A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS
OF CENTRAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN KENYA

by

Ruth Owino

A dissertation presented to the School of Communication

Daystar University
Nairobi, Kenya

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in Communication

May 2020
APPROVAL

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF CENTRAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN KENYA

by

Ruth Owino

In accordance with Daystar University policies, this dissertation is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy

Date:

_________________________________    ____________________
Murej Mak’Ochieng, PhD,
1st Supervisor

_________________________________    ____________________
Jane Awiti, PhD,
2nd Supervisor

_________________________________    ____________________
Levi Obonyo, PhD,
Coordinator, PhD Communication

_________________________________    ____________________
Levi Obonyo, PhD,
Dean, School of Communication
DECLARATION

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE STRATEGIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS OF CENTRAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN KENYA

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

Signed: __________________________ Date: __________________________

Ruth Owino
09-0578
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, I thank God for His Love that never fails, never gives up, and never runs out. Secondly, special thanks to my supervisors, Prof. Mak’Ochieng Murej and Dr. Awiti Jane, for their patience, support, guidance, sacrifice, and time you put into this work. My ideas were ambiguous, shapeless and scattered, but you modeled them to reality.

Thirdly, I am forever indebted to my family, who walked and prayed with me. Words alone cannot express my gratitude to my mother, Naom, I do not know how I would have done this without her. Special thanks to my dad, Japuon, who is ever-present, teaching me adulting and life. To Tabby and Brian, I am grateful for the adventures, prayers, and shared love during the most difficult moments. To my superman, Martey, I say thank you for keeping a girl sane.

My heartfelt gratitude also goes to the research support groups. The brainstorming sessions and encouragement kept me afloat. Thanks to Dr. Kowuor, Dr. Gogo, my colleagues, and students who understood, encouraged and supported me throughout the process. I would also like to thank Naana Kenana (PDU), Kanze Dena (PSCU), Browne Kutswa (PSC), Fatuma Hersi (Ministry of ICT), Ogwaro Gwaro (Ministry of ICT), Eunice Muthamia (Ministry of ICT), and Ronald Rono (OGS). I am grateful for the support they all granted me during the data collection. Special thanks to the staff members of PSCU, PDU, OGS, and the Ministry of ICT. I appreciate all the time and resources provided towards building this study.

I thank God for all those who in one way or the other offered support throughout the process. I am grateful for all the prayers, encouragement and critics. They are the precepts that kept me grounded. It would just have been but a dream. Thank you.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

APPROVAL ................................................................................................................................. ii  
DECLARATION ............................................................................................................................. iv  
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................................................................... v  
LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................................................................... viii  
LIST OF FIGURES .......................................................................................................................... ix  
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ............................................................................. x  
ABSTRACT ...................................................................................................................................... xi  
DEDICATION ................................................................................................................................... xii  
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY ........................................ 1  
1.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 1  
1.2 Background of the Study ........................................................................................................ 2  
1.3 Statement of the Problem ....................................................................................................... 10  
1.4 Purpose of the Study ............................................................................................................. 12  
1.5 Objectives of the Study ......................................................................................................... 12  
1.6 Research Questions .............................................................................................................. 13  
1.7 Justification of the Study ....................................................................................................... 13  
1.8 Significance of the Study ....................................................................................................... 15  
1.9 Scope of Study ...................................................................................................................... 16  
1.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study ...................................................................... 17  
1.11 Definition of Key Terms ..................................................................................................... 18  
1.12 Summary ................................................................................................................................ 22  
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW ............................................................................. 23  
2.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 23  
2.2 Theoretical Framework ......................................................................................................... 23  
2.3 General Literature Review ................................................................................................. 36  
2.4 Empirical Literature ............................................................................................................ 53  
2.5 Conceptual Framework ....................................................................................................... 80  
2.6 Summary ................................................................................................................................ 83  
CHAPTER THREE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ............................................................ 84  
3.1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................ 84  
3.2 Case Study as a Multiparadigm Methodology ..................................................................... 84  
3.3 Case Study as a Research Methodology .............................................................................. 88  
3.4 Research Design ................................................................................................................... 91  
3.5 Theoretical Propositions ...................................................................................................... 93  
3.6 Population ............................................................................................................................ 96  
3.7 Target Population ................................................................................................................ 96  
3.8 Sample size and Sampling Procedure ............................................................................... 97  
3.9 Reliability and Validity of the Research Instruments ....................................................... 99  
3.10 Data Collection Instruments ............................................................................................. 100  
3.11 Data Analysis Plan ............................................................................................................. 104  
3.12 Ethical Considerations ....................................................................................................... 105  
3.13 Summary ............................................................................................................................ 106  
CHAPTER FOUR ....................................................................................................................... 107
# Table of Contents

"THE CASE" AND ITS CONTEXT ......................................................................... 107  
## 4.1 Introduction .............................................................................................. 107  
## 4.2 Presidential Strategic Communication Unit (PSCU) ....................................... 107  
## 4.3 Office of the Government Spokesperson (OGS) .............................................. 113  
## 4.4 Ministry of Information, Communication, and Telecommunication ............... 116  
## 4.5 Unique Data Findings ....................................................................................... 128  
## 4.6 Overall Structure of the Central National Government Communication .......... 131  
## 4.7 Summary .......................................................................................................... 133  

## CHAPTER FIVE ....................................................................................................... 134  
### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION ....................................... 134  
#### 5.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 134  
#### 5.2 Response Rate .................................................................................................. 134  
#### 5.3 Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation ........................................................ 135  
#### 5.4 Summary of Key findings ................................................................................ 185  

## CHAPTER SIX .......................................................................................................... 189  
### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS ................................. 189  
#### 6.1 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 189  
#### 6.2 Discussion of Key Findings ............................................................................. 189  
#### 6.3 Conclusions ...................................................................................................... 207  
#### 6.4 Recommendations of the Study ........................................................................ 209  
#### 6.5 Areas for Further Study .................................................................................... 213  

## REFERENCE ............................................................................................................. 215  

## APPENDICES ........................................................................................................... 242  
### Appendix A: Informed Consent ............................................................................. 242  
### Appendix B: Case Study Protocol ......................................................................... 244  
### Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide ..................................................... 245  
### Appendix D: Questionnaire .................................................................................... 246  
### Appendix E: Ethics Clearance Report .................................................................... 252  
### Appendix F: Approval Letter from the University ................................................. 253  
### Appendix G: Research Permit ................................................................................ 254  
### Appendix H: Approval Letter from the Ministry of ICT ....................................... 255  
### Appendix H: Anti-Plagiarism Report ..................................................................... 257
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3. 1: Study Population ................................................................. 96
Table 3. 2: Target Population .............................................................. 97
Table 5. 1: Establishment within the MDAs ........................................ 135
Table 5. 2: Establishment of Communication Staff at OGS ............... 137
Table 5. 3: Staff Establishment at PSCU .............................................. 137
Table 5. 4: Nature of Government Communication ................................ 138
Table 5. 5: Government Communication and Activities ..................... 139
Table 5. 6: Characteristics of Government Communication ................. 140
Table 5. 7: Clear and Structured Reporting Lines ............................... 142
Table 5. 8: Involvement in Decision and Policy-making ....................... 145
Table 5. 9: Role of Research in Strategic Policy-making ....................... 148
Table 5. 10: Effectiveness of Communication Channels ....................... 151
Table 5. 11: Involvement of the Citizens in Government Communication .... 153
Table 5. 12: Facilitation of Communication Activities ......................... 157
Table 5. 13: Whether Government Communication is Action-Oriented .. 159
Table 5. 14: Fosters Diversity and Strong Mechanism ......................... 161
Table 5. 15: Government Recognition of Communication Legislations .... 163
Table 5. 16: Implementation of Effective Communication Strategies ....... 164
Table 5. 17: Reporting Lines ............................................................. 166
Table 5. 18: Training and Skills Development for Government Communicators .... 181
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework ........................................................................... 81
Figure 4.1: Structure of the PSCU (Source: EOP Structure, 2013) ......................... 109
Figure 4.2: Current Structure of OGS ...................................................................... 115
Figure 4.3: Ministry of ICT Organization Structure ................................................ 118
Figure 4.4: Structure of the Central National Government Communication ........... 132
Figure 5.1: Cross-tabulation of Reporting Lines, Involvement and Role of Research ................................................................................................................ 150
Figure 5.2: Rating of Government Communication .................................................. 155
Figure 5.3: Coordination and Planning of Government Activities ............................ 156
Figure 5.4: Position of Government Communication in the Organizational Chart .. 167
Figure 5.5: Influence of Legislation, Policies, and Conventions ............................. 169
Figure 5.6: Range of Legislation, Policies, and Conventions .................................. 171
Figure 5.7: Cross-tabulation on the Roles of Communication ................................ 172
Figure 5.8: Financial Information on Government Communication ....................... 173
Figure 5.9: Role of Government Communicators ...................................................... 175
Figure 5.10: Employment Status of Government Communicators ............................ 177
Figure 5.11: Professional Background of Government Communicators ................. 178
Figure 5.12: Level of Education of Government Communicators ............................ 179
Figure 5.13: Membership of Professional Bodies Associations ............................... 180
Figure 5.14: Recruitment Process for Communication Positions ............................ 183
## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Cabinet Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIS</td>
<td>Director of Information Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPC</td>
<td>Director of Public Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOP</td>
<td>Executive Office of the President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAA</td>
<td>Government Advertising Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resource</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICTAK</td>
<td>Information, Communication and Technology Association of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOs</td>
<td>Information officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KFC</td>
<td>Kenya Film Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KFCB</td>
<td>Kenya Film Classification Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KNA</td>
<td>Kenya News Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KSG</td>
<td>Kenya School of Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCK</td>
<td>Media Council of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDAs</td>
<td>Ministries, Departments, and Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGCC</td>
<td>National Government Communication Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGS</td>
<td>Office of the Government Spokesperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCOs</td>
<td>Public communication officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDU</td>
<td>Presidential Delivery Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Public Relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRSK</td>
<td>Public Relations Society of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PS</td>
<td>Principal Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSC</td>
<td>Public Service Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSCU</td>
<td>Presidential Strategic Communication Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RQ</td>
<td>Research Questions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

