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Bridging the Communication Lacuna: Perceived Barriers to Effective Teacher-Administrator Communication Management in Secondary Schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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This study examined perceived barriers to effective management of communication channels between teachers and administrators in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Effective communication is essential for coordination, decision-making, and collaboration in schools, yet educational institutions continue to experience communication breakdown that hinder performance. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population comprised 3,000 teachers and school administrators in public secondary schools. A sample of 300 teachers was selected from eight secondary schools (four urban and four rural) using purposive sampling for school selection and systematic random sampling for teacher selection. Data was collected from teachers by the use of questionnaires, while semi-structured interviews were used in the case of principals. The questionnaire captured data on formal and informal communication channels, communication management practices, and perceived barriers, while interviews provided in-depth qualitative insights. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, and standard deviations) and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Findings revealed that communication in secondary schools is hindered by several barriers, including delays in information dissemination, overdependence on informal communication channels, limited integration of digital communication tools, hierarchical administrative structures, and weak feedback mechanisms. These barriers contributed to misunderstandings, reduced teacher participation in decision-making process, and inefficiencies in school operations. The study concludes that ineffective management of communication channels significantly undermines collaboration and overall school effectiveness. The study recommends strengthening such formal communication systems as; enhancing the use of ICT in school communication, promoting participatory leadership practices, and developing clear communication guidelines to improve interaction between teachers and administrators.

Keywords: *communication channels, communication barriers, school administrators' teachers, secondary schools, Uasin Gishu County, ICT integration, school leadership*

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1. Introduction

Communication is at the heart of how secondary schools function, especially in the day-to-day interaction between teachers and administrators. It is through communication that instructions are given, decisions are shared, challenges are addressed, and school goals are coordinated. In secondary schools, this communication happens through different channels. Some are formal, such as staff meetings, official memos, emails, and written reports, while others are informal, including casual conversations in staffrooms, phone calls, WhatsApp messages, and quick

discussions in corridors. When these channels are well managed, they help create clarity, trust, and smooth coordination in school operations. However, when communication channels are poorly managed, confusion, delays, misunderstandings, and conflicts often arise. This makes it important to understand the barriers that affect how communication between teachers and administrators is managed in secondary schools, since this relationship is central to effective school leadership and performance (Genc & Ruhet, 2017; Gomez et al., 2017).

Formal communication is meant to provide structure and order in how information flows between teachers and administrators. In secondary schools, this includes scheduled meetings, official notices, departmental reports, and written instructions from school leadership. Ideally, these channels ensure that everyone receives the same information in a clear and accountable manner. However,however, these formal systems are not always smooth. Sometimes messages are delayed, procedures take too long, or information gets "stuck" at certain administrative levels. In other cases, teachers may feel that formal communication is too rigid or not responsive enough to urgent issues in classrooms. These challenges can create frustration and weaken the effectiveness of school management. Understanding these barriers is important because formal communication is supposed to be the backbone of coordination between teachers and administrators (Argote, 2022).

Alongside formal systems, informal communication plays a major role in shaping how teachers and administrators interact. This type of communication is often more natural and happens through everyday conversations, informal chats, or even social media groups. It is often faster and helps staff share quick updates or clarify issues without waiting for official channels. However, when informal communication becomes the main way of sharing important information, it can lead to problems such as misinformation, misunderstandings, or inconsistent messages. For example, rumors may spread faster than official announcements, or different staff members may receive slightly different versions of the same information. While informal communication helps build relationships and teamwork, it can also create communication gaps when not properly managed (Allen, 2023).

In the United States and Canada, schools have introduced structured communication systems supported by digital tools and leadership frameworks to improve information flow. Even so, challenges such as information overload and too many reporting requirements still affect how smooth communication happens (Leithwood & Louis, 2012; Fullan, 2014). In Europe, countries like Finland and the United Kingdom emphasize openness, trust, and collaboration in school communication. Despite this, issues like heavy administrative workloads and strict accountability systems sometimes slow down communication processes and limit flexibility in decision-making (Sahlberg, 2015; Earley & Greany, 2017). These examples show that communication barriers are not unique to developing countries—they exist even in strong education systems.

