channel is directly linked to employee satisfaction that is linked to customer retention in the organization. Effective formal communication channel facilitates faster decision-making – teams in wheel network make much faster decisions than those in star network (Kunal, 2015).

Limited communication mediums can force employees to deliver messages using potentially ineffective methods. In appropriate upward communication, mediums can create confusion for individuals receiving

the messages (Lesikar, Pettit, & Darsey, 2010). According to a research by Marshal McLuhan, the usage of media is very limited due to lack of knowledge and information. This study will investigate the influence of communication channels in enhancing employees' performance at the County Government of Isiolo.

Another study Sumeya (2016) found that information sharing amongst employees led to better employees' performance and teamwork fostered sense of purpose and a unity of direction among the employees and teams. Kalla (2015) concurs with Sumeya (2016) that upward communication is encouraged in organizations as it enhances work performance by employees. This implies that when upward communication is missing, employees' performance suffers

According to G.O. K. (2018), it was established that capacity gaps at various technical levels within the Public Service structure particularly at middle and higher levels is due to inadequate succession management that adversely affect communication channels on employee performance. High staff turnover in critical technical skills, negative work culture and attitude and staff imbalances between support and technical personnel all affect communication channels (G.O.K., 2018).

### **Research Design**

The research design adopted was a descriptive research to establish the influence of communication channels on enhancing employee performance in the area of study. According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006) a study concerned with finding out who, what, which, and how of a phenomenon is a descriptive study design. The descriptive research was to obtain information that described the existing phenomenon by asking individuals about their perception, attitude, relationship, behaviour or values, through discussions, interviews and other forms of interaction that was why the design was chosen. Kombo and Tromp, (2006) said that the major purpose of descriptive research was to describe the state of affairs as it exists and involves a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Also the researcher collected information by observing type of office structure, cleanliness, lighting systems, employee's interaction, machines used to disseminate information and relationships as workers discharge their duties observing indicators against the observation schedule on organizational structure, work environment, communication channels as variables of the study and how they affected employee performance in the said organization.

### **Study Locale**

The study was carried out at Isiolo County Government offices in Isiolo County. These offices are located in three sub-counties namely Isiolo, Garbatulla and Merti sub-Counties. Due to poor communication infrastructure coupled with harsh climate most of employees are at Isiolo Sub- County that is the County's Headquarter hence the researcher-collected data from County's headquarters. The study targeted ten departments that composed the County Government of Isiolo. Departments are in the service industry.

### **Findings of the Study**

#### **Formal Communication channels**

The respondents were required to indicate whether the organization has adopted effective formal communication channels as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Adoption of effective formal communication channels at ICG**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Yes	68	73
No	25	27
Total	93	100

The study sought to establish whether ICG had adopted effective formal communication channels based on the perception of the employees. The results indicated that 73% of the employees perceived ICG to have adopted effective formal communication channels while 27% were of the opinion that ICG had not adopted effective formal communication channels. These findings imply that ICG can be said to have effective communication channels according to the views of their employees where policies and procedures, guidelines and chain of command is followed. This corresponds with Smirit (2016) who affirms that formal communication channel is the means of communication normally controlled by people in positions of authority in an organization. This clearly indicates that County Government of Isiolo have people in positions of authority and reason why they have adopted effective formal communication channels which is main line of operational communication.

Further respondents were required to indicate the extent to which formal communication channels affect employee performance at the County Government of Isiolo by responding as very great extent, great extent, moderate extent and low extent as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2 Influence of formal communication channels on performance**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very great extent	11	12
Great extent	8	9
Moderate extent	20	21
Low extent	54	58
Total	93	100

The majority of the respondents indicated that formal communication channels had no effect on the service delivery of the employee at County Government of Isiolo in a great extent as shown by 9%, in a very great extent as shown by 12%, in low extent as shown by 58%, in moderate extent as shown by 20%. This shows that formal communication channels have low effect on the performance of employee in service delivery at County Government of Isiolo as supported by Williams (2016) who adds that reports, records and other forms that supply working information to various parts of an organization are included in the formal channel of communication, and do not function automatically without employee's participation. This indicates that employees in the County government of Isiolo participate in formal communication as shown by low extent of 58%. This is further indicated by fact that County Government of Isiolo ensures that formal communication channels are carefully planned and designed to its needs as evidenced by Smirit, (2016).

Concerning the same, the researcher was interested in knowing the extent to which various aspects of formal communication channels affect the employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. Their opinions are illustrated as shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Influence of formal communication channels aspect on performance of County employee**

Aspects	frequency	Mean
Information base	34	0.365
Media types	18	0.193
Communication timing	28	0.301
Feedback gathering	13	0.139

From the findings, the respondents indicated that information base as shown a mean of 0.365, communication timing as illustrated by a mean of 0.301, Media types as expressed by a mean of 0.193 greatly affect employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. Moreover, the respondents indicated that feedback gathering as expressed by a mean of 0.139 moderately affects employee performance in service deliver at County Government of Isiolo. On the respondents' opinion on the ways in which formal communication channels affect the employee performance at County Government of Isiolo, the respondents indicated that communication re- emphasizes the importance of a joint-team effort in disseminating information that encourages formal and informal discussion of expectations, innovation, progress and results and that communication process will mark the beginning of individual plans, appraisal reports and performance results.

