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Strategic Communication and Performance of Universities in Kenya

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Abstract

Purpose: This thesis endeavored to explore on the relationship between strategic communication and performance of universities in Kenya. The thesis study anchored the systems theory of communication.

Methodology: The study used descriptive research design. The target population for this study were all the 64 respondents from chartered universities in Kenya. A structured and semi–structured questionnaire was used for primary data collection. The questionnaire was pilot tested to verify validity and reliability of the instruments. The pilot study comprised of ten percent (10%) of equivalent of study respondents amounting to 27 respondents. Secondary data was collected from journals, books, internet searches and articles through desk research from each university. Collected data was coded, organized and analyzed by Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 28. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the data. Correlation and regression analysis was conducted to find the relationship between the independent and dependent variable. The results is presented in tables, graphs and histograms. The overall Cronbach Alpha value for reliability was over 0.7 and Content validity of over 0.5 respectively. The seven types of validity tests were also carried out; such; Content validity, face validity, construct validity etc.

Findings: The study in summary and conclusion indicated that strategic communication had a significant statistical effect on the performance of universities in Kenya.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Policy and Practice: This study advances theory by applying systems theory to Kenyan universities, showing how strategic communication shapes organizational performance. For policy, it provides evidence for administrators and regulators to strengthen communication channels, enhancing institutional effectiveness. Practically, it offers university leaders actionable guidance for designing communication strategies that improve stakeholder engagement, decision-making, and overall performance.

Keywords: *Strategic Communication, Management Communication, Performance of Universities*

Background of the Study

Since its inception more than 50 years ago, strategic management has expanded its body of knowledge regarding the strategic direction and management of the business. Its roots are primarily located in works by Chandler 1962, and it dates back to the 1960s. As a result, it has undergone substantial development, maturing into a more established and sophisticated field within the field of management. The development of strategic management has been influenced by many contributions from various social science disciplines. The discipline has evolved and matured over the last few decades, as evidenced by developments. It now has a greater range of theories, topics analyzed, and methodologies, along with a great capacity for analysis. There are several reasons for this growth. For example, the range of topics covered has significantly expanded and now includes, among other things, internationalization, firm collaboration, strategies and competition in the product and factor markets, and strategic leadership (Taherdoost, 2022).

The scope of research methods has also expanded; for example, quantitative tools based on sophisticated econometric techniques, multilevel analysis, and, more recently, hybrid methodologies, have supplanted in-depth case studies. The growing consensus on certain fundamental ideas, like the definition or concept of strategy or strategic management, is another sign of the discipline's increasing maturity (Wanyama & Aila, 2022a). In retrospectively, the variety of scholars drawn to strategy research has been steadily rising. Consequently, strategic management has amassed a sizable body of theoretical and empirical knowledge over the course of its development. Compared to other business school disciplines, the SM field is theoretically and topically diverse, lacking a single, well-developed paradigm; as such, its multidisciplinary perspectives can be viewed as a strength and virtue. Furthermore, there is an abundance of evidence demonstrating the field's recent advancements and success in handling challenging and evolving management issues. Accordingly, the theories applied in strategic management are drawn from a broad variety of disciplinary traditions, and this contributes significantly to the topical diversity of strategic management research (Shammi, Bodrud-Doza, Islam & Rahman, 2021).

Additionally, strategic management practices foster innovation and creativity in enterprises; this invention can provide a competitive edge, enhance performance, and expand market share. SM also ensures that all organizational aspects, including functions, resources, and activities, are directed towards a shared objective (Rhys, George & Richard, 2020). This alignment guarantees the synchronization of all endeavors, ensuring they harmoniously contribute to attaining company goals, ultimately leading to enhanced overall performance. However, strategic management practices should prominently include consistently measuring and evaluating performance, as Universities may boost their performance by

monitoring key performance indicators (KPIs) and assessing performance against established objectives. This allows them to identify areas that need improvement and execute suitable actions. Therefore, adopting strategic management practices can enhance organizational performance through setting explicit goals, improved decision-making, efficient allocation of resources, adaptation to environmental changes, promotion of innovation and creativity, ensuring organizational alignment, and implementation of performance measurement and evaluation procedures (Reza, Meysam & Mahdieh, 2020).

Therefore, the model consists of four essential components: defining a strategic target, devising a plan, executing the strategy, and assessing and supervising its progress. They observed that strategic management is a top-level managerial responsibility that centers on making decisions regarding a company's mission, vision, principles, objectives, plans, and carefully formulated policies (Koros and Ragui (2021). It entails the development of a strategic plan to effectively address environmental opportunities and risks, considering the organization's capabilities and limitations to achieve expected performance. Organizational performance as the velocity and extent to which a corporation effectively achieves its business goals. On the one hand, organizational performance analysis assesses an organization's outcomes relative to its expected outputs or objectives (Makwana & Patange, 2022).