In many Asian and African contexts, communication in schools is increasingly shaped by technology and social structures, but challenges still remain. In China, digital platforms such as WeChat and DingTalk have made communication faster and more organized between teachers and administrators. However, the heavy reliance on digital tools can sometimes create pressure, overload, or confusion when messages are not well coordinated (Li et al., 2023; Xu, 2022). In India, efforts to improve communication through ICT tools and community involvement have been promising, but issues like language diversity, unequal access to technology, and social inequalities still affect smooth communication (Sharma & Ranjan, 2022; Gupta & Srivastava, 2023).

Similarly, in several African countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, and Tanzania, schools continue to face challenges such as poor infrastructure, digital gaps, and socio-cultural barriers that affect how teachers and administrators communicate effectively.In Kenya, communication between teachers and administrators has improved with the introduction of systems like KEMIS and the widespread use of mobile communication tools such as WhatsApp. These platforms have made it easier to share information quickly, especially in urban schools. However, many schools still struggle with challenges such as unreliable internet access, limited digital skills, workload pressures on administrators, and language diversity that can affect how messages are understood. Despite these realities, there is still limited research focusing specifically on the perceived barriers that affect how communication channels are managed between teachers and administrators in secondary schools, in Uasin Gishu County.

1.1 Research Objectives

To identify the perceived barriers to effective communication management between teachers and school administrators in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Effective management of communication channels is critical for the smooth functioning of secondary schools because it ensures timely flow of information, meaningful stakeholder engagement, and informed decision-making. However, many secondary schools continue to experience communication breakdowns due to weak coordination of both formal and informal communication channels, leading to misunderstandings, delayed decision-making, poor collaboration among teachers and administrators, and low levels of parental involvement. In Kenya, these challenges

are further intensified by disparities in access to digital communication tools, inadequate infrastructure, and differences in administrative communication practices across schools, which often affect clarity, consistency, and accountability in information sharing. Despite the central role of communication in school and management, there remains limited empirical evidence specifically focusing on the perceived barriers to effective management of communication channels between teachers and administrators in this context. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the perceived barriers to effective management of communication channels between teachers and administrators in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County with a view to informing strategies for improving school communication and overall effectiveness.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Perceived Barriers to Effective Management of Communication Channels

Effective communication is central to the success of any organization, including educational institutions. However, several perceived barriers to communication can hinder the flow of information and reduce organizational efficiency. In educational settings, these barriers can manifest in various ways, including technological limitations, training gaps, cultural differences, and structural inefficiencies. In many developing countries, inadequate access to technology, poor internet infrastructure, and outdated devices limit the ability of schools to facilitate efficient communication among teachers, students, and parents. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, many schools lack the necessary infrastructure to implement effective digital communication systems (Tariq et al., 2020). In Kenya, while digital learning has gained traction, schools in rural areas still struggle with unreliable internet access, affecting the timely sharing of educational materials and communication between teachers and students (Ouma, 2023). Similarly, in other regions, such as parts of India and Indonesia, digital divides persist, restricting access to online resources and communication platforms (Mitra et al., 2019).

Another barrier to effective communication is the gap in training, particularly in the use of technology and communication tools. Teachers and administrators in many countries often lack the training necessary to use advanced communication technologies effectively. In Nigeria, for example, research has shown that teachers often experience difficulties in utilizing digital platforms for communication due to limited professional development opportunities (Okoye, 2019). The lack of training on digital literacy and communication tools results in inefficiencies in both administrative tasks and instructional delivery, which further exacerbates communication problems. This issue is not unique to developing countries; even in advanced economies such as the United States, where the rapid integration of new communication tools occurs, there is often a lag in adequate teacher training, leading to underutilization of available technologies (Harris et al., 2020).

Cultural differences also present significant barriers to communication, especially in multicultural educational settings. In countries with diverse populations, such as the United States, Canada, and Australia, cultural diversity in the student and teacher populations can result in miscommunications and misunderstandings. Teachers may struggle to communicate effectively with students from different cultural backgrounds, leading to a disconnect that can hinder educational outcomes. Additionally, cultural differences in communication styles—such as differences in non-verbal cues, power distance, and directness—can create barriers. In Southeast Asia, for instance, hierarchical cultural norms often result in communication patterns where students are less likely to openly express their opinions, affecting teacher-student interaction and feedback (Nguyen & Lee, 2020). Similarly, in multicultural schools in South Africa, where students may speak multiple languages, language barriers combined with cultural differences can complicate the clarity and effectiveness of communication (Khan, 2018).