This study sought to critically analyse the strategic and political dimensions of government communication by focusing on PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT. The objectives were to; Determine the structures and processes of communication, Investigate whether communication is strategically managed; Examine the role of the political system on the operations of communication; and, the extent to which government communication facilitates citizen participation. The study was grounded on excellence and deliberative democracy theories. A single-case (embedded) design was adopted and the target population was the communication professionals working at PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT. Data was collected through interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, and qualitative data was thematically analysed. The study found out that government communication was transitional, its structures were defined by the existing political power and governance structure. The structures and processes were decentralized, fragmented and tactical. The findings indicated that government communication lacked the overarching strategy, was poorly coordinated and had short-term plans hence contradicting messages. The findings also indicated that there were two cadres of professionals; political appointees and civil servants, however the two cadres were not well managed and coordinated. Further the study found out that the internet provided new possibilities for transparency and citizen engagement, it provided new ways and channels of information dissemination and interaction. Government communication should be professionalised, be based on frameworks and policies that are encultured on the precept of strategic communication.
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late Aunty, Elizabeth Kagumba.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study critically analysed the strategic and political dimensions of central national government communication, focusing on how it is structured, practiced, and whether it involves its citizens. Communication plays a critical role in government operations; without a concerted effort to communicate government policies, plans, and activities effectively, the operations fail in the court of public opinion. The goal of communication in government is complex since government is both a public and a political organization constituted of political actors (Horsley & Liu, 2010). In addition, citizens hold the right to information, therefore, the government has to provide that information (Canel & Sanders, 2012). Subsequently, government communication plays a critical role in facilitating citizen engagement and participation. Government is the source and repository of most information that citizens need for them to play their role as citizens (Tanaka, 2007). For these reasons, government communication is an important area of study.

Canel and Sander (2013) defined government communication as “The role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of a public institution(s), whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that is constituted based on the people’s consent and charged to enact their will” (p. 4). Canel and Sander suggested three important dimensions of government communication: Firstly, it involves government as a public institution; secondly, its primary goal is executive in the service of a political purpose; thirdly, it is done on behalf of citizens and based on their consent. It was, therefore, important to evaluate how government communicates, the factors that influence its
communication, and how it relates to citizens. Such an understanding enabled the researcher to make recommendations, based on pertinent literature of how government communication in Kenya is the best practice.

The government needs to understand its citizens and put systems in place, including communication systems, that facilitate the implementation of policies and legislation that enhance service delivery to its citizens (Falasca & Nord, 2013). After all, government is a public institution constituted through citizens’ consent and charged to enact their will (Canel & Sanders, 2011). Communication should, therefore, be strategically planned, be coherent and systematically thought out to achieve its functions and objectives (Cutlip, Center & Broom, 2000), since it operates on multi-layered levels and serves a diverse group of stakeholders (Graber, 2003).

This study critically analysed the strategic and political dimensions of the central national government communication in Kenya by determining its structures and process. The study was particularly interested in the political and strategic dimensions of government communication, and how it facilitates citizen participation. This chapter introduced the study by explaining the background of government communication and a brief description of the “case”. Throughout the chapter, the key concepts in the study were introduced systematically and defined. The chapter then stated the research problem, research objectives, purpose, and significance of the study. Lastly, this chapter explained the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.2 Background of the Study

Despite its key importance, government communication has “been a neglected area of scholarly interest” (Canel & Sanders, 2012, p. 85), although this has significantly changed in the recently. As demonstrated by Sanders and Canel (2013), government communication has attracted the interest of a growing number of researchers in key
specific areas of government public relations, political public relations, and
government political marketing. Historically, American scholars have over the years
explored presidential rhetoric and communication strategies (Coe & Reitzes, 2010;
Denton & Hahn, 1986; Denton & Holloway, 1996; Farnsworth, 2009; Ryfe, 2005;
Smith & Smith, 1994), presidential news operations (Kurtz, 1998), and presidential
power and communication (Buchanan, 1978; Kernell, 1986, 1997).

Further studies had focused on organisational issues (Kumar, 2010; Cox,
2001; Kumar & Sullivan, 2003), presidential-media relations (Hess, 2000; Spragens,
2003; Walcott & Hult, 2008), presidential communication strategies during scandals
and terrorism (Canel & Sanders, 2006, 2010), presidential public relations (PR)
(Eshbaugh-Soha, 2011; Kiousis & Strömbäck, 2010); and the role of communication
in governmental agencies (Garnett, 1994; Garnett & Kouzmin, 1997; Pandey &
Garnett, 2006).

In the case of Europe, Seymour-Ure (2003) explored British Prime Ministers’
relationship to the media, while Franklin (2004) examined England’s political
communication. Other studies were conducted on the allegations of manipulative
government communication (Andrews, 2006; Gaber, 2007; McNair, 2011); structure
and operations of media relations in government (Ingham, 2003; Moloney, 2000;
Gaber, 2004); and analysis of government communication in Australia (Young,
2007). These studies indicated how government communication cuts across various
fields. However, until recently, what has been lacking were studies that deal with
government communication as an entity, which in its structure, processes, and
practices plays a coordinating, strategic, and relationship building role.

In research, government communication has been situated in different areas,
but mainly in political communication, public relations, corporate communication,
organisational and strategic communication (Canel & Sanders, 2012; Sanders, 2011). For instance, Strömbäck, Mitrook, and Kiousis (2010) examined the theoretical connections between political marketing and public relations (PR), whereas Strömbäck and Kiousis (2011) examined political PR at the intersection of political communication, marketing, and strategic communication. It is clear, therefore, that the diverse growing production of scholarship suggests that the study of government communication requires a multifaceted approach (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011).

Based on a review of the literature by Sanders (2011), Canel and Sanders (2012), Sanders and Canel (2013), and Pfetsch (2008), this study aimed at advancing the scholarship of government communication by focusing on three key contributing fields: Political communication and strategic communication. This study, therefore, critically analysed the political and strategic dimensions of the central national government communication in Kenya.

Lin (2004) explored the four theoretical areas in political communication: Rhetorical analysis of political discourse, studies in propaganda and voting patterns, effects of mass media, and the interface between government, press, and public opinion. While Canel and Sanders (2013) emphasized on the exploration of institutional and social contexts, and how communication performs its civic functions in social and political life, Swanson (2000) was concerned with shaping communication to serve democratic processes. From these studies, it can be noted that research in political communication points towards citizenship and democracy. Sanders (2009) observed, however, that the scholarship has also contributed to intellectual pessimism on the possibility of creating the conditions for civic conversation in contemporary media democracies.

From the strategic communication approach, government communication has
a “strategic management function that is crucial to the success of interaction between the organization and the publics” (Ledingham, 2011, p. 235). This means that stakeholder loyalty and trust is sought through long-term engagement” (Lilleker & Jackson, 2011), therefore, government communication requires “a more proactive and strategic approach, than a reactive and technical one” (Kiousis & Strömback, 2011, p. 315). For these reasons, the capacity to communicate effectively with constituents is a fundamental function of governance (World Bank, 2010). Good governance is “the ability of public institutions to respond to the needs of citizens and upholding their rights to scrutinise and hold them accountable” (DfID, 2006, p. 22; Centre for Future State, 2010). Governments should, therefore, communicate their policies in line with the citizens’ expectations.

Strömback and Kiousis argued that “for PR and strategic communication to be effective, practitioners must be involved in decision making, and not confined to the role of technicians carrying out the tactics” (2011, p. 15). This strategic approach suggests that involving practitioners in decision-making enhances communication roles. If the conceptualization is done from a strategic communication point, it leads to improved communication practice, since the analysis and description are based on the notion of strategy (Kumar, 2001a; 2003b; & 2008; Kumar & Sullivan, 2003).

According to Canel and Sanders (2013), the strategic approach:

Sets the parameters for the organizational chart (is the functional or middle management level responsible for formulation of communication strategy?); specific communication tasks (to what extent do communication officers strategically plan or implement strategy); analyses of public perceptions (to what extent do communication officers scan the environment for people’s concerns and government’s reputation risks (p. 9).

Strategic communication is “coordinated actions, messages, images and other forms of engagement intended to inform, influence, or persuade selected audiences in support of national objectives” (Cornish, Lindley-French. & Yorke, 2011, p. 3).
Further, Cornish et al. (2011) said, “the infusion of communication efforts with clear policies to influence or promote government agendas” (p. 3). Therefore, strategic communication encompasses different communication specialities and activities such as communication strategists who design strategies; researchers who analyse the interplay between strategy, messaging, and audiences; PR practitioners who implement the strategy by drafting messages; and journalists who deliver the message (Ibid). Hence, the need for this study to investigate whether central national government communication in Kenya was strategically managed.

