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## Corporate Communication Types Employed in Public Universities in Kenya

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*Abstract:*
*In the management world today, it's widely accepted that the future of any organization critically depends on how it is viewed by key stakeholders. Several research studies have shown that corporate communication when effectively used can help organizations acquire goodwill to operate among their stakeholders. The bulk of these studies, however have been conducted in business organizations, government ministries and parastatals. There have been few studies investigating the effectiveness of corporate communication in academic institutions yet the phenomenon of lack of the goodwill granted by stakeholders is well and alive in universities. The proposed study sought to investigate the effectiveness of corporate communication as a management tool in public Universities in Kenya. The study was guided by the Legitimacy theory, Stakeholder theory and the Stakeholder Salience Model. The scope of the study was four public universities in Kenya. The target population for the study was 2040 administrative staff working in public universities in Kenya where a sample size of 334 administrative staff was used. The objectives of the study were to: survey the types of corporate communication used in Kenyan Public Universities; The study adopted a descriptive research design. Primary data was collected through use of semi-structured questionnaires. Additionally, interview guides were used to get insights from students and external publics. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis which involved identification and classifying findings based on themes. The study found that Universities were practicing mainly four types of corporate communication (stakeholder relations, corporate branding, reputation management and change communication).*

*Keywords: Corporate communication, citizenship, governance, reputation, crisis, publics, stake*

## 1. Introduction

Corporate Communication can be used as a management tool to add value to University administrative processes, and cumulatively enable them to acquire goodwill among their stakeholders which is essential for Universities to alleviate conflict situations and thus operate smoothly. In the management world today, it's widely believed that the future of any organization critically depends on how it is viewed by stakeholders including members of the community in which it operates (Cornelissen, 2012). The objective of building, maintaining and protecting an organization's reputation is the core task of corporate communications.

Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) and other senior executives nowadays consider protecting their organizations' reputation to be critical and view it as one of their most important strategic objectives. This has prompted organizations to be concerned about their public profile and the need to manage communication strategically because of the possible consequences for their reputation.

Studies in corporate communication in Kenya have majorly focused on commercial organizations and government agencies. Despite the importance attributed to corporate communication, inadequate studies on corporate communication processes have been carried out in Kenyan Public Universities. This Paper sought to investigate corporate communication as a management tool in public Universities in Kenya.

The now widespread adoption of the stakeholder perspective in management marks a move away from the neo-classical economic theory which suggests that the purpose of organizations is to make profits for their shareholders, and that only by doing so can a business contribute to wealth for itself as well as society. In recent times however, the social economic theory has suggested, in contrast, that the notion of accountability in fact extends to other groups besides shareholders who are considered to be important for the continuity of the organization (Money & Schepers, 2007; Cornelissen, 2012).

Stakeholders are also increasingly demanding insight and information from organizations (Konuk, 2016). The new media landscape has added further pressures, with everyone communicating about organizations and with critical journalists looking for gaps and discrepancies in corporate messages. Decisions and actions of companies are increasingly put under keen scrutiny (Cornelissen, 2008, 2012). The rise of citizen journalism has also put modern day organizations under round the clock watch by their publics.

The number of Universities in Kenya has grown (30 public chartered universities, 5 Public University Constituent Colleges, 18 private chartered Universities, 5 private university constituent colleges and 13 Institutions with letters of interim authority) and more Universities are now found among local communities (Commission for University Education, 2017). It's not uncommon to find a University in any part of Kenya and more communities interact with and affect the operations of Public Universities in their locality. University managers are also more within reach and University management has been demystified. Stakeholders have interests in the activities of the Universities and as a result, many of these Universities have found themselves facing conflict situations with stakeholders especially communities within which they operate and protests by their staff and students.

In 2015, management wrangles brought the University of Nairobi in the limelight through negative stories in the media. The succession issue of Kenyatta University's Vice-Chancellor (Citizen Digital December 18, 2015), the long standing land tussle between Kenyatta University and the residents of Kamae village (Daily Nation, January 23, 2015), student unrest following disputed student elections at Chuka University (Standard Digital February 9, 2016), and the students and staff protests at Laikipia University (Standard Digital April 13, 2016) are among other conflict situations experienced.

The University of Embu faced opposition from elders in the community in 2015 in an attempt to get the then Embu University College chartered and renamed. The Elders wanted the University College to remain a Constituent College of the University of Nairobi and retain its name (The Standard October 23, 2015). This was probably in ignorance of constitutional and the Commission for University Education's (CUE) requirements for University Colleges which requires them after three years to either: become a full-fledged University, revert to a campus of the mother university or cease to operate (Universities Act, 2012).

In 2015, at least seven public universities witnessed violent protests by students that resulted to destruction of property. University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Technical University of Mombasa, Dedan Kimathi University, Meru University and Karatina University were among those that were hit by students' strikes. Six universities remained closed in parts of the year after rioting students clashed with police. Often, the battles spilled over to the streets, where motorists and businesses were caught up in the chaos experiencing heavy losses.

This prompted the then Education Cabinet Secretary (CS) to call for crisis talks over rising unrest in universities with managers of the institutions to identify the causes of the unrest and possible ways of forestalling conflict. In the stakeholders meeting the CS said that the situation was compounded by lack of proper information channels by university administrations to engage stakeholders, inadequate teaching and learning facilities and sheer incompetence of some of the staff and added that irresponsible behavior on the part of some students had aggravated the situation.

The Cabinet secretary called for prudent management of universities and adequate involvement of students in the management of universities to end strikes. He also asked universities to adopt a fees policy that would be implemented in consultation with various stakeholders and warned that some vice chancellors had been accused of interfering with student elections. "That is not your business. Let them elect themselves, then involve them in running the university" (The Standard November 6, 2014).