Structural inefficiencies in the organization of schools and educational institutions also play a significant role in communication breakdowns. In many countries, rigid hierarchical structures within schools limit the flow of information. In countries like Japan and Germany, where educational systems tend to be highly structured, communication can become siloed, with limited horizontal communication between departments or between teachers and administrators (Yamamoto, 2021). In some African countries, schools may operate with limited resources, which exacerbates structural inefficiencies, as teachers and administrators may not have clear roles or effective means of communicating across different levels of the institution (Hadebe & Smit, 2021). These inefficiencies often lead to delayed responses, miscommunication, and poor decision-making, further hindering the educational process.

The global digital divide highlights the challenges that many countries face when it comes to the implementation of effective communication technologies. In rural areas of South Asia and Africa, students and teachers often rely on traditional, face-to-face communication methods due to a lack of internet connectivity and technological infrastructure. According to a study by (Raj et al., 2021), rural schools in India suffer from a lack of reliable internet and electricity, which significantly impacts the ability to use technology for teaching and administrative purposes. The gap in technological access not only hinders communication within the school but also affects external communication with parents and the community, further exacerbating the educational divide.

Training gaps in the use of communication technologies are also a widespread issue. Even in countries with higher levels of technological access, there are gaps in teacher

training. A study in the United Kingdom found that while schools had access to advanced communication technologies, teachers often lacked the training to utilize these tools effectively for communication purposes (Henderson & Rome, 2020). This lack of proficiency in communication tools results in inefficient administrative communication, as well as a limited ability to engage with students and parents. Professional development programs that focus on communication and technology use are crucial to bridging these gaps and improving the overall communication infrastructure within schools.

Cultural differences in communication are a complex barrier that affects schools in many parts of the world. For example, in countries like Brazil and Mexico, where family involvement in education is highly valued, schools may face challenges in effectively communicating with parents who have different educational expectations or communication preferences (Sánchez & Sánchez, 2018). In contrast, schools in Scandinavian countries, such as Finland and Sweden, tend to have more egalitarian communication structures, where students and teachers engage in open dialogues. However, even within these settings, cultural differences such as the role of gender or age in communication can still influence how messages are received and interpreted (Alvesson, 2019).

In many educational systems, structural inefficiencies are often linked to bureaucratic processes that slow down communication. In countries like Italy and Spain, where education systems are heavily influenced by centralized governance, administrative decisions may take longer to be communicated to teachers and students. This delay in communication can lead to confusion, frustration, and a lack of timely action (Martín et al., 2019). Additionally, in larger educational institutions, where the management structure is complex, communication can become fragmented, with different departments or units working in isolation from one another. This siloed approach can prevent effective collaboration and information sharing, making it difficult for schools to operate efficiently.

The limitations in technology can also directly impact the relationship between teachers and students. In countries like Kenya, where digital tools are becoming more common in classrooms, teachers may face challenges in engaging students who do not have access to the necessary technology at home. This digital divide can result in unequal educational experiences for students, affecting their ability to participate in online discussions, access course materials, and communicate with teachers outside of the classroom (Ouma, 2023). Without access to technology, students may miss out on opportunities for enhanced learning experiences, such as virtual classroom discussions or feedback on assignments.

Cultural sensitivity is critical when managing communication in diverse educational settings. In countries like Canada, where the population includes a significant number of Indigenous peoples, there are distinct communication challenges that must be addressed to ensure effective engagement between teachers and students. Understanding the cultural context, including the role of storytelling, elders, and community-based learning, is essential for creating an environment where students feel valued and heard (Bhabha, 2004). Fostering cultural sensitivity in communication is essential for creating inclusive educational environments where all students, regardless of their cultural background, can thrive.