Ledingham (2011) looked at government communication as a “relationship building” process. Broom, Casey, and Ritchey (2000) prescribed relational theory for the organisation–public relationships. They argued that relationships are a representation of the interactions, transactions, and linkages between an organisation and its publics. The relational theory assumed that relationship management “is the ethical and efficient management of the organisation–public relationships, which over time focuses on common interests and shared goals in support of mutual understanding and benefit” (Ledingham, 2011, p. 247). Therefore, Ledingham concluded that “communication success is not merely measured by communication output or influence on public opinion, but by the quality of the relationship between an organisation and its publics” (p. 247). This study, therefore, examined the role of government communication in facilitating citizens' participation.

Since 2013, the Government of Kenya has been structured according to the stipulations of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. The government has two levels; the National Government and the Devolved Government (also referred to as County Governments). The national government is run through three main arms: The National Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary. The National Executive
consists of the President, the Deputy President, and the Cabinet. The President is the Head of State and Government; exercises the executive authority, with the assistance of the Deputy President and Cabinet Secretaries; The Commander-in-Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces; The chairperson of the National Security Council; and is a symbol of national unity (Government of Kenya [GoK], 2010).

The functions of the President include nominating (with the approval of the National Assembly) and appointing/dismissing the State or public officer whom the Constitution requires or empowers the President to appoint or dismiss (GoK, 2010). The President also chairs Cabinet meetings, directs and coordinates the functions of ministries and government departments; and by a decision published in the Gazette Notice, assigns responsibility for the implementation and administration of any Act of Parliament to a Cabinet Secretary, to the extent not inconsistent with any Act of Parliament. The President may also establish an office in the public service following the recommendation of the Public Service Commission; receive foreign diplomatic and consular representatives; confer honors; declare a state of emergency; and, with the approval of Parliament, declare war (GoK, 2010).

The Legislature arm of government comprise of a bi-cameral parliament consisting of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly consists of 219 members, each elected by the registered voters of single-member constituencies; forty-seven women; twelve members nominated by parliamentary political parties to represent special interests including the youth, persons with disabilities and workers; and the Speaker, who is an Ex-officio member (GoK, 2010).

The major roles of the National Assembly include: enact legislation; determine the allocation of national revenue; appropriate funds for expenditure by the national government and other national State organs; exercise oversight over national
revenue and its expenditure; review the conduct in office of the President, Deputy President, and other State officers; exercise oversight of State organs; approve declarations of war and extensions of states of emergency (GoK, 2010).

The Senate consists of forty-seven members each elected by the registered voters of the 47 counties; 16 women members who are nominated by political parties; two members representing the youth; two members representing persons with disabilities; and the Speaker, who is an Ex-officio member (GoK, 2010). The major roles of the Senate are to: represent and protect the interests of the counties; participate in the law-making by considering, debating and approving Bills concerning counties; determine the allocation of national revenue among counties, and exercise oversight over national revenue allocated to the county governments; and participate in the oversight of State officers (GoK, 2010).

The third arm of the National Government is the Judiciary which determines disputes and interprets statutes. The Judiciary consists of the judges of the superior courts, magistrates, other judicial officers. It is headed by the Chief Justice who is deputised by the Deputy Chief Justice, and its chief administrator is the Chief Registrar of the Judiciary. The independence of the judiciary is enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution which states in Article 161 (1) that the Judiciary shall be subject only to this Constitution and the law, and shall not be subject to the control or direction of any person or authority (GoK, 2010).

From Article 174 of the Kenyan Constitution, the devolved government is composed of forty-seven counties, and each county has a government consisting of the County Assembly and County Executive (GoK, 2010). As per Article 179 of the Kenyan Constitution, the county executive is headed by the Governor and Deputy Governor, and assisted by the members of the County Executive Committees (CECs)
who are appointed by the governor, with approval of the County Assembly (Gok, 2010). The Fourth Schedule of the Kenyan Constitution outlines the functions of the County Governments (devolved functions), which include; agriculture, health services, control of pollution, cultural activities, animal control and welfare, and trade development and regulation (GoK, 2010). The decentralisation brought by devolution means that power, resources, and representation are devolved to the local level. The National and County governments are distinct and inter-dependent, meaning that they conduct their mutual relations based on consultation and co-operation.

Though the government of Kenya comprises all the arms and levels of government explained above, the focus of this study was government communication at the national level. More specifically, the study focused on the central national government communication, whose scope is the Executive. The Executive is comprised of the Presidency-the President, Deputy President, and Cabinet Office. Therefore, this study focuses on communication that revolves around PSCU, OGS, and, the Ministry of ICT. The Presidency consists of the communication that takes place at the Office of the President (EOP), these include; the President, First Lady, and the Deputy President. The cabinet office assists the president in the coordination of national government functions. Each ministry is headed by a Cabinet Secretary, assisted by an accounting officer -The Principal Secretary (EOP Structure, 2013).

The Executive Order No. 1 of 2018 (Organisation of the government of the Republic of Kenya) outlines that the Cabinet Office has 21 ministries, namely: Interior and Co-ordination of National Government (three state departments); Defense; National Treasury and Planning (two-state departments); Foreign Affairs, Industry; Trade and Co-operatives (three state departments); Health; Agriculture,
Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation (five state departments); Transport, Infrastructure, Housing, Urban Development and Public Works (five state departments).

The other ministries include Devolution and ASALS (two-state departments); Sports, Culture, and Heritage (two-state departments); Education (three state departments); East African Community and Regional Development (two-state departments); Labour and Social Protection (two-state departments); Tourism and Wildlife (two-state departments); Environment and Forestry; Water and Sanitation; Lands and Planning; Energy, Petroleum, and Mining (two-state departments); Public Service, Youth and Gender (three state departments); and, Information, Communication, and Technology (two-state departments). This study focused on the Ministry of ICT, more specifically, the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication, which also hosts the Office of Government spokesperson.

Over the past few years, government has restructured and redefined its communication. Currently, the central national government communication takes place at two disparate levels: The Presidency (PSCU), and, Office of Government Spokesperson (OGS), under the Ministry of ICT). Important to note is that government communication is managed and controlled by those in power. The political system determines the functions of government communication, command the information flow and the extent to which citizens can participate. This coupled with a growing need for citizen participation has resulted to complex and complicated relation between government communication and political communication.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Government communication has increasingly become important for several reasons (Canel & Sanders, 2012). One of these reasons is the need for transparency. In the era of increased government scrutiny and mistrust by citizens, government
performance is evaluated based on its level of transparency (Bertot & Jaeger, 2010). Transparency portrays the accurate picture of government operations; it not only allows citizens to evaluate government performance, but also holds it accountable (Piotrowski, 2007). This is because governing involves “constant exchange of information between the governors and the governed” (Sanders & Canel, 2013, p. 1).

The ability to communicate effectively involves complex sets of interlocking structures and processes that are fundamental in governance and democracy (World Bank, 2010). Effective communication matters to every citizen, without a concerted effort, it almost certainly fails in the court of public opinion (Sanders & Canel, 2013). On the contrary, countries in the developing world have continuously “demonstrated relatively low capacities for deploying approaches and techniques for two-way communication on matters of public importance” (World Bank, 2010, p. 3).

In Kenya, the government has strived to strengthen and streamline its communication structures and process. Over the last few years, the government established the PSCU to replace the PPS; closed and re-opened OGS, later moved it to the Ministry of ICT; formed DPC and GAA under the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication to manage all government advertising. The restructuring and formation of these units were meant to create stability and proper structure of communication, to enhance its efficiency and effectiveness. Thus, this study sought to determine the structures and processes of government communication, and whether these formation and restructuring led to strategic institutional weight.

Despite the formation and restructuring, the central national government still operates within a political environment that is managed by political actors; it is a political instrumental at the disposal of those in power (Holtz-Bacha, 2007a). The political system command and control the information flow, restrict the accessibility
of accurate information, and define the extent to which citizens can participate. While there is growing interest in greater engagement and participation among citizens, the government has not been able to hold an effective two-way communication. Such complexities have resulted in citizens questioning the legitimacy and credibility of the government operations. It is against this backdrop that this study sought to examine the role of the political system on government communication in Kenya.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

Over the last few years, the government of Kenya has strived to strengthen and streamline its communication structures and process. The restructuring and formation of the communication units were meant to create stability and proper structure, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. However, the political system commands and controls the information flow, by defining the extent to which citizens can participate. While there is growing interest in greater participation among citizens, the government has not been able to hold two-way communications.

Such complexities have resulted into citizens questioning the legitimacy and credibility of the government. Thus, the purpose of this study was to critically analyse the strategic and political dimensions of central national government communication in Kenya. The results of this analysis allows the government to use communication as a transparency tool to portray the accurate picture of its operations, enable the citizens to hold the government accountable, and enhance democracy in Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following were the specific objectives of this study:

1. Determine the structures and processes of central national government communication in Kenya
2. Investigate whether the central national government communication in Kenya is strategically managed
3. Examine the role of the political system on the operations of central national government communication in Kenya
4. Assess the extent to which central national government communication facilitates citizen participation in Kenya

1.6 Research Questions
The study was guided by the following research questions:
1. What were the structures and processes of central national government communication in Kenya?
2. Was the central national government communication in Kenya strategically managed?
3. What was the influence of the political system on the operations of the central national government in Kenya?
4. Did the central national government in Kenya as currently practiced facilitate citizen participation?

1.7 Justification of the Study
Government communication, while important in contemporary politics, is still “a neglected area of scholarly interest” (Canel & Sanders, 2012, p. 85). There are very few, if any, systematic research studies on government communication in Africa, and more specifically in Kenya, hence the relevance of this study. Over the last couple of decades, there has been a growing scholarly interest in structure and process of government communication, however, most of these studies, such as Sanders (2011) and Canel and Sanders (2012), have been carried out in Western countries.