In February 2015, The University of Eldoret experienced chaos after politicians leading villagers and local youth stormed the University claiming they were unhappy with the process of hiring and promotions at the University. Similar incidences had been witnessed at Kabianga and Karatina Universities (Daily Nation February 23, 2015). Mamuli, Mutsotso & Namasaka (2013) in a study to investigate the influence of communication on management practices at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya found that poor communication among various actors within the university community had been identified as a contributing factor to conflict situations that characterize universities in Africa. African Universities are characterized by internal conflict including those between administrators and academic staff. Anyakoha, Uzuegbunam, & Ezieke (1995) stated that some of the conflicts often lead to work stoppage or even closure of universities and they stemmed from poor communication. Anyakoha et al. (1995) emphasizes that Universities are successful primarily because of their teaching and research, not because of their management, but good management can, over time, provide the conditions in which teaching and research flourish, just as, more usually, poor management can undermine teaching and research and ultimately lead to institutional decline. One essential characteristic of successful universities is the speed and effectiveness of communication necessary between different organs. Shattock (2003) asserted that in an inter-university competitive environment, how a single staff vacancy is filled or whether a particular allocation of equipment grant is made can have strategic importance for the university's long term performance.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Communication and Corporate Governance

Corporate governance has become a crucial issue in the agenda of executives and communication practitioners necessitated by developments in management including the increasing information demanded of organisations, sophisticated stakeholders and increased legal pressure (Sparkes, 2003; Cornelissen, 2012). Scholars agree that a mutually beneficial relationship between an organization and its publics is key to organizational success and executives have to develop a management culture of service to different stakeholders (Sparkes, 2003; Cornelissen, 2004; Fombrun & Riel, 2007; Garcia, 2008).

Organizations are required to ensure; stakeholder mapping, a policy on management of stakeholder relationships, documentation of stakeholders' interests, expectations and their power to influence organizational operations and that

reputation of organizations and linkage with stakeholders is a regular item of Board agenda (PSC & SCAC, 2015). Events in Kenyan Public Universities however, suggest a lack of awareness of stakeholders' environment and clear policy on and contribution of corporate communication as management tool for stakeholder relations.

### 2.2. The Strategic Function of Corporate Communication

Dolphin (2000) in a historical study on directors of corporate communications in British organizations found that corporate communication has been an increasingly important function. However, little has been published on the role and function of corporate communication executives. Corporate communication literature identifies two predominant roles of the communication practitioner: the manager and the technician (Broom & Smith, 1979; Dozier, 1984; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Steyn., Mateboho, & Aské,. 2001).

Toth, Serini, Wright & Emig (1998) identified a third role named the agency profile, since the set of activities seemed to be managerial in nature. It covered counseling; research; programming decisions; communicating with clients, peers and subordinates; handling correspondence and phone calls and making media contacts. No technical activities featured in this role. Steyn (2000) concurred with these academics on the existence of the third role.

Steyn (2000) conceptualized and empirically verified three roles for the corporate communication practitioner as one; the strategist— role at the top management level of an organisation which gathers strategic information on stakeholders and issues from the external environment by means of environmental scanning and feeds this strategic intelligence into the organisation's strategy formulation processes. This represents corporate communication's contribution to strategic decision making.

The second role was that of the manager; a departmental or functional level role of an organisation which develops corporate communication strategy. It entails identifying key strategic issues, considering their implications for strategic stakeholders and determining what should be communicated to solve a problem or capitalize on the opportunity presented. They formulate communication goals and develop strategic communication plans based on the corporate communication strategy and oversee the implementation of communication programmes by technicians.

The technician role was the third which is not considered a strategic role, since developing/ implementing communication plans or programmes based on the corporate communication strategy is regarded as a role at the micro level. It is implemented through activities such as producing audio-visual materials for presentations, generating publicity e.g. writing media releases, keeping a media clipping service, editing corporate communication materials such as speeches or the annual report, writing articles for the organisation's publications and organising events (Steyn, 2000).

Corporate Communication researchers (Brody, 1985; Cottone, 1987; Van Ruler, Moss, MacManus, & Vercic, 1997) have concluded that corporate communication practitioners in managerial positions still focus on daily routines and technical procedures. This was substantiated in South Africa by Steyn (2000) in a study amongst 103 chief executives. Although CEOs in this study indicated their expectations for senior practitioners to play strategic and managerial roles, their perceptions were that many of these practitioners engaged mainly in technical activities.

The source of responsibility and to whom the communication practitioner reports was also not clear. European practitioners were still struggling to attain positions of management in their organizations. Pincus et al. (1994) stated that perhaps to function effectively, the communications director should be aided by high visibility and status throughout the organization. Wright, (1995) stated that effective practitioners are those who are part of the management thus ensuring that the link with top management thinking is as close as possible because of their particular knowledge and skills.

These studies point to a lack of clear strategic role behavior of the corporate communication practitioner. This paper seeks to explore the role behavior of Corporate Communication practitioners in Public Universities in Kenya.

### 2.3. Strategic Communication

The reputational position that an organization aims to create and maintain with its stakeholders requires communication strategies to guide specific communication events and programmes. A communication strategy is developed in interactions between corporate communication professionals and management to agree on the reputational position that the organization aims to achieve in the minds of stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2012).

Wahome (2005)in a study on the role of Corporate Communications Strategies as used by Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) found that Corporate Communications Strategies have strong impact in transforming organizations. The study confirmed that KCB used multifaceted Corporate Communications Strategies, which contributed to its turnaround. The study recommended the need for organizations to recognize and make use of multifaceted Corporate Communication Strategies which should target both internal and external publics as this will ensure an all-inclusive corporate communication process, which will motivate all to support the process, thus guaranteeing positive results.Despite the importance attributed to strategic communication no study has been carried out in Kenyan Public Universities about strategic communication. This study will seek to establish the effectiveness of communication strategies in Kenyan Public Universities.

### 2.4 Internal Corporate Communication

Cornelissen (2004) states that Internal Corporate Communication (ICC), has not attracted substantial research. His study observed that studies have narrowly considered ICC to refer only to few official channels of communication such as internal newsletters, notice boards or staff meetings. Others have defined ICC narrowly as simply a process that goes from top to bottom. Based on this observation, Cornelissen (2004) observes that ICC ought to be taken to refer to the almost constant interactions within the organization that convey meaning. ICC encompasses both overt communication like meetings, memos etc., and more casual forms of communication such as gossip, pleasantries and body language.

Cornelissen (2004) suggests further that studies of ICC ought to explore its significance in the organization because it is the building block of organizational culture which is the atmosphere of the organization based on its values, mission and work processes. Effective ICC can go a long way towards building an organizational culture where people work together effectively towards a common goal. Argenti (2009) found that unlike with external communication, organizations often fail to strategically plan their internal corporate communication. In other words, ICC is usually either arbitrary or incomplete and if planned, tends to be planned only in reaction to specific events

## 2.5. Types of Corporate Communication

### 2.5.1. Stakeholder Relations

Stakeholders have legitimate interests in corporate activity whether the organization has direct economic interest in them or not. Kotter & Heskett (1992) observed that highly successful organizations are deeply committed to stakeholders. Organizations are not immune to public opinion and managers must recognize the dependencies between organizations and stakeholder groups that must be considered, communicated to and accommodated to secure goodwill from the stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2012).