To overcome training gaps, many countries are now focusing on enhancing teacher professional development. In Australia, for example, there is a growing emphasis on integrating digital literacy and communication skills into teacher training programs. Research by (Harris et al., 2020) highlights the importance of ongoing professional development to equip teachers with the skills needed to use technology for effective communication. These programs help teachers stay up-to-date with the latest tools and platforms, ensuring that they can engage with students and parents through efficient and timely communication methods.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design. The descriptive design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to systematically describe the perceived barriers to effective management of communication channels between teachers and administrators in secondary schools without manipulating any variables. The design helped capture real-life experiences and perceptions of teachers regarding how communication was managed in their schools and the challenges they encountered. According to Taherdoost (2022), descriptive studies are effective in providing accurate representations of phenomena as they naturally occur, making it suitable for examining communication management practices in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County.

The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu County, targeting teachers and school administrators in public secondary schools. The county has 214 public secondary schools with approximately 3,000 teachers (Uasin Gishu County Director of Education, 2024), forming the study population. Using Mugenda and Mugenda's (2013) recommendation that 10% of a population below 10,000 is adequate for sampling, a sample of 300 teachers was selected. The study employed purposive sampling to select four urban and four rural secondary schools to ensure contextual representation, followed by systematic random sampling to select teachers proportionately from each school. This ensured fair representation of both urban and rural school settings as well as gender balance among respondents.

Data were collected using a self-constructed questionnaire administered to teachers and a semi-structured interview schedule for school principals**.** The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic information,

communication channels (formal and informal), management practices, and perceived barriers to communication between teachers and administrators. A four-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" was used to measure responses. Interviews with principals provided deeper qualitative insights into how communication channels were managed and the challenges experienced at the administrative level. The use of both tools allowed for triangulation and a more comprehensive understanding of communication barriers in schools.

The validity of the research instruments was ensured through expert review and literature alignment. Content validity was achieved by aligning questionnaire items with existing literature on school communication and administrative practices, while face validity was confirmed through evaluation by research supervisors. To ensure reliability, a pilot study was conducted in a neighboring sub-county with similar school characteristics but excluded from the main study. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to test internal consistency, with a threshold of 0.70 considered acceptable (Ary et al., 2006). The pilot results guided refinement of the instruments before the actual data collection.

Data collection followed official ethical and administrative procedures. After obtaining ethical clearance and a research permit from NACOSTI, permission was sought from county and sub-county education authorities before visiting sampled schools. Questionnaires were administered personally to teachers in their schools, while interviews with principals were conducted at convenient times. Research assistants supported data collection to ensure efficiency. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and given the right to withdraw voluntarily at any stage.

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize teachers' perceptions of communication barriers. Qualitative data from interviews were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and meanings. The findings were presented in tables and narrative form to provide a clear interpretation of perceived barriers to communication management between teachers and administrators. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and honest reporting of findings were strictly observed throughout the study.

4. Results and Discussion

This section sought to explore the perceived barriers that hinder effective communication between teachers and administrators in secondary schools within Uasin Gishu County. Using a 4-point Likert scale, teachers rated various potential obstacles such as training gaps in communication technology, cultural differences, and structural inefficiencies affecting the communication process.

4.1Technological Limitations in Communication

Table 1: Technological Limitations in Communication

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school internet is very reliable when using communication technologies such as computers to send Emails.	300	3.6033	.86128
The school encounters technological problems such as software glitches often.	300	3.5933	.81044
Technology used by the school limit teachers' ability ability to communicate effectively. For instance, use of social media or Emails to communicate.	300	3.5100	.70585
Communication tools such as apps and platforms are easy to use.	300	3.4900	.76059
Teachers can easily access necessary technological communication devices such as computer, smartphones and headphones.	300	3.1767	.61649
The technological tools used by the school such as apps and platforms cause you stress and frustration	300	3.4300	.69765
Technological tools such as instant messaging used by the school makes it difficult for you to express your emotions.	300	2.6600	.78301

School's technological tools used in communication easily lead to misunderstandings and miscommunications.	300	2.8367	.75624
Overall Mean		**3.24**	**.76310**

From Table 1, teachers strongly agreed that the school internet is reliable when using tools like computers to send emails (M = 3.60, SD = 0.86), and that technological problems such as software glitches are common (M = 3.59, SD = 0.81). These two items, both highly rated and with moderate variability, suggest that while the infrastructure (internet) is dependable, technical issues are still frequent, potentially due to outdated systems or lack of maintenance.