Universities in Kenya are established under the Universities Rules, 1989 which details the Establishment of Universities, the Standardization processes, procedures and accreditation, the Universities Act 1985 (CAP 210B) and the Universities Act 2012. Universities in the country operate under two main categories, those with a full charter or those operating under an interim letter of authority waiting full chartering (Golensky & Hager, 2020). There are 64 accredited universities in Kenya Universities in Kenya offer both undergraduate and postgraduate programs with different programs including certificates, diplomas and degrees. The sector's regulator is the Commission for University Education (CUE), charged with the ensuring that the standards of a university are adhered to by universities (Kinyua & Sije, 2023).

With 17 fully chartered universities in Kenya, the higher education sector has registered performance, attributable to a host of factors, among them the growing demand for university education. Consequently, there has been a strain on public universities to handle the subsequent demand (Golensky & Hager, 2020). The performance of University sector in Kenya has further been attributed to the fact that most of the universities in the country are established and managed and/or affiliated with religious Universities with massive followings diminishing; as well as the diminishing opportunities available in public

universities. Being profit making entities, fees in universities are accordingly charged in conformity to market forces on the grounds of full cost recovery (Kinyua & Sije, 2023).

Despite the assertion that strategic leadership plays a vital and dynamic role in formulating organizational strategies that ultimately lead to sustainable competitive advantage (Dudin & Al-Rbabah), Kenyan universities continue to perform poorly in international rankings. This is notwithstanding the deliberate efforts by the Government of Kenya to expand university education through the establishment of new universities and the expansion of academic programmes, aimed at supporting industrialization under Kenya Vision 2030. According to a Webometrics survey conducted in 2013, only the University of Nairobi and Strathmore University were ranked among the top 50 institutions out of over 12,000 universities in Africa.

Only the University of Nairobi (1405) was ranked among the top 1500 in a survey conducted by the Academic Ranking of World Universities in 2023 suggesting that the universities' attainment of sustainable competitive advantage has become a point of concern to stakeholders following these low positions in ranking (Golensky & Hager, 2020). In 2020, only University of Nairobi appeared in the top 50 ranking among the Universities in Africa as per the Webometrics survey in 2020. The survey suggests that universities' performance has become a point of concern to stakeholders following these low positions in ranking. University rankings are an important aspect of academia as they provide a way for students to compare different institutions, inform educators and researchers about the institutions making the most significant contributions to their field and help policymakers evaluate the performance of universities (Kinyua & Sije, 2023).

The University ranking in Kenya is based on the school's number of alumni who have secured employment, published research projects, the quality of its learning facilities and other assets, students' population, its regional and global reputation, among other things (Golensky & Hager, 2020).. Evidently, the ranking summarises the global performance of the institutions, provides information for prospective students and scholars, and reflects the commitment to the dissemination of scientific knowledge. According to Rabai (2022), universities with good reputation historically and consistently receive accolades in research and academics and produces high-performing graduates.

Statement of the Problem

University education holds immense value for any country, contributing significantly to economic growth, social development, and innovation (Wakhisi, 2021). According to Kinyua and Sije (2023), observed that as centers for advanced learning, universities equip individuals with specialized skills and knowledge that drive key industries, from healthcare to technology, agriculture, and more, however of late there has been declining from 69% to

47% between the year of 2022 and 2024. Also Panagiotou (2021), asserted that graduates can bring innovation to the workforce, fostering an environment of entrepreneurship and research that bolsters the country's competitiveness through strategic management and the intervention of external environment. This collective contribution from universities helps Kenya address critical challenges such as poverty, unemployment, and health crises, ultimately driving sustainable national development and enhancing the quality of life for its citizens (Otieno & Lewa, 2020). According to Rabai (2020), the expansion of university education has experienced a crisis deteriorating quality and relevance, unsustainable financing, limited research, low staff morale.

According to Stantcheva (2023), he observed that through rapid expansion has also led to a rise in educational costs. Leadership challenges have led to crises in the universities including failure to meet the demand for high quality services and the implication is that academic standards have been compromised in pursuit of the financial survival of the institution (CUE, 2022). These challenges can be attributed to lack of strategic direction, strategic human resource management, poor strategic control and bad communication strategies which culminate to lack of competitiveness. Despite the deliberate move by the Government of Kenya to expand university education through the creation of more universities and expansion of programmes offered to get industrialized by the year 2030 in line with the Kenya Vision 2030, Kenyan universities continue to be ranked low internationally as only University of Nairobi, JKUAT, Moi and Kenyatta University were ranked among top 100 out of 12,000 institutions in Africa and no Kenyan university was ranked among the top 1000 in a survey conducted by the Academic Ranking of World Universities in 2022.

The survey suggests that universities' performance has become a point of concern to stakeholders following these low positions in ranking (Kaluyu, M'chebere, & Gichunge, 2023). Wakhisi (2021) assessed the effect of strategic leadership on organization performance of state-owned sugar manufacturing firms in western Kenya. Unfortunately, most recent studies have also tackled on different variables on the subject of strategic leadership practices leaving a knowledge gap on the relationship between strategic leadership practices and performance of universities in Kenya (Stantcheva, 2023). This study, therefore study was done in the Kenyan context so as to bridge the existing knowledge gap with new thesis findings. Finally, this thesis sought to fill the gap in the literature by focusing on the relationship between strategic communication and performance of universities in Kenya.