The growing scholarship suggests the need for “a multi-faceted theoretical
approach” (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011, p. 13). Additionally, there is a realisation of the need to build bridges between cognate areas and disciplines (Hong, Park, Lee & Park, 2012; Lee, 2008; Liu, Horsley & Levenshus, 2010; Seltzer & Zhang, 2011; Strömbäck, Mitrook & Kiousis, 2010). Therefore, by studying communication at the central national government of Kenya, this study contributes to filling this gap.

Most of the studies (Hansson, 2017; Leycegui & Valenzuela, 2013; Maqeda & Makombe, 2013; Sanders, 2011; Semetko & Wahdwa, 2013) in government communication have used singular, though cognate, communication approaches with the three most popular ones being political communication (Andrews, 2006; Franklin, 2004; Gaber, 2004; 2007; Ingham, 2003; McNair, 2011; Moloney, 2000; Seymour-Ure, 2003), strategic communication (Cox, 2001; Garnett & Kouzmin, 1997; Garnett, 1994; Kumar & Sullivan, 2003; Kumar, 2010; Pandey & Garnett, 2006; Young, 2007), and public relations (Canel & Sanders, 2010; Eshbaugh-Soha, 2011; Hess, 2000; Kiousis & Strömbäck, 2010; Spragens, 2003; Walcott & Hult, 2008).

Government communication involves considerable complexities in terms of goals (Da Silva & Batista, 2007), stakeholders (Liu et al., 2010), needs (Sanders, 2011), and various definitions and resources (Canel & Sanders, 2012). It operates in multi-layered and diverse environments, often must juggle with issues such as “what appear to be conflicting objectives set by political masters” (Canel & Sanders, 2012, p. 86). It also deals with diverse groups of stakeholders including politicians and citizens. Because government communication is complex, scholars have recognised the need to use a multi-faceted approach in studying it. This study contributed to this development by critically analysing the political and strategic dimensions of government communication in Kenya.
The government of Kenya has strived to strengthen and streamline its communication structures and practices over the last few years. Currently, the central national government communication in Kenya takes place at three disparate levels. The first level revolves around the presidency through the PSCU, which is charged with the following; covering the President and the First Lady, carrying out research and communicating government policy, digitization of presidential communications, and branding State events and functions (www.president.go.ke).

The second level operates as the Government Spokesperson, under the Ministry of ICT. This office has the oversight role over all government communication channels, including; Directorate of Information (both at the national and county level), Department of Public Communication (DPC), National Government Communication Center (NGCC), the Government Media Center (GMC), Kenya News Agency (KNA), and MyGov (http://www.ict.go.ke).

The third level operates within the Ministry of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT), which is responsible for the formulation, interpretation, and implementation of information; strategies and programs; research; coordinating information services; gathers; digitizes and avails information through Government Portal (http://www.ict.go.ke). These recent developments made a critical analysis of central national government communication in Kenya appropriate.

1.8 Significance of the Study

As a scholarly work, this study’s findings is an important addition to the emerging field of government communication, both internationally and regionally, especially on African scholarship where there is a serious dearth. Since it used a multifaceted theoretical approach, and strategic and communication approach in analysing government communication, the study contributes to the growing
preference for and usefulness of this approaches in the field of communication.

Further, the findings of this study are useful in several ways to the operations of the three units in the central national government communication. It established the communication structures and processes that are not working well, or effectively, and suggested ways on how to improve them. The suggestions for improvement were based on the lessons learned from the literature on how to manage government communication strategically, in ways that foster good relations with citizens and facilitate their participation in governance/public life.

The study findings are also significant in providing information for researchers, professionals, and academicians operating in the field of government communication. This is because the findings explained in details the nature and framework of government communication as it is currently practiced in Kenya, considering the political and communication environment in which it operates. The findings are also helpful to policymakers and researchers since it provides a better understanding of the structures and practices of government communication for possible improvement, regulation, and replication.

1.9 Scope of Study

This study critically analysed the central national government communication in Kenya from strategic and political dimensions. Based on the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the Government of Kenya functions at two levels: the national government and the county government. The national government has three arms: Executive, Legislature, and Judiciary. The Executive is headed by the President, Legislature by the Speaker of the national assembly, and Judiciary is led by the Chief Justice. The focus of this study was on the Executive (Central national government), which comprises of the President, Deputy President, and, Cabinet Office.
The central national government communication revolves around three agencies: PSC, OGS, and, State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication (Ministry of ICT). The study focused on the top leadership at the three units; Head of units at the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication; and public communication officers under the Ministry of ICT who are posted within the MDAs.

1.10 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

One of the major limitations of this study was that there is very limited research conducted in Africa, especially Kenya, on government communication, thus, making it difficult to gather literature to build the study on. However, the study used insights from literature and studies conducted in other parts of the globe to develop arguments and explanations on government communication in Kenya.

Given the bureaucracy of the government systems, the researcher found it difficult in accessing respondents and relevant documents from the government communication offices. This is because every organisation is sensitive about giving information that may be used or published outside its scope. To mitigate this, the researcher took time to explain to the government communication authorities and respondents the need for this study, especially that the findings provide insights and recommendations on government communication.

Some government communication practitioners would withheld critical information or did not provide information that was objective, thus, hiding the true picture of the organisation for fear of victimisation or portrayal of a bad image. The researcher mitigated this by assuring respondents of anonymity and confidentiality. Additionally, the researcher used triangulation in data collection and analysis.

The government of Kenya operates at two levels: the National and the County. This study focused on the Central National Government communication, only
focusing on the Executive, which has the Presidency and Cabinet Office under which are found ministries and state departments that have their communication departments. However, this study focused on three central government agencies: The PSCU which is the communication division in the Presidency and whose head is also the State House Spokesperson; the Office of the National Government Spokesperson which is responsible for the coordination of communication to the public on all matters relating to the national government; and the Ministry of ICT which is the national government ministry in charge of communication.

1.11 Definition of Key Terms

**Government:** An institution and a body of actors, which defines the operations, direction, and shapes the public affairs within society (Keman, 2002). In this study, government refers to an institution through which the public order is strategically maintained and collectively organized for the welfare of the society. It is an association formed by and run on behalf of the citizens, led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is the President, assisted by the management team (Cabinet Officer) and divided into departments (MDAs) to provide services to its citizens.

**Government communication:** According to Canel and Sanders (2013), it refers to “the role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of a public institution(s) whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that is constituted based on the people’s indirect or direct consent and charged to enact their will” (p. 4). In this study, the term refers to the structure, and practice of communication under the PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT.

**Strategic communication:** Refers to the coordinated and planned communication done at senior management level with substantial development of specialised units that permit proactive dialogue with stakeholders that shape
organisational goals (Canel & Sanders, 2013). In this study, the terms refer to the structured communication that facilitates an organised and integrated communication activity undertaken by skilled and knowledgeable professionals, who are involved in decision making and occupy positions at every level in the government. It constitutes the empowerment of the PR function; communication roles; organisation of the communication function; and its relationship to other management functions.

*Political communication:* Refers to communication undertaken by political actors to achieve specific objectives, including communication addressed/about political actors and their activities that are produced by non-politicians such as citizens and media (McNair, 2007). In this study, the terms refer to all forms of communication, structures, and practices undertaken by government communicators but influenced by political system/actors.

*Professionalization of government communication:* Refers to how the government adopts and develops a set of practices and attitudes collectively driven by social differentiation and changes in the media system and technology, to achieve its strategic goals (Newman, 1999). In this study, the terms refer to the rise of the Internet, fragmented communication environment, and changes in the democratic process that have transformed government communication.

*Citizen participation:* Refers to where a heterogeneous group with different interests or with unequal means to participate are involved in the promotion of civic engagement of various discussions on how to better address their needs (Kassen, 2013). In this study, the terms refer to the readiness and channels provided by the government to accept citizens’ contributions and values, that are used in policy and decision making. These may include; providing channels of communication,
disseminating information to citizens, receiving information from/about citizens, and decision making processes.

*Political public relations*: Refers to the “management process by which an organisation or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals” (McNair 2011, p. 8). In this study, it is the strategic communication process aimed at building a mutually and beneficial relationship between political institutions and the citizens, relationships that have longer-term political beneficial effects including the generation of institutional credibility.

*Organization-public relationships*: Are the patterns of interaction, transaction and exchange of information, and linkage between an organization and its publics (Broom, Casey & Ritchey, 2000). In this study, organisational -public relations will be the patterns of interactions, transactions, exchanges, and linkages between the government and citizens.

*Public sphere*: A “virtual or imaginary community which does not necessarily exist in any identifiable space, and it is made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state” (Habermas, 1991, p. 176). In this study, public sphere refers to the spaces that provide public deliberation and public opinion. For instance, the media as a contested arena influenced by political actors and institutions with money, moral clout, or other forms of power.

*National Government*: The political authority that governs an entire nation. In Kenya, political power is shared between national government (national) and county government (devolved). The power of the national government is separated and carried out by the legislative, executive, and judicial (GoK, 2010).
Central National Government communication: The communication that revolves around the Executive arm of Government. In this study, the focus was on the Executive arm of the Government of Kenya, which comprises of the President, the Deputy President, and Cabinet Secretaries/Principal Secretaries. In this study, it is the communication that takes place at the PSCU, OGS, and the Ministry of ICT.

Political dimension: According to Dahl (1998), political dimension is where each citizen has equal and effective opportunities for an enlightened understanding of government actions and policies (Dahl, 1998). Moreover, citizens need opportunities to express their views; learn from one another; engage in discussion and deliberation; read, hear, and question experts, political candidates, and persons whose judgments they trust; and learn in other ways that depend on freedom of expression” (Dahl, 1998, 1997, 1998). In this study, the terms refer to the power to make decision, define the structures, and policies that shape the practice of government communication without political inter-reference while operating in a political environment.