Teachers also agreed that the technology used by the school limits their ability to communicate effectively (M = 3.51, SD = 0.71), particularly through media like email or social platforms. This perception was fairly consistent, suggesting a shared concern over the compatibility or appropriateness of some platforms in a school context. Ease of use of communication apps and platforms was similarly rated positively (M = 3.49, SD = 0.76), though slightly less enthusiastically. Access to devices such as computers and smartphones was rated more moderately (M = 3.18, SD = 0.62), with relatively low variability, indicating general agreement that access exists but may not be universal.

Interestingly, many teachers reported that technological tools cause stress and frustration (M = 3.43, SD = 0.70), showing strong agreement and suggesting that despite ease of use, emotional strain is a common consequence of using these platforms. The lowest-rated items involved the emotional and interpersonal limitations of digital communication: difficulties expressing emotions via tools like instant messaging (M = 2.66, SD = 0.78) and the potential for misunderstandings or miscommunications (M = 2.84, SD = 0.76). These responses reflect mixed experiences, with some teachers managing well while others struggle.

The overall mean score was 3.24 with a standard deviation of 0.76, indicating that, on average, teachers agreed that technological tools support communication within the school. However, the moderate variability suggests that not all teachers share the same experience. While most acknowledged the reliability of internet and availability of basic tools, significant concerns were raised about stress, emotional disconnect, and the risk of miscommunication when using these technologies. These findings imply that, despite the general functionality of digital communication tools, there remains a need for improvements in user experience, emotional expressiveness, and support mechanisms to enhance effective communication.

4.2 Training Gaps in Communication Technology

Table 2: Training Gaps in Communication Technology

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school regularly offers trainings on the use of technological tools used in communication such as sematime and zeraki analytics.	300	2.810	1.01192
The school's training on communication technology is effective.	300	3.060	.62533
Teachers encounter difficulties in using communication technologies due to lack of training.	300	2.773	1.08283
Lack of training in communication technologies such as use of social media leads to miscommunications among school members.	300	3.443	.96431
The school should invest more in training of teachers on the use of communication technology.	300	3.860	.83830
Overall Mean		**3.19**	

From Table 21, teachers gave varied responses regarding training gaps in communication technology. They strongly agreed that "The school should invest more in training of teachers on the use of communication technology" (M = 3.86, SD = 0.84), indicating a widely shared and consistent opinion on the need for greater investment in capacity building. There was also strong agreement that "Lack of training in communication technologies such as use of social media leads to miscommunications among school

members" (M = 3.44, SD = 0.96), with slightly more variation in responses.

Moderate agreement was reported on the statement "The school's training on communication technology is effective" (M = 3.06, SD = 0.63), suggesting satisfaction among many teachers, though the low standard deviation reflects a relatively shared perception. Meanwhile, there was lower agreement with "The school regularly offers trainings on the use of technological tools used in communication such as Sematime and Zeraki Analytics" (M = 2.81, SD = 1.01), and "Teachers encounter difficulties in using communication technologies due to lack of training" (M = 2.77, SD = 1.08), both of which had wider variability.

The overall mean was 3.19 with a standard deviation of 0.91, indicating general agreement that training gaps exist and that this affect communication effectiveness. However, the variability across individual items points to uneven training experiences, where some teachers feel adequately supported while others report gaps. The findings strongly suggest the need for more regular, inclusive training programs to enhance technological proficiency and communication clarity across the school community.