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the relationship between strategic communication and performance of universities in Kenya.

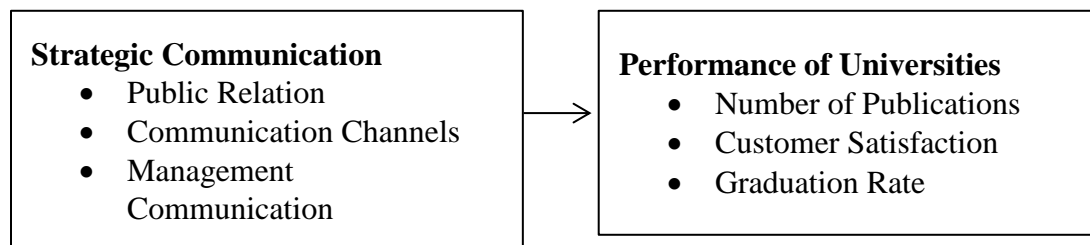**Theoretical Framework**

Systems Theory of Communication

This theory was first developed by Howard Giles in 1971, intending to evaluate and examine speech. The theory over the years has been expounded to cover many aspects of communication. Speakers may engage in divergent or convergent communicative behavior. The theory assumes people adapt the communicative behave depending on whom they are engaging and the perception desired based on one's status. Convergence depends on whether the individuals adapt to each other's communicative behavior is perceived as good or bad in the communication process. In divergent communication, speaker and listener emphasize the social distance between themselves (Gill, 2019).

According to Penrose (2009) they posit that individuals try to adapt their communication style to others in search of listener's approval, in an effort to enhance communication efficiency and maintain a positive social identity with the listener (Becker, 1962). Both speaker and listener share a cooperative behavior which leads them to convergence while communicating. Furthermore, Penrose (2009) argues that by keeping a positive social identity, the communication process is seen as divergent because the speaker wants to keep an identity with a reference (listener). This theory has been criticized for inability of its concepts to be tested with many scholars claiming conversation are normally too complex to be narrowed down as processes. Some scholars have accused the theory of being heavily reliant on rational communication forms even though it recognizes disagreements in communication; it overlooks the possibility of one party in the conversation being unreasonable (Bratton, 2003).

Effective communication in strategic leadership is dependent on ability of various stakeholders involved in the project being able to understand language and communication context. This may entail employing different communication techniques subject intended purpose of communication and the parties targeted in the communication (Penrose, 2009). According to Rodriguez, whose views are accommodated in this study, this theory plays a role in the intergroup and interpersonal cues of communication and how dominance and power may influence the communication pattern among different strategic leadership stakeholders. Strategic leadership team members are expected to adapt to their communication by adopting communication methods that facilitate effective communication to message recipients and feedback too (Newell, 1973).

Conceptual Framework

According to Ujwary-Gil and Potoczek (2020), a concept is an abstract or general idea inferred or derived from specific instances. A conceptual framework is a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant fields of enquiry and used to structure a subsequent presentation. Kothari (2011) defines an independent variable also known as the explanatory variable as the presumed cause of the changes of the dependent variable, while a dependent variable refers to the variable which the researcher wishes to explain.

Strategic Communication	Performance of Universities
• Public Relation • Communication Channels • Management Communication	• Number of Publications • Customer Satisfaction • Graduation Rate

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Strategic Communication

Strategic communication influences the energy levels for change and improvement in the organization. It makes every employee to focus on goals and priorities and at the same time be able to progressively provide feedback. Shammi *et al.* (2021), effective communication systems have a great impact and direct effect on organization learning and innovation processes. It can be evaluated through the communication channels available, the technologies used, and the feedback generated. Strategy implementation is less addressed in the world of business today. This has led to business failure and disappointments. Companies that have good strategies repeatedly are faced with disappointing results simply because a good strategy has no meaning if it is not executed well. Strategy implementation suffers from one major ingredient, communicating and defining the strategy in a way that the employees can understand and run with (Ongongo & Mang'ana, 2022).

According to Shammi *et al.* (2021), effective communication is a key requirement for effective strategy communication in an organization that eventually leads to strategy implementation. Organization communication plays an important role in training, knowledge dissemination and learning during the process of strategy implementation. Therefore, effective communication should clearly explain the new responsibilities, duties and tasks which will be done by targeted employees. Communication affects strategy implementation practices directly through its impact on the individuals involved in implementation. It encourages participation in strategy

formulation, refinement and implementation, as well as facilitating direct communication of corporate strategies once formulated. Involvement of the upper management and belief in the strategic vision which can create enthusiasm and motivate personnel to work towards the achievement of the goals set thus success in the implementation of strategy (Ongongo & Mang'ana, 2022).