Relational dimension: Efforts to strengthen relationships between the target group and the government and empowers the target group to understand what the government is doing and why (Liu et al., 2012). In this study, the terms refer to the role of government communication in facilitating policy understanding and fostering a high level of policy compliance and policy support.

Strategic dimension: The complex and participative management technique of scanning the environment and the formulation of mission, vision, and strategies to improve the performance of the organization, and hence its competitiveness in the market (Huang, 2005). In this study, it is the assessment of the environment, management of organization resources, course of actions, adoption of long-term
perspectives, and changes in the environment in a way that increases the possibility of achieving the organization goals.

1.12 Summary

This chapter introduced and captured the essence of this study. It elaborated on the background issues that informed the desire to undertake this study. Further, the chapter clearly stated the problem that the study sought to address, the perceived knowledge gap it sought to plug, and the possible practical ways into which the results can be used. The chapter also provided definitions of key terms as they are used in the study. The next chapter reviews the relevant literature from various authors and schools of thought, discusses the theoretical framework upon which the study was anchored, and empirical literature from various country studies.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on government communication by focusing on the strategic and political dimensions. The review begins by discussing the theoretical framework, followed by the general literature pertinent to the major theorised to government communication. The review then discusses empirical literature focusing mainly on three country studies, and how government communication structures and processes are developed and influenced by different factors. The chapter ends by providing a conceptual framework for the study.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study was premised on the argument that to be effective, government communication should be managed and practiced strategically following principles found in strategic communication or public relations. However, this chapter demonstrates that communication in the public sector, where government communication belongs, is more complex as discussed by Liu & Horsley (2007). The chapter explains that government communication is affected by and responds to a variety of interests including media, citizens, and political actors. This means that a theoretical framework of government communication should address its political and strategic dimensions. For this reason, the theoretical framework was drawn from two theories that underpin the importance of the strategic and political communication. The study used the excellence theory of PR and the theory of deliberative democracy.

2.2.1 Excellence Theory of Public Relations

The excellence theory advocates for the value of public relations (PR) in an organisation and identifies the characteristics of the PR function that increases its
value (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995). Excellence theory holds that PR contributes to developing and cultivating high-quality relationships with the strategic components of an organisations’ institutional environment and the effectiveness of public relations practice (Grunig, 2003). PR’s contribution can be evaluated by measuring the quality of these relationships. Excellence theory holds that PR is a strategic managerial role that develops aspirations for strategic management. It brings the voices of the publics into strategic decision making by researching and listening to the publics before decisions are made. Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002) argued that PR plays a role in administering and evaluating PR programs to communicate with the publics, to enable the organisation to build and maintain long-term relationships.

According to Grunig et al. (2002), the excellence theory focuses on how PR makes organisations more effective, depending on how it is organised, managed, conditioned, the environment it operates within and how the monetary value of PR can be determined. Grunig and Grunig (2008) defined excellence as “a set of characteristics organised to function as correlated with organisational effectiveness” while effectiveness is “a set of attributes and practices that help build quality, long-term relationships with strategic constituencies” (p. 328). It occurs when an organisation achieves goals in consultation with stakeholders (Grunig, Grunig & Ehling 1992). As such PR executives should be involved in strategic management and decision-making since PR is a management function that coordinates all communication in the organisation (Grunig et al., 1998).

The PR executives scans the organisation’s environment to identify the publics’ needs and concerns, incorporate them into their strategies, and build towards a mutual relationship (Grunig et al., 2002). Organisations should, therefore, communicate symmetrically to cultivate high-quality, mutual relationships with their
publics (Grunig, 2006). Also, organisations should appreciate that mutual relationships are a precursor to better interaction, helps reduce the cost of legal disputes and negative publicity, and builds trust and loyalty for the improved decision-making process (Dozier et al., 1995).

It is important to note that in his later work, Grunig emphasised the distinctions between the symbolic interpretative paradigm and the strategic management paradigms (Grunig, 2014). On one hand, the symbolic interpretative paradigm is a messaging activity whose purpose is to make organisations look good in the media. This paradigm strives to influence how the publics interpret the behaviours of organisations after they occur, to secure the power of the decision-makers, embodied in concepts of impressions, image, and reputation. Practitioners who follow this paradigm emphasise on messages, publicity, media effects, which they believe allow the organisation to buffer itself from its environment (Grunig, 2014).

On the other hand, the strategic management paradigm is a management activity that improves relationships between stakeholders and organisations (Grunig, 2014). This paradigm focuses on the participation of public relations executives in decision making so they can help manage the behaviour of the organisation, rather than only interpret it to the publics. This is a bridging activity designed to build relationships with stakeholders which emphasizes two-way communication of many kinds to provide publics a voice in management decisions. The paradigm broadens the traditional PR activities to fit into a framework of environmental scanning, research, and listening. As such, messages, therefore, reflect the informational needs of the publics as well as the advocacy needs of the organisation (Grunig, 2014).

According to Grunig and Grunig (2008), the elements of an excellent PR function can be placed into four categories, each containing several characteristics
that can be audited (p. 335). The four categories are empowerment of the PR function; communication roles regarding the PR models; organisation of the communication function; and its relationship to other management functions. For PR to contribute to organisational effectiveness, the organisation should empower it as a critical management function (Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

Excellence theory advocates for “communication programs be developed for publics who have been identified as part of the process” (Grunig & Grunig, 2008, p. 336), through environmental scanning. Grunig (2008) argued that through environmental scanning, PR plays a key role in identifying the organisation publics, their needs and concerns, and ways to build mutual relationships. An excellent PR department is one that communicates with important publics to bring their voices into the strategic process, making it possible for the publics to participate in the organisation’s decisions (Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

In a democracy, this approach suggests that communication should play the role of mediation between the government and citizens. This means that it should provide the necessary platforms for citizens’ participation and ensure their concerns are included in policy-making. Government communicators should, therefore, scan the environment to identify their publics’ needs, and ensure they represent them in the strategy-making process. Also, communication programs should be based on formative research, have concrete and measurable objectives, use varying techniques in their implementation and be evaluated formally (Grunig & Grunig, 2008).

Government communication should be run by excellent communication units and be strategically managed. Besides, government communicators should have direct reporting lines with the head of the units (such as the President or Cabinet secretary in
charge). Their roles, whether as technicians or managers should be well defined in a way that they are in a position to influence the decision.

Grunig et al. (2002) insisted that senior communicators should be communication managers rather than technicians or administrators. They should have the ability to be strategists to conceptualise and direct PR programs, failure to which management, who may not be knowledgeable about communication management will oversee the communication functions. Grunig (1992a) argued that while administrative managers typically manage the communication function, personnel, and the budget; the strategic managers help in decision making through environmental scanning, and have the critical knowledge for the management of organisation behaviour. It is therefore important for the government to integrate its communication functions and operations under a single department that provides the framework for coordinating all programs.

Grunig and Grunig (2008) argued that communication functions should not be sublimated to other functions. In conducting the communication function, they argue that, “excellent departments design more of their communication programs based on the two-way symmetrical model and public participation, rather than on the press agency (publicity), public information (disclosure of accurate information) or one-way symmetrical (only the interests of the organisation) models” (p. 337). Excellence theory, therefore, suggested that the organisation should use the two-way symmetrical model, use communication to enhance public participation and manage conflict with strategic publics (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). Following this suggestion, this study contended that government communication should aim at establishing mutual relationships that serve the interests of both the government and its citizens/publics.
While the excellence theory incorporates several concepts and ideas, the most important for this study is its contribution to the strategic management of communication. From this perspective, communication should help the government interact with the stakeholders (citizens) and behave in a socially responsible manner to accomplish its democratic and governance mission. Communication facilitates dialogue which in turn produces mutually-beneficial relationships (Grunig & Huang, 2000). Since the building of these relationships is important, the relationships should be measured and evaluated to determine the effectiveness and value of public relations (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). The strategic communication approach suggests that government communication should consider public relations measurement as an integral part of its functions, and carry out formative research for the publics' interest with which the government needs to cultivate relationships.

Evaluative research should also be carried out to measure the effects of communication programs on cognition, attitudes, and behaviours of both the publics and the organisation, and the effects of communication on the quality of their relationships (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). All this means that communication should be institutionalised to operate as a strategic tool for effective governance.

2.2.2 Critique of Excellence Theory of Public Relations

Excellence theory has drawn its share of criticism. Scholars have criticized the two-way symmetrical communication to be elusive. The emergence and nature of the digital media make it more possible to have a two-way balanced dialogue with the public (Grunig & Grunig, 2011). In the contemporary PR theory, some level of two-way interaction is identified as an essential element, but practice often falls short of this ideal (Macnamara, 2009). Digital media offers openness for collaboration and interactivity to enable a dialogic and collaborative approach.
Despite the increased capacity to engage directly with the publics through digital media, there is evidence that many organisations do not take advantage of the new technologies (Huang & Yang, 2015). Many organisations do not have the characteristics and tolerance for risk to utilise the dialogue potential of digital media (Huang & Yang, 2015). Therefore, two-way communication is an unrealistic utopia and a misleading concept (Laskin, 2012). The symmetry of communication is not a binary yes/no measurement, but is grounded in the concepts of power (Laskin, 2012). The centrality of the relational approach is somewhat marginalised and actual examples of dialogic PR are very difficult to find (Pieczka, 2011).