Wamae (2011) in a study on the role of corporate communication policies in enhancing stakeholder relations at the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) highlighted poor communication with stakeholders as affecting smooth operations. The study concluded that KPA's communication in addressing problems and grievances was reflected in delays in responding to problems hence a need to restructure the communication policies. The current communication through print media was impersonal and did not enhance the relationship between KPA and its stakeholders.

Respondents felt that organizations could use other methods of communicating with stakeholders through electronic mail, frequent meetings, more forums and seminars to discuss new developments, address operational issues and provide an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with management to ensure efficient running of business. Occurrences in Universities suggest a lack of efficient management of stakeholder relations and this study aimed at assessing the practice of stakeholder relations as a corporate communication process in Public Universities.

## 2.6. Corporate Branding

Branding emphasizes specific values to be associated with an organization. Keller (1993) states that brand equity occurs when stakeholders are familiar with a brand and hold favourable, strong and unique associations in memory. Brands however typically fail to recognize that social processes affect the brand and numerous times, perception, memory and knowledge are shaped in social processes and organizational members are an important target audience for branding efforts. In organizations like universities, staff is in essence what constitutes the product and values to be associated with the brand need to be connected to the employees, their capabilities and characteristics (Kärreman & Rylander, 2008).

The task of the Corporate Communication practitioner therefore is to link the organizations corporate identity its mission and vision with the organizational culture—to the core values that the employees associate with the organization. Whatever picture is presented to external stakeholders has an effect upon the beliefs and values of employees and on the organizations identity as employees mirror themselves in whatever messages are being sent out to external stakeholders. Internal communication therefore is key to helping employees know of communication events or campaigns though the use of brand manuals, intranet resources, brand briefings and workshops to not only know about their organizations corporate brand but also enact it in their daily tasks especially when communicating to stakeholders (Fombrum & Van Riel, 2004).

## 2.7. Reputation Management

Scholars state that to manage favourable reputation there is need to align the organizations culture as experienced by staff, the corporate vision as articulated by management and the corporate image or reputation as seen in the eyes of stakeholders (Hatch & Schultz, 2001; Fombrum & Riel 2004; Cornellissen, 2012). There will be a vision- culture gap, when management moves the organization in a strategic direction that employees do not understand or support; an image-culture gap when employees do not practice what the organization claims to believe in leading to confusion among stakeholders; and a vision-image gap when stakeholders feel that the management is taking the organization in a direction that they do not support (Hatch & Schultz 2001; Cornellissen, 2012).

This happens when the organization does not sufficiently communicate with its stakeholders and creates strategic visions that aren't aligned with what stakeholders expect from the organization. Cornelissen (2012) states that the organization must continuously monitor the alignment between its vision (the senior management's aspirations for the organization), Culture (the organizations values as felt and practiced by its staff) and its image (the impression that stakeholders have of the organization). The image that's projected to stakeholders must therefore be carried by both the management and employees and understood and appreciated by its stakeholders to enable universities acquire goodwill from the stakeholders.

Njari (2009) in study of corporate reputation at the Nation Media Group (NMG) found that corporate reputation is a critical aspect for an organization's survival and sustaining competitive advantage. The study suggested that there are many attributes that constitute corporate reputation including; focus on the employees, responsibility to the community, corporate culture management, marketing communications, corporate identity management and focusing on the customer. Further qualitative and quantitative research should be conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of how these attributes influence the company's reputation and find out the key drivers of its reputation. These studies and

occurrences at public universities however point to a disconnect between organizational culture, corporate vision and image and thus reputation in organizations. This study therefore sought to investigate if public universities in Kenya have aligned their visions, cultures and images as a way of obtaining goodwill amongst their stakeholders.

*2.8. Media Relations*

Publicity generated by media and their coverage of an organization influences stakeholders. News routines within media houses may reflect certain ideologies or political orientation and as such may have a direct bearing upon the way news about an organization is reported consisting of either good or bad coverage (Cornelissen, 2012). A study commissioned by the BBC Trust found that programmes on the BBC for example the Money Programme, Radio Five Live and the 10 O'clock News failed to represent stakeholder perspectives on corporate stories in favour of consumer perspective. The study criticized the BBC business editors' often rather negative and narrow views on business.

David Deephouse coined the term "Media Favourability"—the overall evaluation of a firm presented in media when streams of stories about the firm are aired. Media not only convey information but also make and represent reputational assessments to audiences. Favourable news is when an organization is praised for actions associated with activities that should raise its reputation. Unfavourable reporting is when an organization is criticized for its actions or actions it's associated with that may decrease its reputation. Cornellsen (2012) suggests that Corporate Communication Professionals should cultivate positive evaluations by the media through releasing well placed stories that report on organizational actions or significant newsworthy events.

Exchanges between journalists and communicators should essentially be negotiations about how news is to be framed to ensure a tally between corporate frames and news frames and ensure stories are framed in a way consistent with the organizations preferred frame. The skill in media relations is often in spotting the stories or the angles that can turn corporate news into media news through the use of press releases, press conferences, interviews, media monitoring and research (Akoth, 2007; Cornelissen, 2008). Reports in Kenyan news media however do not demonstrate the practice of media relations in Kenyan Universities. This study sought to survey the effectiveness of the practice of media relations by communication practitioners in Public Universities.

*2.9. Change Communication*

Change disrupts the status quo and presents a justification for problems and resistance. In change, stakeholders have an expectation for continuity and it is essential for leaders to frame and emphasize this sense of continuity if stakeholders are to maintain their identification with the organization after change. Managers should articulate rationale for change and then communicate, drumming support in order to implement and realize change. The importance of Corporate Communication is to communicate to employees during and after change to avoid resistance.

Communication is central to how change is formulated, announced and explained and also contributes to successful implementation and institutionalization (Cornelissen, 2004). When change is radical and substitutive, managers have to engage in many conversations with stakeholders to initiate the desired overhaul in thinking. Organizational change is more successful when stakeholders in non-managerial positions are able to exert influence over change process by providing feedback on the change and its implementation i.e. there is an open communication environment. It influences stakeholders trust, commitment and willingness to change (Larkin & Larkin, 1998).
Chepkirui (2014)in a study on change communication at Unilever Kenya revealed that some strategies are more effective than others. Respondents felt that they were provided with adequate information about change and their concerns addressed satisfactorily. The most effective strategy was word of mouth followed through the supervisors. Where change is not always communicated effectively, information cascaded to employees is met with resistance, rumours and exaggeration, so that the implementation of planned innovation that would otherwise steer growth creates a gate for negative growth as well as have a negative influence on corporate culture (Keyton, 2005; Burke, 2008). Universities other institutions in Kenya undergo change in management and upgrading to constituent colleges or University status and a lot political and community influence is experienced during such change. There is however little done to study the impact of change communication during these transitions.