4.3 Cultural Barriers to Communication

Table 3: Cultural Barriers to Communication

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Language difference in the school setting affects teachers' ability to communicate effectively.	30	2.480	.66664
The school often experience misunderstandings due to language barrier.	30	3.700	.61476
Communication style such as directness or indirectness of individuals from different cultures in school affects their clarity in interaction.	30	3.850	.63942
School staff find it difficult to understand individual's non – verbal cues such body language or facial expressions due to cultural differences.	30	3.090	.67087
The school administration has o adjust their communication style to accommodate cultural differences among teachers.	30	3.196	.94921
Individuals in school are faced with the challenge of understanding different cultural norms such hierarchical expectations in communication.	30	3.480	.63055
Communication technologies such as chat platforms and social media are effective in bridging cultural communication gaps in schools.	30	3.026	.97765
Overall Mean		**3.27**	.76237

From Table 3, teachers reported varying levels of agreement on the presence and impact of cultural barriers to communication in their schools. The highest level of agreement was recorded for the statement "Communication style such as directness or indirectness of individuals from different cultures in school affects their clarity in interaction" (M = 3.85, SD = 0.64), indicating that many staff experience difficulties linked to diverse communication styles. Similarly, strong agreement was observed for "The school often experience misunderstandings due to language barrier" (M = 3.70, SD = 0.61) and "Individuals in school are faced with the challenge of understanding different cultural norms such as hierarchical expectations in communication" (M = 3.48, SD = 0.63).

Moderate agreement was noted for items such as "The school administration has to adjust their communication style to accommodate cultural differences among teachers" (M = 3.20, SD = 0.95), and "School staff find it difficult to understand individual's non-verbal cues due to cultural differences" (M = 3.09, SD = 0.67). These items reflect a recognition of the subtle, yet important, role of cultural dynamics in both verbal and non-verbal interactions. Interestingly, "Communication technologies such as chat platforms and social media are effective in bridging cultural communication gaps" received a lower mean (M =

3.03, SD = 0.98), suggesting a more cautious or mixed perception of technology as a solution to cultural challenges. The lowest mean was recorded for "Language difference in the school setting affects teachers' ability to communicate effectively" (M = 2.48, SD = 0.67), indicating that language itself is not perceived as a primary obstacle, possibly due to the shared instructional medium.

Overall, the mean rating was 3.27, with a moderate standard deviation of 0.74, showing that while cultural barriers are acknowledged and felt, their impact varies across different communication aspects. The findings imply a need for culturally responsive communication strategies and training that help staff navigate and respect diversity within the school environment.

4.4 Structural Inefficiencies in Communication

Table 4: Structural Inefficiencies in Communication

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school administration structure (hierarchy) affects communication effectiveness.	30	2.823	.78795
Decision – making authority is appropriately distributed across the school.	30	2.653	.66931
The school frequently experience communication breakdowns due to outdated communication tools such as poor document management system.	30	3.286	.55875
The school often experience communication delays due to hierarchical approval processes.	30	3.856	.85551
Miscommunication often occurs in your school due to unclear roles and responsibilities.	30	3.456	.87789
Lack of clarity, delayed communication, incomplete information, rumors and assumptions are the most common cause of miscommunication in your school.	30	3.790	.58912
Miscommunications in school are often addressed quickly.	30	3.980	.70327
Rumors are common in your school environment.	30	3.730	.68214
Staff, social media, lack of formal updates and misinterpretations of policies are the typical sources of rumors in your school.	30	3.090	.65062
Your school management immediately responds to and effectively controls rumors.	30	3.716	.81564
Overall Mean		**3.34**	.72723

From Table 4, teachers reported generally high levels of agreement regarding the presence and effects of structural inefficiencies in communication within their schools. The item with the highest level of agreement was "Miscommunications in school are often addressed quickly" (M = 3.98, SD = 0.70), reflecting a positive perception of the administration's responsiveness when issues do arise. This was closely followed by agreement on "The school often experience communication delays due to hierarchical approval processes" (M = 3.86, SD = 0.86) and "Lack of clarity, delayed communication, incomplete information, rumors and assumptions are the most common cause of miscommunication" (M = 3.79, SD = 0.59), both indicating recognition of systemic delays and barriers to timely, clear communication.

Teachers also noted a significant presence of rumors (M = 3.73, SD = 0.68) and perceived that school management was proactive in responding to them (M = 3.72, SD = 0.82). There was strong agreement that "Miscommunication

often occurs due to unclear roles and responsibilities" (M = 3.46, SD = 0.88), and that "Outdated communication tools such as poor document management systems contribute to breakdowns" (M = 3.29, SD = 0.56), suggesting inefficiencies in both structure and technology.