A communication strategy should explicitly clarify what it conveys and how it should be purveyed appropriately to the audience and the intended purpose (UNICEF, 2018). A productive communication channel stems from the inside out and the beliefs of the employees should follow those of the main organization. To have an effective communication in an organization, an initial process must be developed and ensured that it maintains focus on the original goal. When creating a communication channel, it is necessary to think about the pathways of communication and the communication technologies which can in turn affect the feedback. Communication technologies also play an important role in communication channels if the organization is targeting those born in the computer generation (Ongongo & Mang'ana, 2022).

Empirical Literature Review

Strategic communication

According to Ominde et al. (2022), communication is a critical component of the procedure execution process as it helps in the coordination of endeavors, assets, individuals, and exercises. The pretended by correspondence in the presentation of a business element is evaluated to be at a R Squared coefficient of 0.250 implying that it impacts 25% of hierarchical execution. The examination further expresses that correspondence is particularly helpful and basic in huge Universities since there are generally numerous exercises, individuals, assets, and endeavors being applied to cause positive change in such associations. Another crucial element of Strategic communication and performance linkage is communication. Communicating strategy up and down the organization and linking it to individual and departmental objectives yields better outcomes (Momoh & Itohan, 2023). Implementing a strategy begins with educating those who have to execute it. Better performance has been recorded by Universities that are able to disseminate the strategy from top to bottom.

Momoh and Itohan (2023), studied the impact of effective communication on institution performance in Nigeria. Discoveries demonstrated that viable openness was absolutely vital for hierarchical execution. The pretended by correspondence in the exhibition of an element is assessed to be at a R Squared coefficient of 0.505 implying that it impacts 50.5% of authoritative execution . The investigation suggested that for successful and proficient authoritative communication, executives must adopt several key practices (Momoh & Itohan, 2023). First, they should ensure clarity of thought before conveying any message. They must also have a strong understanding of both the physical and human context when communicating. The

motivation behind communication should be carefully examined, and planning should incorporate both top-down and bottom-up approaches, ensuring that all facts are accurate and clearly expressed. Attention must be given to the content and tone of messages, using language that the recipients find meaningful. Effective communication also requires encouraging all participants to be attentive listeners, following up promptly with appropriate actions, and implementing efficient feedback and follow-up mechanisms.

Ominde *et al.* (2022), studied the effect of communication on organizational performance at Kenya Ports Authority. It was found that communication strategies, systems and practices played a central role in high-performance. Information, understanding and knowledge are the lifeblood of the organizational body. Communication sets the tone and direction of improvement efforts. Effective strategy links to organizational goals. The main conclusion drawn from the research was communication play a central role in high-performance. The study recommended that there is a need for a communication policy as it has monitoring and evaluation indicators. Momoh And Itohan, (2023) did an exploration on the impacts of employee communication on performance of Universities in the horticulture industry in Kenya. Selected population was all flower farms which according to KFC directory they are 14 and all of them are located in Naivasha. Research design adopted was cross sectional survey research. Stratified sampling technique was used to sample the respondents of the study. Descriptive statistics were used in analyzing quantitative data while qualitative data was analyzed using themes. Inferential statistics like correlation and regression were applied in testing the association between the variables

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A research design is a framework used to collect data and analyze it with the aim of answering the study's research questions (Bhattacherjee, 2023). This study adopted descriptive survey research design approach using quantitative and qualitative research designs (Denis, 2020). This research also employed the explanatory research design, also referred to as the causal research design, given that the study is aimed at determining the nature and extent of cause-and-impact relationships. The objective of an explanatory research is to identify associations, as well as causal relationships, among different variables.

Research Philosophy

Research philosophy relates to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge, and contains important assumptions about the way in which researchers view the world. These research philosophies are positivism, constructionism, critical realism and pragmatism. The positivists believe that the world is external (Carlson *et* al., 1988) and that

there is a single objective reality in each research regardless of the researchers perspective (Panksepp, 1982). The positivism philosophy was used in this study.

Study Population

A target population is a group of events, people or items of interest with a common observable attribute. The target population for this study was the 64 universities accredited to undertake university education in Kenya, distributed as follows: 27 public universities 18 chartered universities, 5 university constituent colleges and 14 institutions with letter of interim authority according to the Commission for University Education website (CUE, 2021. The survey unit of analysis composed of universities accredited to undertake university education in Kenya whose academic leaders were the units of inquiry. These universities were selected for the study since they are largely controlled by the same regulator (CUE) and are required to observe similar guidelines in their operations (Faoubar & Zaghari, 2023).

Table 1: Study Population

Type of University	Population
Public universities	27
Chartered universities	18
University constituent colleges	5
Institutions with letter of interim authority	14
Total	**64**

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame describes the list of all population units from which the sample was selected (Faoubar & Zaghari, 2023). The sampling frame for this study is the list of 64 universities accredited to undertake university education in Kenya according to the Commission for University Education website (CUE, 2020), of this 64 the study targeted 4 respondents per institution.