*2.10. Crisis Communication*

Crisis has the potential to damage an organizations reputation and relationship with stakeholders. It is important that communicators anticipate and plan for possible crisis scenarios and prepare crisis communication plans aimed at exerting control over events. This reassures stakeholders that their interests are cared for thus limiting negative consequences for stakeholders, the organization and its reputation (Cornelissen, 2004).

Planning includes establishing key responsibilities for communication professionals before a crisis actually happens including; identification of organizations key spokespersons, media training of the CEO and the spokespersons, establishing a crisis communication team and in major crisis, a press office to field media enquiries and handle the release of information, establishing crisis locations where the media can meet and be briefed in the event of hazardous situations and identification of contacts at relevant external agencies for example the police, fire services among others who may need to be contacted in case of a crisis (Mitroff & Pearson,1993; Mitroff, 2006; Anthonissen, 2008).

The terrorist crisis at Garissa University has consistently featured in media stories pointing to a lack of proper management of the crisis. This has continually dented the image of the University as lacking control of the situation. This study evaluated the status of crisis communication preparedness in Public Universities in Kenya.

*2.11. Corporate Social Responsibility*

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and community relations have emerged as core business functions with the overall aim of building strong and lasting relationships with communities in which organizations operate (Cornelissen, 2012).

The democratic model of representation and participation in society forms a foundation for recent ideas on corporate citizenship. Organizations are legal entities with rights and duties and in effect, citizens of states in which they operate. Corporate citizenship refers to the portfolio of activities that organizations undertake to fulfill perceived duties as members of society. When organizations are granted the legal and political rights of individuals through incorporation, they are ascribed explicitly and implicitly, a set of rights and responsibilities few of which are legally mandated, but many of which have come to be expected as corporate citizen responsibilities .These not only create goodwill but also provides a license to operate (OECD, 2004).

Ropers (1999) in his study of consumers' perception of companies that practice corporate social responsibility found that 8 out of 10 consumers had a more positive image of the companies who support a cause which they care about. Two thirds of those polled said that they would be likely to switch to a brand or retailer associated with a cause they support when the price and quality are equal.

Obewa (2007) found out that most Kenyan firms do not know the difference between CSR and philanthropy. A company can give out donations generously to good causes, but CSR encompasses more than that. His study describes CSR as a move by a corporate organization to take responsibility for the impacts of its activities on society and the environment, where these activities are expected to be consistent with the interest of society and sustainable development Obewa (2007).Deetz (2007) found out that most managers' approach to communication with stakeholders about CSR tends to be based on strategic persuasion rather than on democratic communication or dialogue and are often hesitant to include stakeholders in decisions. McKinsey (2006) stated that organizations often simply focus on media and PR tactics to manage CSR initiatives without considering other ways to embed CSR within their organizations.

Morsing & Schultz (2006) identify three standard strategies for communicating CSR. The Stakeholder Information Strategy which is a one way flow of information where information about the company's CSR is made available to stakeholders objectively as possible about their CSR activities through the news media, brochures, reports and pamphlets (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

The Stakeholder Response Strategy seeks stakeholders for feedback on CSR activities or more generally in response to organizational decisions and actions. The organization however, decides what the focus of CSR activities should be and engages with shareholders to promote these activities. CSR is therefore seen as a purely marketing or PR ploy rather than commitment to stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006).

The third and most effective Stakeholder Involvement Strategy employs mutual dialogue between organizations and stakeholders. Stakeholders have a say in the CSR commitments of the organization. By engaging in dialogue, an organization ensures that it always aware not only of its stakeholder's expectations and shifts in expectations, but also of its potential influence on the expectations. They therefore set up stakeholder consultation forums and conduct ongoing surveys on stakeholder opinions and therefore its activities are seen as authentic and as meeting the expectation of stakeholders (Morsing & Schultz, 2006). Organizations are better off involving stakeholders in their CSR policies rather that setting their own targets and trying to convince stakeholders of their effects (Cornelissen, 2008). Studies however suggest that most organizations adopt the Stakeholder information strategy (Morsing & Schultz, 2006; Obewa, 2007; Deetz, 2007; Cornelissen, 2012). The study sought to explore the information strategies in use in public universities in Kenya.

International organisations awoke to importance of CSR after being affected by public responses to issues they had not until that time thought were part of their organization duties. In the 2nd Asia-European Education Workshop in 2011, themed "Knowledge Societies: Universities and their Social Responsibilities" the awareness of the changing context that shapes expectations of stakeholders towards universities was highlighted. Promotion of University Social Responsibility (USR) through the continuous dialogue with stakeholders, the identification of a USR paradigm, and the pursuit of evidence-based USR policies was recommended. Universities cannot survive today as self-sufficient systems with no direct links to society (Schneller & Thoni, 2011).

Felt (2003) & Vukasovic (2008) state that the changes and challenges universities face with regard to operations have impacted on the delivery of quality education as well as on the notions of autonomy, academic freedom, changing focus and responsibilities towards society. Nagy & Robb (2008) highlighted the corporatization of the universities and the increased call as a good corporate citizen. USR is a rather new concept and universities have tried to exemplify it in their vision and mission statements (Vasilescu, Barna, Epure, & Baicu. (2010). Schneller & Thoni (2011) state that USR is still an open field. Most of what the universities practice as USR are within the framework of quality management and accreditation. Accreditation and quality management standards in most countries have community or social engagement criteria ranging from small community services that are rendered free to hosting a community or involving the community in university life. A review of the main accreditation systems that include community relations, social engagement or academic services shows that most of the universities will work within the confines of these standards to fulfill or meet the minimum requirements (Schneller & Thoni, 2011).

### 2.12. Community Involvement Programmes

Many organizations encounter protests and boycotts that affect their operations resulting from the psychological contract which defines community expectations by stakeholders. Cornelissen (2012) states that it is important to gauge such expectations at the level of each community affected by the organizations activities as well as how they may change over time. Cornelissen (2012) states that the freedom organizations once had for making decisions has become constrained and challenged by communities which exert greater forms of socially responsible behaviour and community involvement. Organizations therefore need to manage community involvement as to avert challenges to their licenses to operate.