On the other hand, lower means were observed for items such as "The school administration structure (hierarchy) affects communication effectiveness" (M = 2.82, SD = 0.79) and "Decision-making authority is appropriately distributed across the school" (M = 2.65, SD = 0.67), indicating uncertainty or disagreement regarding the distribution of authority and the direct influence of hierarchy on communication.

The overall mean score was 3.34 with a moderate standard deviation of approximately 0.72, implying general agreement with the presence of structural communication challenges, though the intensity of these experiences varies across respondents. Generally, this data suggests that while school leaders may be responsive to communication issues, their systems are often reactive rather than proactive. The combination of bureaucratic delays, unclear expectations, and rumour-prone environments impairs consistent and timely communication.

4.5 Discussion of Interview Analysis on Communication Barriers in Schools

The quantitative findings revealed several barriers that hinder effective communication in schools. Teachers cited limited access to ICT tools, such as smartphones and internet connectivity, as a major challenge, particularly in schools that rely on digital platforms. Delayed communication was also a recurring issue, often resulting in confusion and inefficiencies. Additionally, teachers reported limited opportunities for feedback, with communication perceived as largely top-down. Negative staff attitudes, including reluctance to engage with messages or participate in discussions, further undermined communication efforts. These findings highlight that both technological gaps and interpersonal dynamics contribute to communication breakdowns within school settings.

The responses from school principals echoed and deepened this understanding. Most administrators acknowledged that technological limitations and behavioral challenges are equally disruptive.

"Some teachers don't have smartphones. Others are inactive in WhatsApp groups." (P3)

This statement highlights a key logistical challenge: digital communication is only as effective as the tools and habits available to both sender and receiver. While WhatsApp is widely used, its effectiveness is compromised when some teachers lack smartphones, are unfamiliar with digital etiquette, or simply do not check messages regularly.

"Delayed responses, especially when you're consulting, are frustrating." (P6)

"Negative attitudes and assumptions — some teachers ignore messages or go silent." (P4)

"Sometimes the network is poor, or the teacher is in class and misses the message." (P1)

These voices draw attention to a more complicated set of barriers — not just poor infrastructure, but also inconsistent responsiveness, passive communication behaviors, and occasional disregard for communication norms. For instance, the expectation that messages will be acknowledged or acted upon is not always met, which affects coordination and planning.

From both sets of data, it is evident that communication breakdowns stem from both technical and human factors. A school might have Wi-Fi and smartphones, yet still experience gaps if the attitude, professionalism and habits of engagement among staff are lacking.

This suggests that effective communication in schools is not simply about infrastructure — it is a cultural practice. Schools need to cultivate responsiveness, accountability, and shared norms around how and when to communicate. Otherwise, tools like WhatsApp or internal memos will have limited impact. Furthermore, the principals' responses reflect a practical understanding of school life: teachers are sometimes busy, distracted, or unavailable due to classroom responsibilities, which necessitates a multimodal communication approach — one that does not rely solely on digital platforms.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that effective management of communication channels between teachers and administrators in secondary schools is a critical determinant of school efficiency, coordination, and overall performance. However, perceived barriers including technological limitations, training gaps, cultural issues, and structural inefficiencies hinder effective communication channels in secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. Despite the general functionality of digital communication tools, there is need for: improvements in user experience and support mechanisms to enhance effective communication; regular, inclusive training programs to enhance technological proficiency and communication clarity in schools; culturally responsive communication strategies and training that help staff navigate and respect diversity within the school environment; and a multimodal communication approach, one that does not rely solely on digital platforms. Hence, communication breakdowns stem from both technical and human factors.

5.2 Recommendations

1. School administration should strengthen formal communication channels by ensuring timely dissemination of information, clear documentation of decisions, and consistent feedback mechanisms to teachers.
2. School administration should institutionalize regular and structured communication forums, such as staff meetings and departmental briefings, to reduce overreliance on informal communication.
3. Government of Kenya should enhance digital communication infrastructure in secondary schools through support from the Ministry of Education and county education authorities to improve the efficiency and accessibility of information.
4. Ministry of Education should provide continuous training for teachers and school administrators on the effective use of ICT-based communication tools to strengthen communication practices.

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