Gutiérrez-García, Recalde, and Piñera-Camacho (2015) described dialogue as a multifaceted process comprised of multiple dimensions that lead to different degrees of involvement, which calls for differentiated management strategies concerning stakeholders. Gutiérrez-García et al. (2015) found that the dimensions of “listening” and “openness to the other” represent conflict of interests for management personnel, who must be open to the demands and expectations of the publics, but at the same time ensure the achievement of given objectives. The dialogic processes should be rooted in business culture, to build bridges with the publics, to refine an ethical awareness and sense of responsibility. Gregory (2015) recommended that organisations need to build a culture of listening and engagement as a role for PR.

PR professionals should define organisational character and values; building a culture of listening, engagement and reporting with integrity; and the fulfillment of responsibilities in ethics, citizenship, and sustainability (Gregory, 2015). Listening is the most fundamental functioning of society; democracy is founded on the principle of vox populi, not just in the sense of speaking but also being listened to (Macnamara, 2016). Macnamara raises questions about the extent to which organisations listen to
those who seek to engage with them, concluding that corporate communication is generally one-way. Organisations cannot effectively listen unless they identify cultural, structural, political, and technological components to create the vital missing element in public communication and the public sphere.

The ultimate end of two-way communication is to build and maintain relationships with key publics. Relationships ideally are built on trust, commitment, loyalty and for the long haul (Grunig & Grunig, 2011), but relationships with mutuality of control are not easily achieved (Coombs & Holladay, 2015). Discussions of mutuality in relationships often seem distorted from reality (Coombs & Holladay, 2015). Relationship management is understood as communication activity that produces cognitive and affective outcomes, is a technique of managing the soft, symbolic boundary of social responsibility, which can only be enacted within a tolerant, and deliberative democracy (Pieczka, 2011).

The original Excellence Theory research was conducted in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada and replicated in Slovenia (Verčič, 1996), giving credence to the notion that its principles of strategic management might be applied as best practice around the globe. Grunig (2003) acknowledged that the theory has to be applied differently in different markets, taking into account differences in culture, political systems, economic systems, level of development, media systems, and the extent of activism (Grunig, 2003, p. 41). There are many reasons, however, why the theory does not apply to certain countries and cultures.

Symmetry and two-way dialogue are closely linked with the notion that power is distributed and exercised between multiple groups that aspire to and achieve equilibrium (Gregory & Halff, 2013). There are inherent inequalities across the globe, dealing with the complexities is to impose order and certainty by simplifying,
accepting, and perhaps enforcing convergence across time, space and cultures (Gregory & Halff, 2013). Converging public relations to a single tradition, therefore, amounts to hegemony, the acceptance of a particular ideology and associated practices, at the expense of local cultural norms. Organisations should adopt existing PR capabilities and practices to suit their conditions, activities, and culture (Doan & Bolowol, 2014). This is because PR is in different stages and considered differently in a different culture (Garcia, 2015). Excellence theory has remained the principal hegemonic disciplinary matrix in PR (Gregory & Halff, 2013).

2.2.3 Theory of Deliberative Democracy

According to Chambers (2003), deliberative democracy is a normative theory that suggests ways in which democracy can be enhanced and criticises institutions that do not live up to the normative standard. Thus, it begins with turning away from a liberal individualist or economic understandings of democracy and toward a view anchored in conceptions of accountability and discussion. It is based on deliberation, which aims at producing reasonable, well-informed opinion in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of the discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants (Chambers 2003).

Chambers (2003) explained that deliberative democracy is a “talk-centric democratic theory” as opposed to the “voting-centric democratic theory” which views democracy as the arena in which fixed preferences and interests compete via fair mechanisms of aggregation. Further, Chambers clarified that deliberative democracy focuses on the communicative processes of opinion and will-formation that precede voting, and is where accountability replaces consent as the conceptual core of legitimacy. Thus, accountability is primarily understood in terms of ‘giving an
account’ of something, that is, publicly articulating, explaining, and most importantly justifying public policy.

Chambers noted that “consent (and voting) does not disappear but is rather “given a complex and richer interpretation”; thus, “deliberative democracy is not usually thought of as an alternative to representative democracy, rather an expansion of representative democracy” (p. 308). But Bohman (1998) argued that in deliberative theory, public deliberation is free and equal among citizens, in such a way that deliberation forms the core of legitimate political decision making and self-government. Cooke (2000) added that deliberative democracy secures a central place for a reasoned discussion in political life. Arguably, deliberative democracy is a complex ideal that is connected to another ideal; that of public reason which requires that a legitimate decision be the one that “everyone could accept” or at least not reasonably reject (Bohman, 1998).

Consequently, any conception of deliberative democracy is organised around an ideal of political justification requiring free public reasoning of equal citizens (Cohen, 1997a). Deliberative democracy draws also on Dahlgren’s work (2009), and especially his argument that for deliberation to take place, reasons should be made accessible to all concerned; they should in some manner be made public and comprehensible. This calls for equal participation; each citizen must be given equal consideration for a decision to be legitimate (Dahlgren 1997).

Fishkin (2009a) argued that deliberation should be a process by which individuals sincerely weigh the merits of competing arguments in their discussions. In Fishkin’s view, democracy is built on the quality of deliberation within the public sphere. Fishkin suggested that the quality of deliberation is influenced by five conditions: information (the extent to which participants have access to accurate and
relevant information); substantive balance (the extent to which reasons provided by one side are answered by arguments offered by the other side); diversity (all significant positions in the public are represented); conscientiousness (the extent to which participants honestly assess the merits of the arguments); and equal consideration (the extent to which reasons are considered on their merits regardless of who are the participants that presented them).

Deliberative democracy is governed by a set of clear principles whose underpinning is reasoned agreement among citizens. It is evocative of rational legislation, participatory politics, and civic self-governance (Bohman & Rehg, 1997). As such, deliberation should be; i) free, ii) based on reason, iii) equitable, and iv) have a consensus as to the overall outcome. The way deliberation occurs is fundamental to the democratic process (Young, 2006), so that factors such as political domination, economic dependence, speech style and right to speak are not assumed to be indicators of equality (Benhabib, 1996). The main point here is that decision-making should be open, equal, and free to all since the legitimacy of democratic institutions increases as deliberation improves (Benhabib 1996).

Fishkin (2009b), however, was concerned with the theoretical underpinnings of deliberative democracy, arguing that due to “rational ignorance”, people are ill-informed and it is hard to motivate them to become informed. Deliberative theorists, therefore, should not assume equality during deliberation, instead, they should provide a framework that facilitates free discussion among equal citizens, by providing favourable conditions for participation, association and expression (Cohen, 1997a). The ‘public’ should be involved in argumentation over problematised validity claims for proper deliberation. Dahlberg (2009) argued that certain social institutions emphasize more on communication, but rational communication is ideal for citizen
participation in politics, such debates lead to critically informed public opinion that scrutinises decision-making processes.

Based on the above arguments, this study posited that for deliberative democracy to take place, government should provide channels and environments through which citizens can debate and interact with the institutions of democracy. This means that the communication structures and processes should enable engagement with citizens and provide them with sufficient information to participate in democracy. Therefore, this study proposed that to be effective, the government communication should be managed strategically, despite communication in the public sector operating in a political environment.

The fact that the government communication is affected by and responds to a variety of political interests, and defined by the political system, government communication should be detached from the rhetorics and political communication. Hence the use of the two theories, excellence theory (strategic communication) and deliberative democracy (political communication).

2.3.4 Critique of the Theory of Deliberative Democracy

Participation is a term that encompasses a broad range of phenomena: it may be distinguished according to the sphere in which it is expressed (political, social, economic) or according to the forms it can take (Floridia, 2013). Ideally, participation is reflected in various forms including conflictual and antagonistic social practices and, social cooperation or self-organization of civil society through which individuals govern their lives together and deal with common problems in a communal way (Habermas, 1996). There is a varied set of possible types of participation ranging from protests, complaints, advocacy, claims, and deliberative. There may also be varying degrees, several hybrids, and overlaps. Yet, discourses in participatory
democracy do not evoke only these varied incarnations of citizen participation, but also a properly political and decisional dimension.

According to Bohman (1997) participation enables a specific form of political decision-making to be shaped and practiced. There is a substantial difference in theoretical perspectives about the notion of “deliberative democracy”. These two terms cannot be equated: “participatory democracy” is founded on the direct action of citizens who exercise some power and decide issues affecting their lives; “deliberative democracy”, instead, is founded on argumentative exchanges, reciprocal reasoning, and on the public debate which precedes decisions (Habermas, 1996).

“Deliberative democracy” sees deliberation as a step or a phase of a dialogic and discursive process for reaching decisions, which legitimate democratic institutions, and only these, must and can take (Cohen, 1997a). Any citizen or individual may make decisions through deliberative procedures; but when we enter the sphere of political decisions, deliberative procedures may be only a phase or an element within a process that is itself legitimate only based on institutional democratic procedures (Habermas, 1996). The source of legitimacy upon which a democratic decision may be founded is: first, a discursive and deliberative legitimacy, produced in the public sphere; second, the institutional legitimacy deriving from the rule of law within a democratic State (Habermas, 1996).

This twofold source may also lead to a tension between these two levels, in what Habermas refers to as a “two-track model” (Habermas, 1996). In order to deliberate, a process of discursive formation and transformation of political opinions and judgments takes place, which is the opposite of any immediate conception of democracy (Florida, 2013). These conceptions may be defined as “direct”, “participative”, and also variants derived from the refusal of mediation where it is
considered that there is no space for a dialogue-based choice and only constrained, technically “true” decisions are possible. This tension between participation and deliberation is reflected in countries that focus on enhancing deliberative and/or participative procedures in policy decision-making (Habermas, 1996). Hence, the need for a renewed theoretical reflection on the paradigms through which to evaluate the relationship between politics, public policies, and participation.