Burke (1999) in a study of the development of community involvement programmes found that prior to the 1980's, community involvement programmes involved charitable donations rather than taking an active part in community causes. Though indicating minor involvement in community affairs, philanthropy provides a strong symbolic signal of caring for the community. The 1980's saw a move to employee volunteer programmes working on community causes as ambassadors and building strong community relations translating to positive organizational reputation.

Beginning 1990's, there was a shift towards partnerships which assume a higher level of commitment to community involvement in addressing community issues and needs and enhance community relations for example by making available their expertise and technology to address issues that affect local communities (Burke,1999). An organization that adheres not only to regulations but norms and expectations of stakeholders promotes and builds goodwill to operate in that community due to social acceptance. Organizations known for good community relations intimately connect and internalize such programmes with organizational values and corporate communication should ensure that organizations align external commitments with internal values and responsibilities to alleviate the risk of losing their reputation and goodwill in the community.

Existing literature points to lack of effective community involvement programmes and overreliance on donations as a strategy. This study therefore sought to provide an analytical survey of the status and use of community involvement programmes in Public Universities in Kenya.

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1. Research Design

The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Since the events have already occurred, the researcher merely selects the relevant variables for analysis of their relationships (Kahn & Best, 1993). Mugenda & Mugenda (1999) give the purpose of descriptive research as determining and reporting the way things are. The design was appropriate for this study as the researcher sought to establish the role of corporate communication on legitimacy of universities without manipulation of variables.

### 3.2. Population and Sample Size

The target population was all the 2,040 administrative staff working in the thirty three (33) Public Universities—thirty(30) Chartered Universities and three(3) public university constituent colleges operating in Kenya as listed by the Commission for University Education (CUE).

The study employed the multi-stage sampling technique. The first stage involved the selection of Universities from which data was collected while the second stage involved the selection of the respondents to participate in the study. The researcher started by randomly selecting four (4) public universities—Kenyatta University, Laikipia University, Rongo University and the Technical University of Mombasa to represent 10% of the 33 public Universities in Kenya. This was in line with the recommendation of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who recommended 10% as adequate sample size from a given population. In the second phase, the researcher selected respondents from the pool of administrative staff working in the Universities.

Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) contend that a researcher can purposefully select respondents he/she considers to have the required information or with capability to provide credible responses. Therefore, additional respondents were selected to participate in the interview so that they could provide additional information regarding corporate communication in the University. These respondents were external publics and students. For the external publics, the researcher purposively selected 20 opinion leaders (five for each University) including: Government Officers, Religious Leaders, Hostel Owners, and Members of the press and Suppliers. Five student leaders were also purposively selected from each University to make a total of 20 students. The respondents selected were believed to be conversant with corporate communication practiced by the University and were therefore in a position to provide credible responses necessary to make valid conclusions regarding the study objectives. Table shown below depicts the overall sample size used in the study.

### 3.3. Research Instruments

#### 3.3.1. Questionnaire

Primary data was collected by use of semi-structured questionnaires. Questionnaires are suitable for obtaining important information about the population and are said to reach large number of subjects who are able to read and write independently (Orodho, 2004). Gay (1992) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views or opinions and also make suggestions. For the closed-ended questions the Five –Level Likert scale was used. The open-

ended questions were also added to capture qualitative data from the respondents. The instrument comprised four sections. Section A sought demographic information about the respondents. Section B sought information about types of corporate communication embraced in Universities. Section C was used to obtain responses regarding challenges facing corporate communication while the last section D sought responses regarding the implication of corporate communication on the legitimacy and license to operate for public universities.

### 3.3.2. Interview Guide

To get views of the students and external publics in regard to corporate communication in Universities, separate interview guides were used for each group of respondents. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) contend that an interview guide is an important tool a researcher can use to collect data from respondents by probing them to clarify issues under investigation in order to obtain information that can enrich research findings based on quantitative data as was the case in this study.

## 4. Data Analysis, Presentation & Interpretation

### 4.1. Questionnaire Response Rate

This research study had a sample size of 334 respondents who were administrative staff working in the four randomly selected Universities which included Kenyatta University, Laikipia University, Rongo University and the Technical University of Mombasa. Out of the total of 334 questionnaires issued, 168 (50.3%) were correctly filled representing a response rate of 50.3 percent of the total number of questionnaires issued. Unreturned questionnaires were 112 representing 33.5 percent while the disqualified questionnaires due to incompleteness and inconsistencies were 54 representing 16.2 percent of the total number of issued questionnaires.  Table 1 represents the summary of the response rate.

| Responses | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Administered questionnaires | 168 | 50.3 |
| Unreturned Questionnaires | 112 | 33.5 |
| Disqualified questionnaires | 54 | 16.2 |
| Returned and correctly filled questionnaires | 334 | 82.4 |

Table 1: Questionnaire Response Rate
Source: Survey Data (2018)

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50 percent is adequate, a response rate of 60 percent is good, and a response rate of 70 percent is very good. The response rate of 50.3 percent observed in this study was therefore adequate and as such sufficient for further analysis and for drawing conclusions based on the stipulated research objectives.

### 4.2. Demographic Information

The researcher wanted to find out the characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study before making conclusions of the study variables. The items collecting data on these characteristics were contained in section A of the questionnaire that was administered to administrative staff working in the public Universities. Table 2 summarizes information on respondents' characteristics.

| Sex | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 80 | 47.6 |
| Female | 88 | 52.4 |
| Total | 168 | 100 |
| **Age** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| Below 25 years | 18 | 10.7 |
| 25 – 35 years | 53 | 31.5 |
| 36 – 45 years | 56 | 33.3 |
| 46 – 55 years | 31 | 18.5 |
| Over 55 years | 10 | 6 |
| Total | 168 | 100 |
| **Level of Education** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
| Certificate | 26 | 15.5 |
| Diploma | 54 | 32.1 |
| Bachelor's degree | 68 | 40.5 |
| Master's degree | 20 | 11.9 |
| PhD | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 168 | 100 |

| Time Worked in Current Position | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| Less than a Year | 24 | 14.3 |
| 1-2 Years | 52 | 31 |
| 3-5 Years | 55 | 32.7 |
| Over 5 Years | 37 | 22 |
| Total | 168 | 100 |
| **Office** | **Frequency** | **Percentage** |
| Admissions | 16 | 9.5 |
| Corporate Communication | 17 | 10.1 |
| Council Matters | 13 | 7.7 |
| Dean of Students | 18 | 10.7 |
| Finance | 15 | 8.9 |
| PC & ISO Office | 11 | 6.5 |
| Procurement | 20 | 11.9 |
| Registrar's Office | 15 | 8.9 |
| University Reception | 13 | 7.7 |
| VC's Office | 30 | 17.9 |
| Total | 168 | 100 |