The study also sought to establish whether distortion of information significantly influence employee's performance at County Government of Isiolo. This provided the findings on satisfaction of communication channels and its effect on employees' performances. In this section, statements were provided relating formal communication channels at ICG and employees. The respondents were required to indicate the significant influence of distortion of information on employee performance at the County Government of Isiolo by responding as strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Distortion of information at County Government of Isiolo**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	6	6
Disagree	9	10
Neutral	8	9
Agree	47	50
Strongly agree	23	25
Total	93	100

The study sought out whether the distortion of information had significant influence on performance of employee at County Government of Isiolo. The respondents indicated as expressed by 50% agreed indicating that distortion of information significantly influences employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. 25% strongly agreed, 10% disagreed and 9% were neutral who did not know what influences them to perform or not to deliver services as required at the County Government of Isiolo while 6 % strongly disagreed that distortion of information does not influence their performance. This is an indicator that to avoid distortion of information, appropriate channel should be used when disseminating any information to employee at County Government of Isiolo. This is clearly supported by use of effective formal communication in the County Government of Isiolo as supported by Sumenya (2016).

In addition, the respondents were required to indicate whether secrecy is maintained in formal communication channels as presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Secrecy maintenance at County Government of Isiolo**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	39	42
Disagree	19	20
Neutral	5	5
Agree	7	8
Strongly agree	23	25
Total	93	100

Respondents expressed their dissatisfaction on secrecy maintenance in formal communication channels as expressed by 42% strongly denying that secrecy is not maintained in formal communication at County Government of Isiolo. 25% strongly agree, 20% disagree, 8% agreed while 5% were neutral. This indicates that secrecy in formal communication channels is not maintained which adversely influences employee performance at County Government of Isiolo as expressed by 42% in Table 5. On an interview conducted by the researcher, it was found that the top level management discloses information before disseminated to employees in formal channels of communication which great affects employee's performance in service delivery as affirms by Smirit (2016), that information may get leaked at the wrong time.

Moreover, respondents were required to indicate whether formal communication channel slows information as presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Slowness of information at County Government of Isiolo**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	7	8
Disagree	11	12
Neutral	3	3
Agree	48	52
Strongly agree	24	25
Total	93	100

Majority of the respondents indicated that formal communication channels significantly influences employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. As illustrated by Table 6. 52% agreed that formal communication channels slow information at the County Government of Isiolo. 25% strongly agreed, 12% disagreed, while 3% were neutral, as they did not know whether formal communication channels slow or quickens information transmission at the County Government of Isiolo. Smirit (2016), affirms that formal channels of communication deter a free flow of information as it takes a specific routine of information flow hence rated as 25% in slowness of information. This clearly indicates that formal channels of communication slow information influencing employee's performance in the County Government of Isiolo as depicted in table 6.

Respondents were further requested to indicate whether employees had close supervision while performing their tasks as presented in table 7.

**Table 7: Employees' supervision at County Government of Isiolo**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Disagree	47	51
Disagree	11	12
Neutral	3	3
Agree	8	9
Strongly agree	24	25
Total	93	100

Majority of the respondents indicated that there was no close supervision to employees at County Government of Isiolo. Employees relied on their own knowledge and innovation on whatever tasks were presented to them. This is an indication that where more knowledge or tactic was required employees were

hands off especially where new communication channels were to be implemented. This is clearly expressed by 51% strongly disagreeing and 12% disagreeing that there was no supervision, 3% was neutral and 9% agreed there was supervision. 25% strong agreed there was supervision and these were staff working at the Headquarters in the Top management level departments. On observation, there was laxity, lateness and absenteeism clearly indicating that there was no supervision on employees work and this greatly affected performance at the County Government of Isiolo.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, the study recommends that County Government of Isiolo should train staff on the use of Communication channels in order to enhance employee performance. The organization should also employ qualified staff, avail them with technical expertise, and assist in the enhancement of performance. Similarly, the organization should also have in place communication policy which employee can adhere to when disseminating information.

The study recommends that employees should be properly deployed to minimize circle group and social gatherings to facilitate effective communication using appropriate communication channels. The study further recommends that qualified staff should be appointed for top-level management for policy formulation and middle level management for policy interpretation. This will enable employees to refer to policies and other procedures to enhance knowledge and innovation. Also chain of command will be followed without questioning the authority in top level management. The management team of County Government of Isiolo should consider use of formal communication channels that can leave a record of evidence especially in matters that require reference and where misleading facts can be pinpointed for sanction.

The study further recommends that in order to communication effectively, appropriate channel should be used in accordance to communication policy and a two communication should be encouraged in order to gather feedback. The study also recommends that communication should flow freely both upwards and downwards. Emails, letters, memos, status meeting and verbal communication should be frequently used.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

The study was limited to communication channels enhancing employee performance at County Government of Isiolo. Therefore, the study needs to be done to explore the drivers of communication channels influencing employee performance in other counties in Kenya.

From the above findings, conclusion and recommendation the study suggests that an in-depth study should be carried out to determine the challenges faced by County Government in selecting the appropriate communication channel in disseminating particular information and to establish the effects of communication channels on employee performance at County Government in Kenya.

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