2.3 General Literature Review

2.3.1 Nature of Government communication

According to Canel and Sanders (2012), though the term ‘government communication’ is often used to refer solely to top-level executive communication, but it can also be used to refer to institutions established by the government to do its work. Canel and Sanders further defined government communication as “the aims, role, and practice of communication implemented by executive politicians and officials of public institutions in the service of a political rationale, and that are constituted based on the people’s consent and are charged to enact their will” (p. 86).

Later on, Canel and Sanders (2012) modified the above definition by stating that government communication is “the communication that takes place in and on behalf of a public institution(s), whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that is constituted based on the people’s consent and charged to enact their will” (p. 4). Canel and Sander's definitions suggest three important dimensions of government communication: Firstly, that it involves government as a public institution; secondly, that its primary goal is executive in the service of a political reason; and thirdly, that it is done on behalf of citizens.

A limiting definition of government communication is given by Blumer and Kavanagh (1999), who defined government communication as that communication
that seeks to win and not engage, by adapting the political practices into the media roles, on behalf of the government. Seen in this way, the government communication only seeks to engage when there is a need for permanent campaigns (Norris et al., 2003). The development of the permanent campaign view of government communication has brought the practice of PR, together with its methods and tools squarely into the frame (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011a). The permanent campaign is viewed as a tool for engaging and build mutual relationships for a better democracy.

Lee, Grant, and Stewart (2012) referred to the permanent campaigns as government public relations that manage relationships between the government, media, and public opinion (citizen). This view is based on the fact that public relations is the management that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and the publics on whom its success or failure depends (Broom, 2009). In order for government communication to function on permanent campaigns, it will, therefore, require a consistent and effective public relations effort that will sustain long term relationships.

Swanson (2000) stated that government communication should be concerned with how communication performs its civic functions at the center of social and political life, and point the way toward shaping communication to better serve democratic processes (Swanson, 2000). This means that government should communicate with its citizens to build democracy. Since government communication focuses mostly on the role of communication in political processes and institutions associated with electoral campaigning and governing (Swanson 2000), it is more appropriate to talk about political public relations.

Strömbäck and Kiousis’ defined political public relations as “the process whereby an organization or individual actor for political purposes, through purposeful
communication and action, seeks to influence and to establish, build, and maintain beneficial relationships and reputations with its key publics to help support its mission and achieve its goals” (2011, p. 8). Government communication is a component of the broader government actions, it belongs to the practice of public policy that is institutionalized in government. From this perspective, government communication should seek to positively and actively engage with citizens as participants in the democratic process. In order to do this, there is a need to understand how the government organises communication, and its practice (Kumar, 2003a, b; 2007).

However, one needs to appreciate how government communication differs from corporate communication or public relations as practiced in the private sector. Gelders (2005) argued that the environment under which government communication operates, which is the public sector, is different from that of the private sector. While government communication is practiced in public and meant to serve citizens, that of a private organisation focuses on winning more publics to consume their products and services (Lee, 2008; Viteriti, 1997). This means that government exists to serve the social well-being of its citizens, its communication is therefore informed by the social purpose rather than by market pressures (Rainey, 2003).

The context of government communication is typically “less open to market competition with less incentive to reduce costs, less concern with consumer preferences and more subject to legal and formal constraints affecting managers’ choices of procedures and operational areas than in the private sector” (Horsley, 2007, p. 378). In government, there is more diversity and uncertainty about objectives and decision-making. Graber (2003) argued that it has “less decision-making autonomy, less flexibility in establishing performance incentives, more application of formal regulations, and political roles for top managers” (p. 12). It’s uncertain and diverse
nature has, in some countries, led to the devaluation of communication; hence elimination of communicators’ positions, leaving unskilled communicators to fill the void (Garnett, 1994). The lack of decision-making autonomy has also resulted in fragmented structures, where communication is poorly coordinated and contradictory (Graber, 2003). The existence of contradicting voices usually is an indication that communication has been relegated as a technical role (Gower, 2006).

Further, government communication in many countries is centralized and controlled, such that there is a regulation to monitor the dissemination of information (Bekkers, 1998). Central control is put in place to regulate the impact of crisis and risks in communication that may emerge from the dilution of accountabilities, inconsistent, and uncoordinated communication (Lipsky, 1980). Subsequently, inadequacies such as lack of training, education, or experience by professionals could lead to poor communication management (Ehling, 1992).

In the private sector, communication professionals are encouraged to advance their careers through seminars, conferences, research, and continuing education. They are also enrolled in professional bodies that provide standards of practice (Sallot, Cameron & Larisey, 1997). This is not the case in government because professional development is not one of the merits used in job awards or promotions (Liu & Horsley, 2007). Government communication struggles with such complexities as a result of the multi-layered and diverse nature of its operation (Puddington, 2009).

As a public institution, its communication serves various publics, diverse needs, and interests. Canel and Sanders (2011) argued that because of its public institutional setting, government communication operations are “directed to external audiences and played out partly in the space of appearance with important implications for the operational condition for communication” (Fisher & Horsley,
This nature of government has therefore led to intense media scrutiny (Fitch, 2004; Lee, 2008).

The media scrutiny has led to a public discourse which in turn has increased the need for transparency and accountability. For this reason, Jones (2002) argued that the media is predisposed to cover government more negatively, and the frequent negative coverage affects government decisions (Lee, 2008; Pounsford & Meara, 2004). Consequently, governments have been forced to make incremental changes in policies and improvise better communication methods (Graber, 2003).

2.3.2 Strategic Communication in Government Communication

The discussion on the nature of government communication given above suggests that to be effective, it should be practiced strategically. Strategic communication is a key concern for any organization that aims at accomplishing its mission through the effective use of communication (Hallahan, Holtzhausen, van Ruler, Vercic, & Sriramesh, 2007). Depending on its mission, an organization can adopt various forms of communication (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2013). In political communication, strategic communication can be in the form of political strategy (McNair, 2007), government strategy (Sanders & Canel, 2013), and administrative communication strategy (Garnett, 1994). In government, strategic communication can mean managing the complexity of the organization-public relationships and the environment under which communication operates (Sanders & Canel, 2013).

However, government communication does not occur in isolation but always happens within the context of the existing political system and policy framework. It is thus embedded in the relationship between political systems, institutions, departments, and stakeholders (Jansen, Stoep & Jochemsen, 2017). Regardless of the environment, it operates in, government communication should satisfy the citizen’s
entitlement to information and support good democratic governance. It should, therefore, play a key role in public policy and government performance.

Government communication should not be aimed at personal image building and of other organizations or interests (Jansen, Stoep & Jochemsen, 2017), instead, it should make it easy for the government to be contacted by its citizens, and provide adequate information. Government communication ought to be truthful, accessible, understandable, timely, and strategic. More importantly, it should not be interwoven with party political interests (Jansen et al., 2017).

The history of the institutionalisation of strategic communication in government is rather short but eventful (Salomonsen, Frandsen & Johansen, 2016). In the beginning, strategic communication was primarily institutionalised as a practice due to the need for advice in political communication. Strategic communication amongst political leaders operated in a complex environment that was characterised by media negativity, blame games, and the imposition of mediatised formats (Esser & Strömbäck, 2014a; Hood, 2011; Peters, 2016; Schillemans & Pierre, 2016).

As such, strategic communication was largely informed by a political logic of communication for political principals (Canel & Sanders, 2012). Its introduction to the government was therefore triggered by the need for politicians and the government to engage with the media (Frandsen & Johansen, 2015). As a result, many scholars and political actors equate government communication and political communication. It is against the backdrop given above, that politicians and government functionaries needed to acquire useful tactics on how to deal with the media. This resulted in the introduction and strengthening of political advisers’ positions (Eichbaum & Shaw, 2010), and strategic communication consultants within the government. Despite these association between the strategic and political
communication, and the central role that the media played, government communication should not be equated with media relations (Canel, 2012; Hallahan, 2011; Kiousis, Popescu & Mitrook, 2007; Tedesco, 2011), but should include other functions and activities that build relationships.

Public relations play a key strategic role in building and maintaining relationships. The government needs to build relationships with its publics in a strategic manner for successful interaction and relationships” (Ledingham, 2011). In this case, strategic management implies that political actors need to seek to engage in conversation with citizens over a long period (Lilleker & Jackson, 2011), which requires a more proactive and strategic approach rather than a reactive and merely technical one (Kiousis & Strömbäck, 2011). To perform these tasks, professionals should have the ability to foster and maintain diverse relationships, they should be competent in stakeholder management (Jeffrey & Brunton, 2011).

The practitioners also need to monitor, evaluate, and be socially responsible. They should have the ability to plan, measure, monitor, and evaluate the communication process, as a socially responsible function, such that it sustains the ethical and acceptable behavior by all stakeholders. At the same time, they should actively monitor the environment for early detection of changes or trends which may impact on key stakeholders (ibid.). More importantly, lobby and strategically advocate for a particular point of view with the various stakeholders.

As such, government communication practitioners should be involved in strategic decision-making and not confined to the role of technicians, for them to have a proactive approach to communication” (Strömbäck & Kiousis 2011a). The practitioners should be in management positions where they can make critical decisions concerning strategic goals. Kelley (1956) insisted that “to be of any value,
the communicators must sit in all planning sessions and do their part of selecting issues”. “They should have a voice in selecting, determining, and projecting issues” (pp. 211–212). Kelley added that their position in policy-making affects the basic relationships between the public and the organisation.