Table 2 Unit of Observation

UNIT OF OBSERVATION	POPULATION
University Management	64
Worker Union Representation (2 Representative ,Uasu – 1 and Kusu-- 1)	128
University Councils	64
Total	**256**

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researcher used Stratified sampling which is a type of probability sampling method in which sample members from a larger population are selected according to a random starting point but with a fixed, periodic interval (the sampling interval). According to Denis (2020) a sample is subset of a population. In a descriptive survey a sample enables a researcher to gain information about a population. The larger the sample, the more likely the scores on the variables were representative of the population scores. The sample size was determined using the formula suggested by Yamane (1967).

The formula is as follows:

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

Where, n= Sample size N= Population size

e= Margin of error

Therefore, the sample size for the respondents was:

$$n=256 /1+256 (0.05)^2$$

n=156 respondents

Therefore, a sample size of 156 respondents participated.

Table 3: Sample Size

UNIT OF OBSERVATION	SAMPLE
University Management	39
Worker Union Representation (2 Representative ,Uasu – 1 and Kusu-- 1)	78
University Councils	39
Total	**156**

Research Instruments

Both qualitative and quantitative data was collected through primary and secondary data. Primary data was required to gain deeper insight and a better interpretation of the quantitative data. This research used questionnaire. The primary data is key to the current research as it provides information that address the research objectives. The questionnaire was administered by four trained research assistants to the university management. The method of data collection

was through drop and pick method. On the other hand, secondary data on university performance was collected using a data collection sheet.

Pilot Study

Before a survey is carried out all aspects of the questionnaire as a survey instrument should undergo a pilot test. Pre-testing enables the researcher to modify and remove ambiguous items on instruments. A pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in design, instrumentation and to provide proxy data for selection of probability sample. Denis (2020) Pilot test enables the researcher to identify and elimiate any problems that may exist in a questionnaire and examine the reliability and validity for measures used in the questionnaire. A pilot study is conducted with 4% - 10% of the sample population. The pilot study was conducted among 16 respondents which is 10% of the sample size from the universities in Kenya. The aim was to test the reliability and validity of the questionnaire.

Data Processing and Presentation

Academy for educational development (2006), state that data analysis can refer to a variety of specific procedures and methods. Data analysis involves goals; relationships; decision making; and ideas in addition to working with the actual data itself. Simply put, data analysis includes ways of working with data to support the goals and plans of research. Denis (2020), data analysis is a process; a series of connected activities designed to obtain meaningful information from the collected data. Data analysis involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and applying statistical techniques to help the researcher interpret the findings in relation to the research questions. In this study, quantitative data was coded and analyzed, while content coding was used in coding the qualitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics was used to analyse quantitative data after appropriate data coding using Statistical Package for Performance of social Science (SPSS) version 28 (Faoubar & Zaghari, 2023). Statistical techniques such as measures of central tendency, dispersion, symmetry and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. In descriptive analysis, the raw data of the indicators was analyzed and presented in frequency tables and graphs for all the variables depending on the nature of the categorical data of the indicator. The mode in terms of the modal class was used as a measure of central tendency of choice because the indicators were ordinal categorical data with 5 categories each.

To draw conclusions on the objectives of the study and test hypotheses, statistical models were fitted for the specification function showing the relationship between strategic communication and Performance of Universities in Kenya. The study used two types of linear regression analyses; linear multiple regression and hierarchical linear regression (Faoubar & Zaghari, 2023). Linear regression was used to test relationship between variable due to linear relationship

between the variables. The following regression model was used for quantitative procedures examining the relationship between independent and dependent variables;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Performance of Universities in Kenya

β_0 =constant

β_1 = Regression Coefficients

X_1 – Strategic communication

ε = the error of term

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Communication

The study sought to examine the influence of strategic leadership practices on performance of Universities in Kenya. The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of strategic communication on performance of Universities in Kenya. The respondents were required to indicate the extent to which strategic communication influenced performance of Universities in Kenya. This was on a likert scale of strongly disagree, disagree, not sure, agree and strongly agree. The results were expressed as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation as shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics for Strategic Communication

Statements	1 %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 %	Mean	Std.Dev
Public relation is important for the success of the university	0(0)	0(0)	3(2.7)	50(42.3)	65(55)	4.51	0.721
The university promote communication channels then guide, encourage, empower and facilitate students	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	50(42)	63(53)	3.47	0.751
Students expectation depend on motivation of workers by setting more challenging expectations to achieve higher performance	0(0)	0(0)	3(2.7)	27(22.3)	89(75)	3.49	0.801
The roles of principals and agents or the interaction situation in the university is restructured	0(0)	3(2.7)	6(5.3)	27(22.3)	83(69.7)	4.61	0.732
The university rewards best performing students	0(0)	6(5.3)	9(7.7)	38(32.3)	65(54.7)	4.53	0.733
The university considers views of their workers, parents and students	0(0)	0(0)	12(10)	27(23)	80(67)	4.41	0.747
The university ensures that its workers have the right capacity	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	50(42)	63(53)	3.38	0.933
Transformation of a university needs visionary and strategist managers	0(0)	0(0)	3(2.7)	27(22.3)	89(75)	4.49	0.801
The university must create an environment in which students can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence	0(0)	3(2.7)	6(5.3)	27(22.3)	83(69.7)	3.61	0.732
	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)	126(42)	174(53)	4.39	0.933
Transformational HRM has helped in improving performance of the university							

n=119; Key: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Not Sure=3, Agree=4, and Strongly Agree=5