*Table 2: Characteristics of the Respondents*
*Source: Survey Data, 2018*

Table 2 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of demographic information relating to the respondents. From the table, female respondents had the highest percentage rate of 52.4 percent while male respondents were 47.6%. This indicated that most administrators working in public Universities are female. The slight difference in the percentage and frequency of respondents in terms of sex additionally implied that there was a likelihood obtaining balanced findings.

In terms of age, the highest percentage of respondents working as administrators were aged between 36 and 45 years with 33.3% followed by those aged between 25 and 35 years with a percentage of 31.5%. The number of respondents aged between 46 and 55 years were 31 representing 18.5% of the total respondents. Those aged below 25 years were 18 representing 10.7% of the total respondents while those who were over 50 years were the least with a score of 6%. The implication of these findings are that most University administrators are middle aged necessitating the need to come up with corporate communication strategies majorly focusing on this group as they constitute the bulk of the administrators likely to handle corporate communication in public Universities. In terms of education, majority of respondents were Bachelor's degree (40.5%) and Diploma holders (32.1%). The respondents with certificate level of education were 26 representing 15.5% of the total number of respondents while those with Master's degree represented 11.9% of the total number of respondents. There was no respondent with a PhD degree.

In terms of length of time worked in the current position, majority of respondents (32.7%) had worked in their current position for a period ranging between 3 to 5 years. Accordingly, 31% of the respondents had worked in their current position for between 1 and 2 years while those who had worked in their current position for over 5 years were 37 representing 22.0% of the respondents. Finally, 14.3% of the respondents had worked in their current position for less than a year. The implications of these findings are that there could have been regular inter-departmental transfers within Universities which made it impossible for administrators to stay for long in a particular office. It could also be possible that there was high turn-over amongst administrators, something that could adversely affect corporate communication as prolonged stay in one position comes with additional experience in doing tasks pertaining an office.

In terms of office worked, majority of the respondents were drawn from Vice Chancellors' offices (17.9%) followed closely by procurement (11.9%), Dean of students (10.7), corporate communication (10.1%) and admissions (9.5%). Respondents drawn from finance departments represented 8.9% of the total respondents which was same case with those drawn from the offices of registrars. University Receptions and council matters had the lowest respondents with each having 7.7% of the total number of respondents. The implication of these findings is that the study obtained balanced findings due to representations of all offices where corporate communication between the University and both internal and external stakeholders is likely to take place.

### 4.3. Types of Corporate Communication Used in Universities

Data collected was analyzed to illustrate the various types of corporate communication embraced in public universities. Table 3 shows the summary of the descriptive statistics on types of corporate communication.

| Types of Corporate Communication | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Engage in ongoing communication with stakeholders | 168 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 4.0298 | .97530 |
| Management of University Corporate Identity, Branding and Reputation | 168 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 4.0357 | 1.28507 |
| Actively manages the reputation of the University | 168 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 4.4226 | .69642 |
| Management of relations with the media | 168 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.0893 | 1.65544 |
| Engages stakeholders while implementing change | 168 | 1.00 | 5.00 | 3.9524 | .94018 |
| Develop crisis communication plans | 168 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 2.6429 | .84970 |
| Corporate Social Responsibility | 168 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 3.1885 | .48756 |
| Implement community involvement programmes | 168 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 3.2560 | 1.05534 |

*Table 3: Types of Corporate Communication*
*Source: Survey Data, 2018*

*4.4. Stakeholders Relations*

To get responses on whether stakeholders' relations was being practiced as a type of corporate communication, respondents were asked "Whether the University engage in ongoing communication with stakeholders". From Table 3, the mean score of the indicator was 4.0298 indicating that majority of the respondents agreed to a large extent that their University was engaging in ongoing communication with stakeholders. The small standard deviation value of 0.97530 indicates that majority of the respondents views were convergent with regard to implementation of stakeholders relations as a type of corporate communication in public Universities.

However, based on interview responses with external publics, most respondents expressed that there were few incidences of conflicts between the external stakeholders and the universities managements where the universities had failed to provide the stakeholders with adequate information especially on critical issues affecting them including social and institutional changes of the university. Most respondents were dissatisfied with the way that the university fails to communicate with the stakeholders using mutual dialogue and in an organized and continuous way. The respondents were dissatisfied that the university only addresses their concern through formal communication (including letters, memos telephones and emails). Interestingly, the respondents felt that the informal modes of communication (such as stakeholders' forum, demonstration, and social media) have been ignored. Furthermore, the respondents were dissatisfied with the way the universities underplayed the recommendations (and perspectives) of the stakeholders. Most of the respondents therefore were of the opinion that although most university staff had effective communication skills there were numerous flaws in the communication processes and information relayed to the stakeholders. The dissatisfaction in the communication process therefore led to the dissatisfaction by the external stakeholders on the image and reputation of the respective universities.

Recent occurrences in Universities where unrests, complains and disagreements have been reported, suggest a lack of efficient management of stakeholder relations and as such this study recommends the practice of stakeholders relations as a type of corporate communication. This is in line with the recommendations by Wamae (2011) who recommended the restructuring of communication policies to deal with concerns and relations with stakeholders.

*4.5. Corporate Branding*

Table 3 indicates that the mean of the respondents' scoring was 4.0357 indicating that majority of the respondents agreed that corporate branding was being embraced to a large extent by public Universities in Kenya. The small standard deviation value of 1.28507 indicates that majority of the respondents views were convergent with regard to implementation of corporate branding as a type of corporate communication in public Universities.

Corporate branding of the public universities is critical in dealing with the negative perceptions that have emerged in some section of the public that some private universities are better than public universities. Public Universities should therefore move to formulate strategies that ensure their corporate brands are enhanced as recommended by Keller (1993). Additionally, corporate communication practitioners in public Universities should seek to send messages to stakeholders in a way likely to enhance the corporate identity (Fombrum & Van Riel, 2004).