The findings on the statement of "Public relation is important for the success of the university", the majority of the respondents, 65 (55%) gave strongly agreed and 50 (42.3%) gave agreed to the statement, while a few of the respondents, 3 (2.7%) were not sure as supported by a mean of 4.51 and a standard deviation of 0.721. On the statement of "The university promote communication channels then guide, encourage, empower and facilitate students", the majority of the respondents, 63 (53%) gave strongly agreed and 50 (42%) gave agreed to the statement evidenced by a mean of 4.47 and a standard deviation of 0.551. This is in line with the findings of Ongeri and Osoro (2022).

About the statement of "Management communication depend on motivation of workers by setting more challenging expectations to achieve higher performance", the majority of the respondents, 89 (75%) gave strongly agreed and 27 (22.3%) agreed to the statement, while a few of the respondents, 3 (2.7%) were not sure as shown by a mean of 4.49 and a standard deviation of 0.901. Regarding the statement of "The roles of principals and agents or the interaction situation in the university is restructured", the majority of the respondents, 83 (69.7%) gave strongly agreed and 27 (22.3%) agreed to the stamen, while a few of the respondents, 6 (5.3%) were not sure and 3 (2.7%) gave disagreed to the statement as supported by a mean of 4.61 and a standard deviation of 0.732. Concerning the statement of "The university rewards best performing students", the majority of the respondents, 65 (54.7%) gave strongly agreed and 38 (32.3%) gave agreed to the statement, while a few of the respondents, 9 (7.7%) were not sure and 16 (5.3%) disagreed to the statement as shown by a mean of 4.53 and a standard deviation of 0.733. This is in line with the findings of Muriithi *et al.* (2022).

On the statement of "The university considers views of their workers, parents and students", the majority of the respondents, 80 (67%) gave strongly agreed and 27 (23%) gave agreed to the statement, while a few of the respondents, 12 (10%) were not sure as evidenced by a mean of 4.41 and a standard deviation of 0.747. Regarding the statement of "The university ensures that its workers have the right capacity", the majority of the respondents, 63 (53%) gave strongly agreed and 50 (42%) gave agreed to the statement as supported by a mean of 4.30 and a standard deviation of 0.933. Concerning the statement of "Transformation of a university needs visionary and strategist managers", the majority of the respondents, 89 (75%) gave strongly agreed and 27 (22.3%) gave agreed to the statement, while a few of the respondents, 3 (2.7%) were not sure as indicated by a mean of 4.49 and a standard deviation of 0.701. This is in line with the findings of Nyile *et al.* (2022).

On the statement of "The university must create an environment in which students can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence", the majority of the respondents, 83 (69.7%) gave strongly agreed and 27 (22.3%) agreed to the statement, while a few of the respondents, 6 (5.3%) were not sure and 3 (2.7%) disagreed to the statement as as shown by a mean of 4.61 and a standard deviation of 0.732. Finally, on the statement of "Strategic communication has helped in improving performance of the university", the majority of the respondents, 63 (53%) gave strongly agreed and 50 (42%) gave agreed to the statement as supported by a mean of 4.39 and a standard deviation of 0.933.

The results clearly indicated that strategic communication enhances the performance of Universities in Kenya as summarized in table 4. The findings are in agreement with a number of researchers who established that transformational HRM plays a big role on performance of universities when implemented with proper structures. Gupta, Kumar, Kusi-Sarpong, Jabbour

and Agyemang (2021) established that government technology is one of the enablers that university's need to focus much in order to transform and improve their performance. They further stated that transformational HRM brings greater visibility across the strategic leadership, ensuring access to accurate knowledge with actionable insights to help optimize the processes, recognize potential risks, recommendations to mitigate them, and to lower costs. Durach, Wiengarten and Choi (2020) noted that transformational HRM emphasizes motivation and inspiration to increase performance of universities, and the managers must create an environment in which students can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence.

Lu, Wang and Wang (2023) found out that many companies through transformational HRM structure have invested in greater strategic leadership digitization over the years to cope up with strategic leadership disruptions and to ensure performance. Pupkin (2023) noted that transformational practices model seeks to address current challenges through a collaborative and inclusive approach, which requires the active participation of all relevant actors in decision-making for better performance. Dubey *et al*. (2020) found out that transformational HRM faces many challenges at the implementation stages as resistance to change, integration of new technologies, knowledge integration and analytics, disruption to existing processes, cost, talent and skills. But when fully implemented then the universities upsurge their performance. Aben, van der Valk, Roehrich and Selviaridis (2021) stated that there is need for comprehensive overhaul and modernization of a education's strategic leadership network, designed to gain a competitive advantage by improving operational efficiency and boosting customer satisfaction. Dubey *et al.* (2020) established that transformational HRM leads to various benefits like improved efficiency, cost reduction, increased visibility, enhanced customer experience, improved ability, enhanced strategic collaboration, improved strategic HRM , and reputation to all universities.

Qualitative Analysis

Strategic Communication

The participants of the study were asked to indicate the other effects of strategic communication. The study established that 27 (22.7%) of the respondents agreed that the campuses universities in Kenya enhanced public relations; 29 (24.7%)of the respondents agreed that there was an increased communication channels; 25 (22.0%) of the respondents disagreed that there is improved agility; 4 (3.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that enhanced management communication in university currently ; 4 (3.3%) improved their focus on sustainability and 23 (19.0%) of the respondents agreed that to build a stronger brand reputation as a result of strategic communication respectively. The findings are presented in the table 5 below. A noteworthy outcome is the 27 (22.7%) of the respondents agreed to increase in knowledge sharing and learning reported by the participants. This suggests that strategic communication fosters a

collaborative environment, potentially through improved communication channels or knowledge management systems. This enhanced knowledge dissemination can lead to communication channels, improved decision-making, and a more competent workforce. The observed 29 (24.7%) of the respondents were moderate towards for any increase in investment in strategic communication aligns with the transformative nature of strategic communication. This is in line with the findings of Nyile et al. (2022).

By embracing digital solutions, universities can enhance visibility, streamline processes, and gain real-time knowledge for better decision-making. This investment signifies a strategic shift towards a more knowledge-driven and agile strategic leadership. The findings reveal a positive impact on agility 26 (22.0%) of the respondents agreed and responsiveness 4 (3.3%) of the respondents disagreed. Strategic communication likely facilitates a more flexible and adaptable strategic leadership by promoting cross-functional collaboration and risk mitigation strategies. This allows universities to respond swiftly to market fluctuations and unforeseen disruptions. Only 4 (3.3%) of participants were moderate to the reported of an enhanced focus on sustainability. The 23 (19.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed that any increase in universities reporting would trigger a stronger brand reputation. This is in line with the findings of Muriithi et al. (2022). This could be attributed to improved product quality and consistency achieved through a more efficient and controlled strategic leadership. Additionally, increased visibility into ethical sourcing practices could enhance brand image.

The results of this study are in agreement with literature reviewed. Gupta, Kumar, Kusi-Sarpong, Jabbour and Agyemang (2021) concluded that government technology is one of the enablers that university need to focus much in order to transform and improve their strategic leadership performance. They further stated that transformational HRM brings greater visibility across the strategic leadership, ensuring access to accurate knowledge with actionable insights to help optimize the processes, recognize potential risks, recommendations to mitigate them, and to lower costs. Durach, Wiengarten and Choi (2020) noted that transformational HRM emphasizes motivation and inspiration to increase performance of universities, and managers must create an environment in which student can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence. The examiners must not must communicate with their students.

In their study, Lu, Wang and Wang (2023) found out that many companies have invested in greater strategic leadership digitization over the years to cope up with strategic leadership disruptions and to ensure performance. Pupkin (2023) noted that transformational HRM model seeks to address current challenges through a collaborative and inclusive approach, which requires the active participation of all relevant actors in decision-making. According to Aben, van der Valk, Roehrich and Selviaridis (2021), there is need for comprehensive overhaul and modernization of a education's strategic leadership network, designed to gain a competitive

advantage by improving operational efficiency and boosting customer satisfaction. Dubey, et al. (2020) found out that transformational HRM leads to various benefits like improved efficiency, cost reduction, increased visibility, enhanced customer experience, improved agility, enhanced collaboration, improved university structure, and sustainability to campuses.

Table 5: Strategic Communication

Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Enhanced knowledge sharing and learning	27	22.7	22.7
Increased investment in strategic leadership technology	29	24.7	47.3
Improved quality	26	22.0	69.3
Increased responsiveness	4	3.3	77.7
Improved focus on performance metrics	4	3.3	31.0
Stronger support from management	23	19.0	100.0
Total	**119**	**100.0**	

n=119

Tests of Hypotheses

Regression Analysis on Strategic communication and Performance of Universities in Kenya

The first objective of the study was designed to establish the effect of strategic communication on performance of Universities in Kenya. The literature that was reviewed in this study as well as theoretical reasoning associated strategic communication with performance of Universities. Following the theoretical arguments, the following hypothesis was formulated and tested:

> H_{01}: *Strategic communication does not significantly affect the performance of Universities in Kenya.*

The hypothesis was tested by running an ordinary least square regression model. The model summary in table 6 demonstrates that the coefficient of determination as indicated by Adjusted R square to be 0.451 implying that 45.1% of performance of Universities in Kenya.is explained by strategic communication. Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis stating that strategic communication does not influence performance of Universities in Kenya. Instead, the researcher considered the alternative hypothesis as strategic control has significant effect on performance of Universities in Kenya.

The results of this study are in agreement with literature reviewed. Gupta, Kumar, Kusi-Sarpong, Jabbour and Agyemang (2021) concluded that government technology is one of the enablers that university need to focus much in order to transform and improve their strategic leadership

performance. They further stated that transformational HRM brings greater visibility across the strategic leadership, ensuring access to accurate knowledge with actionable insights to help optimize the processes, recognize potential risks, recommendations to mitigate them, and to lower costs. Durach, Wiengarten and Choi (2020) noted that transformational HRM emphasizes motivation and inspiration to increase performance of universities, and managers must create an environment in which students can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence. The managers must communicate with their students.