*4.6. Reputation Management*

From Table 3, the average score based on the respondents' views was 4.4226 with a standard deviation of 0.69642. On the monadic scale used in the study, the implication of the average score is that majority of the respondents agreed to a large extent that most public Universities sampled in this study were embracing reputation management as a type of corporate communication. The small standard deviation (0.69642) was an indication of convergence of respondents' views with regard to practice of reputation management in public universities.

As pointed out by Njari (2009) reputation management is critical for an organization's survival and for sustenance of competitive advantage and as such should be embraced by public universities in Kenya. This will ensure that public

universities sufficiently communicate with their stakeholders and create strategic visions that are aligned with what stakeholders expect from the organization. In addition, each public University must continuously monitor the alignment between its vision, culture and image in line with the recommendation of Cornelissen (2012). The image that's projected to universities' stakeholders must therefore be carried by both the management and employees and understood and appreciated by its stakeholders to enable universities win goodwill from their stakeholders.

## 4.7. Media Relations
Compared to reputation management, corporate branding and stakeholders' relations, majority of the respondents observed that media relations is only practiced to a small extent in the sampled Universities as the mean score was 3.0893. The standard deviation of this indicator was 1.65544 indicating that responses with regard to media relations were to a greater extent homogeneous in the sampled Universities.

To curb the negative perceptions about public Universities, favourable news should characterize news bulletins by the current media houses. This means that public Universities should engage media houses in ensuring their events are covered positively in a manner likely to have them praised in order to raise their reputation. Cornellsen (2012) suggests that corporate communication professionals should cultivate positive evaluations by the media through releasing well placed stories that report on organizational actions or significant newsworthy events, something noble for public Universities to undertake. Communication professionals in public universities should engage journalists on how news are to be framed to ensure a tally between corporate frames and news frames and to ensure stories are framed in a way consistent with the public universities preferred frame.

## 4.8. Change Management
From Table 3, the mean score of the respondents' views with regard to practice of change management as a type of corporate communication was 3.9524 with a standard deviation of 0.94018. Based on the monadic scale used in this study, the mean implies that majority of the respondents were of the view that sampled public Universities had embraced change management as a type of corporate communication to a large extent. The small standard deviation was an indication of convergence on respondents' views with regard to the change management in the Universities.

Universities in Kenya have undergone turbulent times occasioned by poor performances in secondary schools, low capitation from Treasury and stiff competition that has led to various structural changes. These changes have in most cases disrupted the status quo and have presented a justification for problems and resistance. Rousseau (1998) stated that in change, stakeholders have an expectation for continuity and it is essential for leaders to frame and emphasize this sense of continuity if stakeholders are to maintain their identification with the organization after change. Public Universities' management should articulate rationale for change and then communicate, drumming support in order to implement and realize change. Additionally, Cornelissen (2004) asserted that communication is central to how change is formulated, announced and explained for its successful implementation and institutionalization.

## 4.9. Crisis Communication
From Table 3, majority of the respondents agreed that Universities sampled were only to a small extent (mean score = 2.6429) embracing crisis communication as a type of corporate communication. The small standard deviation (0.84970) indicated convergence of respondents views with regard to the practice of corporate communication in the Universities. Crisis has the potential to damage an organizations reputation and relationship with stakeholders. It is important that communicators anticipate and plan for possible crisis scenarios and prepare crisis communication plans aimed at exerting control over events. This reassures stakeholders that their interests are cared for thus limiting negative consequences for stakeholders, the organization and its reputation (Cornelissen, 2004). Public Universities should therefore put measures of quickly and in a structured manner conveying relevant information during times of crisis to avoid misunderstanding, distrust and anxiety among its key stakeholders particularly on business continuity.

## 4.10. Corporate Social Responsibility
The study sought to find out whether three types of corporate social responsibilities namely charitable donations, employee volunteer programmes and partnerships with stakeholders in deciding corporate social responsibility activities were being embraced by public Universities. The average score of the three social corporate responsibilities was 3.1885 with a standard deviation of 0.48756. The implication of this finding is that Universities have embraced corporate social responsibility to a small extent. However, the three types of corporate social responsibilities have been embraced at different levels by Universities as shown in the Table 4:

| Corporate Social Responsibilities | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation |
| Give charitable donations as a way of implementing its corporate social responsibility | 168 | 3.00 | 5.00 | 3.8869 | .85769 |
| Use employee volunteer programmes as a way of implementing its corporate social responsibility | 168 | 2.00 | 5.00 | 2.8869 | .98142 |
| Partner with stakeholders to decide its corporate social responsibility activities | 168 | 2.00 | 4.00 | 2.7917 | .63674 |

*Table 4: Corporate Social Responsibilities in Universities*
*Source: Survey Data, 2018*

From Table 4, of all the types of corporate social responsibilities, charitable donations, recorded the highest mean (3.8869) which means that most respondents agreed to a large extent that sampled Universities were giving charitable donations as a way of implementing their corporate social responsibility. Use of employee volunteer programmes as a way of implementing corporate social responsibility recorded a mean of 2.8869 indicating that employee volunteer programmes were used to a small extent by the sampled Universities. Partnering with stakeholders to decide their corporate social responsibility activities recorded the lowest mean of 2.7917 indicating that this was the least used form of corporate social responsibilities by the sampled Universities.

The questionnaire included an open-ended question to get insight into current challenges facing implementation of corporate communication in the Universities. Based on the responses, the administration staff recorded that their universities do not communicate effectively over the media the CSR activities to be conducted within (or outside) the university. In most cases the information is relayed over emails and memos in designated office noticeboards that cannot be accessed by all administration employees. Accordingly, the universities decision-makers do not have mutual dialogue on the preparations and expectations of administration staff on the CSR activities. Lastly, the university corporate communication departments do not review staff feedback upon participation of the CSR activities.

Public universities do not exists in isolation from the community and therefore should aim at building strong and lasting relationships with communities in which they operate as recommended by Cornelissen (2012). This calls for more undertaking of corporate social responsibility activities. As pointed out by Ropers (1999), organizations that practice corporate social responsibility have a more positive image which is directly linked to the goodwill they win from their stakeholders. In a wider sense of social responsibility, Universities should not only meet legal and regulatory requirements, but should treat these and related requirements as opportunities for improvement beyond mere compliance through the need to address their current and future impact on society proactively, and by ensuring ethical practices in all stakeholder interactions as part of good citizenship practices. They will need to define performance or outcome indicators to ensure that the social consciousness and responsibility meet the basic requirements and expectations to service the stakeholders (Schneller & Thoni, 2011).