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In table 7, the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. The hypothesis was tested by running an ordinary least square regression model. The acceptance and rejection criteria were that, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the H_0 is not rejected but if it is less than 0.05, the H_0 fails to be accepted. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, then strategic communication had a significant explanatory power on performance of Universities (F=246.159 and p-value <0.05). The finding is also supported by the p-value of 0.000. *Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis stating that strategic communication does not influence performance of Universities in Kenya and considered the alternative hypothesis* as strategic control has significant influence on performance of Universities.

The results of this study are in agreement with literature reviewed. Gupta, Kumar, Kusi-Sarpong, Jabbour and Agyemang (2021) concluded that government technology is one of the enablers that university need to focus much in order to transform and improve their strategic leadership performance. They further stated that transformational HRM brings greater visibility across the strategic leadership, ensuring access to accurate knowledge with actionable insights to help optimize the processes, recognize potential risks, recommendations to mitigate them, and to lower costs. Durach, Wiengarten and Choi (2020) noted that transformational HRM emphasizes motivation and inspiration to increase performance of universities, and managers must create an

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From table 8, regression equation can be written as:

$Y = 2.177 + 0.503X_4$

Where:

X_4 is strategic communication

Y is performance of Universities in Kenya.

The regression equation above shows that when strategic communication is held constant at zero, performance of Universities would be 2.177 units. There is an influence of strategic communication on performance of Universities in Kenya. A unit increase in strategic communication increases performance of Universities by 0.503 Units. The hypothesis was tested by running an ordinary least square regression model. The acceptance and rejection criteria were that, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the H_0 is not rejected but if it is less than 0.05, the H_0 fails to be accepted. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, we conclude that there is a significant effect of strategic communication on performance of Universities in Kenya. The finding is also supported by the p-value of 0.005. The researcher rejected the null hypothesis stating that strategic communication does not influence performance of Universities in Kenya and considered the alternative hypothesis since the strategic control has positive significant effect on performance of Universities in Kenya.

The results of this study are in agreement with literature reviewed. Gupta, Kumar, Kusi-Sarpong, Jabbour and Agyemang (2021) concluded that government technology is one of the enablers that university need to focus much in order to transform and improve their strategic leadership performance. They further stated that transformational HRM brings greater visibility across the

strategic leadership, ensuring access to accurate knowledge with actionable insights to help optimize the processes, recognize potential risks, recommendations to mitigate them, and to lower costs. Durach, Wiengarten and Choi (2020) noted that transformational HRM emphasizes motivation and inspiration to increase performance of universities, and managers must create an environment in which students can accept and execute their responsibilities with confidence. The managers must communicate with their students.

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Table 6: Model Summary for Strategic Communication

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.673[a]	0.452	0.421	0.22679

  a. Predictor: (Constant), Strategic communication
  b. Dependable Variable: Performance of Universities

Table 7: ANOVA Table for Strategic communication

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.661	1	12.661	83.848	.000[b]
	Residual	5.327	118	0.151		
	Total	**10.933**	**119**			

  a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Universities
  b. Predictor: (Constant), Strategic communication

Table 8: Regression Coefficients Table for Strategic Communication

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.177	0.146		14.370	0.000
	X_4	0.503	0.032	0.673	15.639	0.004

    a. Dependent Variable: Performance of Universities

    b. Predictor: Strategic communication

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions of the Study

Strategic Communication

The study aimed at the examination of the effect of strategic communication on the performance of Universities in Kenya. The results showed that strategic communication had effect on the performance of Universities in Kenya. The effect was significant in the model. This study results showed a strong positive relationship between strategic communication and the performance of Universities. This study provided evidence that strategic communication significantly and positively effects the performance of Universities in Kenya. This implies that an increase in performance of number university is likely through embracing strategic communication within strategic leadership practices system.

As a result, the study concluded that strategic communication positively affect performance of Universities. This study also concludes that strategic communication to be implemented in the universities with good structures and rules that guide a university in enhancing competitive edge within the global strategic leadership. The study determined that strategic communication had a positive effect on performance of Universities. This study concludes that the public relation is important for the success of the universities and that the universities to reward best performing students to improve performance.

Recommendations of the Study

The study recommends that the Universities in Kenya should implement strategic communication to enhance the understanding between managers and general staff. This will improve the productivity, number of publications, customer satisfaction and hence the performance of universities. The study further recommends that the universities to embrace public relation that is important for the success of their universities. The students to be motivated through setting more challenging expectations in order to achieve higher performance, and

ensure that the workers have the right capacity. The universities need to engage the visionary and strategist managers to propel the implementation of strategic communication.

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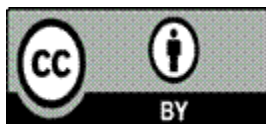
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