*4.11. Community Involvement Programmes*

From Table 3, community involvement programmes had a mean score of 3.2560 with a standard deviation of 1.05534. This implies that community involvement programmes as a type of corporate communication was being embraced to a small extent by the sampled Universities. The small standard deviation was an indication of convergence in respondents' views with regard to community involvement programmes.

Based on interviews with external publics, the external stakeholders feel that the universities do not engage them effectively and in an ongoing process. The external stakeholders are dissatisfied with how the universities fail to effectively communicate structural changes on the universities' operation systems. In this regard, the external stakeholders feel that the universities do not conduct effective surveys on the opinion of stakeholders concerning the operations of the university. Moreover, the external stakeholders were dissatisfied with how the universities evaluated their feedbacks especially on changes that might affect them. Most of the external stakeholders further responded that although the universities conduct several corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities in each academic year, the universities fail to involve the communities effectively especially in decision making. The external stakeholders attributed the lack of involvement of the communities as a leading factor towards ineffective implementation of the CSR activities. Most of the external stakeholders responded that the universities focused more on charitable donations while doing little on partnerships programs with the stakeholders and employee volunteer programs. Additionally, several interviewed members of external publics noted that the CSR activities conducted by the university were not well advertised on the mass media platforms.

Public universities today unlike the past cannot ignore the communities in which they operate. As pointed out by Cornelissen (2012), the freedom organizations once had for making decisions has become constrained and challenged by communities which exert pressure on their decision making processes. Public Universities therefore need to manage community involvement so as to avert challenges to their licenses to operate in the communities where they are situated.

Organizations known for good community relations intimately connect and internalize such programmes with organizational values. Corporate communication in Universities should be geared towards ensuring that organizations align external commitments with internal values and responsibilities to alleviate the risk of losing their reputation and goodwill in the community.

## 5. Discussion of the Findings

Understanding corporate communication by University top management, employees, students and external stakeholders in public universities is essential to effective attainment of goodwill of the Universities from stakeholders. The study has focused on the types of corporate communication embraced by public Universities and challenges affecting corporate communication in order to address how corporate communication can be used in public universities as a best practice tool to win goodwill of stakeholders. Firstly involvement of external stakeholders in corporate communications is of paramount importance as accountability of Universities extends beyond the immediate internal stakeholders involving students and employees. As pointed out by Money & Schepers (2007) and Cornelissen (2012) for continuity of organizations, all internal and external stakeholders' concerns must be taken into consideration in planning and execution of corporate communication strategies.

The dominant types of corporate communication practiced in most Universities as found in the study were stakeholders' relations, corporate branding, reputation management and change communication. Universities were undertaking media relations, crisis communication, corporate social responsibility and community involvement programmes to a small extent. Universities should try to address challenges that have hindered the integration of all these types of corporate communication in their communication processes. However, measuring the impacts of each type of corporate communication is important in determining the extent to which it can be used given limitations of resources. One responded had this to say, "...lets be engaged by top university management and we shall tell them which communication strategies works best where...". This points to a need to evaluate the various types of corporate communication to establish which type best works where.

A number of challenges have been found to hinder corporate communication. Key among these challenges are, failure by Universities to measure communication for both internal and external stakeholders, failure by Universities to take into account contribution of communication practitioners in governance decisions, lack of involvement of stakeholders when implementing organizational change and lack of inducting new employees on communication skills. Additionally, Universities have not put in place stakeholders communication strategy and stakeholders communication policies. Corporate communication offices are also under-funded making execution of communication plans a major challenge for Universities. In this era of social media, most Universities are yet to fully embrace social media platforms by collecting statistics on their utilization in order to inform decision making. Furthermore, social media policies have not been formulated and implemented in most Universities.

Corporate communication plays a pivotal role in enhancing the goodwill of Universities with its stakeholders. However, for this to happen, multi-thronged approach to implementation is required in bringing contribution of all involved stakeholders may they be internal or external. Secondly, budgetary allocation needs to be enhanced for communication department. The Universities should also continuously engage in evaluating the effectiveness of communication in order to determine if indeed the Universities are gaining from investments in corporate communication as far as enhancement of their goodwill is concerned.

As noted by one administrative staff "...we are required to participate in corporate communication but no one tells us how..." shows most of the employees fail to implement corporate communication. The main reasons for this is as a result of the technicality involved in the process, poor orientation of the relevant channels as well as poor feedback by the universities' management on the challenges experienced by the staff. Ultimately, better communication between administrative employees and the management will result to improved participation of the staff in corporate social responsibility activities which translate to improvement of the corporate image and acceptance by the local community. The improvement of corporate communication policy by universities will generate goodwill among the administration staff.

The study sought to address the following research question: What are the types of corporate communication used in Kenyan Public Universities? Based on this question, the study found that Universities had embraced to a large extent four types of corporate communication including stakeholders' relations, corporate branding, reputation management and change communication. Universities were undertaking media relations, crisis communication, corporate social responsibility and community involvement programmes to a small extent.

## 6. Conclusion

Corporate communication has a role to play in enhancing the goodwill of the Universities. This however calls for identification and dealing with challenges likely to affect implementation of corporate communication policies and strategies. Corporate communications should be seen and utilized as intellectual capital. Universities must achieve this by taking into account contribution of communication practitioners in governance decisions, providing adequate information about themselves to staff so that they can deal with unexpected communication needs. Universities must also strive to ensure the number of personnel dedicated to corporate communication is adequate and highly qualified to deal with all matters relating to both internal and external stakeholders.

Top management commitment is also paramount if corporate communication is to yield goodwill for Universities. This calls for Universities' top management being involved in formulation of communication policies and strategies.

Additionally, the management should ensure communication is not haphazardly done by establishing communication offices and adequately facilitating them with required financial resources and manpower.

Given the rapid technological evolution which has seen exponential growth in social media platforms, Universities should ensure mainstreaming of social media platforms as corporate tools for communication. Universities should continuously monitor what stakeholders say about it on social media and should carry out statistics such as likes, shares, tweets and viral spread on stories about them on social media with a view to enhancing decision making processes. Additionally, Universities should consider having specialist communication officers managing their social media platforms to deal with issues promptly. Finally, every University should have a social media policy to guide on utilization of the platforms for the right purposes in order to gain positively from the platforms.

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