The appropriate organisational chart is that which positions public relations at the management level. Kumae and Sullivan (2003), therefore, advocated for setting parameters that place communication at the middle management level; determine the performance of communication tasks, and analyse public opinion by scanning the environment. In effect, the strategic approach conceptualises communication not simply as an enabling function but as a contributing factor to the strategy process (Cox, 2001). Communication should make decisions in ways that optimise their ability to accomplish their work and be responsive to any exigencies (Bryson, 1995).

In some respect, government communicators are information brokers; they develop strategic means of providing information to the publics and manage organization reputation. Citizens demand access to information and inclusion in the decision-making as a means of holding government accountable to the implicit contract (Salomonsen et al., 2016), it is important that the government is transparent, demonstrates openness and accountability. Transparency as a strategic imperative requires the provision of explicit information about the organization’s activities, and outcomes (Meijer, 2009; Pitrowski & Borry, 2009).

Transparency also calls for the participation of the citizens as stakeholders; participation is important because stakeholders can give their input (Jennings & Zeitner, 2003; Norris, 2001), and access information (Roberts, 2004). Since information is disclosed in a richer contextualised setting, the government usually provides information in a one-way process that controls the interpretation. The
government does this to maintain discretion and power but fails to comply with accountability requirements (Salomonsen et al., 2016). Citizens require a certain level of additional information to participate in the policy-making process. Two-way communication exemplifies transparency that enables the government to be visible and enable external actors to actively contribute to the democracy processes (La Porte et al., 2001; Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).

2.3.3 Political Communication in Government Communication

As explained above, government communication is complex because of its operation in a political environment that is controlled by political actors. It is affected by the political environment; thus, it is strongly defined and influenced by political systems and interests (Appleby, 1973; Pounsford & Meara, 2004). The problem with this is that politics will influence the creativity in message development (Fitch, 2004; Horsley & Barker, 2002), increase external influences (Graber, 2003), influence the dissemination of information (Fairbanks, Plowman, & Rawlins, 2007; Hiebert, 1981), but also elevates the need for public support (Allison, 2004; Graber, 2003).

Due to its operation in a political environment, government communicators are “forced to adopt and develop complex communication practices” (Canel & Sanders, 2012, p. 91). This has led, in some countries, to the appointment of professionals into communication positions based on political party affiliation and not on qualification. In other cases, it has led to the practice of communication for propaganda purposes by covering up for the political mistakes of leaders, as opposed to the best communication practices that engage with citizens and enhance the reputation of government (Canel & Sanders, 2012).

The nature and interplay between political systems, citizens, and government call for communication that is centered on relationship building and maintenance.
Viteritti (1997) as cited in Graber (2003), argued that “meaningful government communication is not merely management practicality but “apolitical, albeit moral, obligation that originates from the basic covenant that exists between the government and the people” (p. 226). For these reasons, as Leonard et al. (2005) argued, communication should focus on mutual and long-term trust-building between the government (as the organization) and its major publics. The citizens should not, therefore, be impartial and passive spectators, but rather act as partners in the creation of meaning and communication (Botan & Taylor, 2004).

Stromback and Kiousis (2011) advocated that such communication should be examined from the perspective of political public relations, because politics, political communication, and political public relations are inextricably linked together. Their advocacy on political communication is critical to a constructive and meaningful policy-making. Citizen-focused government communication produces better policies, fosters trust among citizens, enables the government to gain mindshare for its policies, and promotes co-sharing of the ownership and responsibility for shaping policies (Whyte & Macintosh, 2002).

Citizen-focused government communication calls for relationship management that is built on upholding certain values between governments and citizens such as transparency, trust, accessibility, and responsiveness (Pandey & Garnett, 2006; Zmerli & Newton, 2008; Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010). Such relationship management called for an integration of political and citizens relationship management. Political public relations provide a good basis for examining the political dimension of government communication (Strömbäck & Kiousis’, 2011).

Applied to government communication, Strömbäck and Kiousis’ definition refers to what it is (management process), its purposeful feature, the elements that
describe its purpose (establish and maintain beneficial relationships), and therefore points out notions and dimensions that introduces new perspectives for the analysis of government communication (Canel & Sanders, 2012). Government communication in politics involves all forms of communication undertaken by politicians to achieve specific objectives. The expected outcome is a political result that serves the democratic processes (McNair, 2007).

In an effort to achieve political results, the government needs to cultivate relationships oriented towards achieving mutual understanding with citizens who should be seen as interactive actors at the end of the communication process. While Swanson (2000) observed that the role of communication in political processes and institutions is associated with electoral campaigning and governing. Luoma-aho (2008) recommended that citizens should be involved in the processes instead of merely being monitored and controlled. This means that support and dialogue become more important than control. Government communicators, therefore, have the obligation of keeping the publics informed and to be informed by the publics, in fulfilling their democratic responsibility.

Besides, government communicators should be informed by the publics, because democratic accountability is enhanced where managers are provided with insight relating to how the publics think and react to government decisions (Lee, 2008; Garnett, 1997; Garnett & Kouzmin, 1997). Therefore, government communication should strive to pursue democratic purposes and mutual understanding (Canel & Sanders 2012). From this perspective, Canel and Sanders (2012) insisted that its mission should not merely be political, but be democratic and emancipatory. Canel and Sander’s argument underscored the importance of the relational dimension of government communication.
2.3.4 Relationship Management in Government Communication

Strategic communication and political communication in government communication require the cultivation of relationships. Cutlip et al. (2000) defined public relations as “the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (p. 6). This definition contains one of the key characteristics of public relations that is contained in many definitions, including the definition of political public relations, which is the importance assigned to have mutually beneficial relationships with key publics. As noted by Jackson (2010), the relational dimension interprets public relations by inverting the components of the term ‘public relations,’ so that it is relations with the publics. The goal is building and maintaining substantive relationships with the publics (Hung 2000b).

This relational perspective has moved public relations from focusing on publicity towards an emphasis on establishing and maintaining mutual relationships (Ledingham, 2011). This is a major transition that involves a mentality shift, where communication is considered a two-way process for creating and exchanging meaning, preferably interactive and participatory at all levels (Servaes 1999; Blokhuis 2005). Communication “informs, persuades, and integrates people with people” (Bernays, 1952, p. 12). Similarly, public relations is about people, and politics is ultimately about “who gets what, when, how,” (Laswell, 1936), and this is decided through the communication process (Castells, 2009). Therefore, political communication, political PR, and public relations are inextricably linked together.
Public relations is perceived as a management function that seeks to establish and maintain relationships between an organisation and its publics, both parties should have a reciprocal and long-term commitment to achieving the mission and goals of the relationship (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011). The nature of this relationship determines the level of communication success (Grunig, 1992b). Stakeholder loyalty, involvement, openness, commitment, and mutuality are critical to any organization (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011). Government communication should, therefore, be used as a long-term tool that seeks to maintain government-citizens' relationships (Ledingham, 2011). The citizen should be engaged; thus, the government must find a balance between its interests as a public organisation, and those of citizens.

Ledingham (2011) conceptualised organisation-publics' relationship using five relevant dimensions: “trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment”. He operationalized “trust as an organisation doing what it says it will do; openness as sharing the organisation’s plans for the future with public members; involvement as the organisation being involved in the welfare of the community; investment as the organisation investing in the community; and commitment as the organisation being committed to the welfare of the community” (p. 62).

Subsequently, organisations with effective PR should practice relationship management as the desired outcome of practicing public relations and to attaining good reputation (Center & Jackson, 1995); and this should be the goal of government communication. Grunig (1992) proposed strategies for maintaining organisation-public relationships, including access, positiveness, openness, assurance, networking, and the sharing of tasks, and the desired outcomes should be control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment as outcomes.
Grunig’s ideas on relationship give the impression that the success of a relationship is not measured primarily by communication output or influence on the opinions of various publics, but by the quality of the relationships between an organisation and its publics (Grunig 1992). However, according to Ledingham (2011), the idea is that “relationships need to be seen as mutually beneficial based on mutual interest” (p. 63). Successful management of relations means to understand what must be done to initiate, develop, and maintain that relationship.

Ledingham (2011) argued that involvement and support of the community can endanger loyalty towards an organisation when that involvement/support is known by the key publics. They conclude that “what emerges is a process in which organisations must (1) focus on the relationships with their key publics, and (2) communicate involvement of those activities/programs that build the organisation–public relationship” (p. 63). These insights and ideas can be applied to government communication through boundary scanning, government can predict and assess the level of citizen satisfaction with what it does. Such satisfaction is dependent on the nature of the relationship that it has with its citizens. It is therefore important for the government to establish and maintain relations with its citizens for a good reputation.

As much as relational management is critical and applicable in government, it is important to note that the political environment tends to be more contentious and conflictual (Sellers, 2010). Conflicts are often enduring due to incompatible values and interests in politics. This, together with lack of management training and the pre-dominance of professionals who are assigned technical roles within the structures (Lindemann & Lapetina, 1981), makes relationship management more difficult. This not only increases the stakes involved, but it influences the strategic approach. This is
particularly the case because the government, like all organizations, cannot always choose their publics; the publics oftentimes choose them.

While citizens may need to trust the government through the establishment of mutually beneficial and trusting relations, some citizens are always hostile to the government. Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) argued that citizens’ trust in government is a critical factor in their complying with laws and co-operation with the government (Kearns 2004). Governments must take efforts to implement effective and reliable communication practices that alleviate the perceptual and informational discrepancies that have characterised government communication (Pietersen & Johnson, 2011).

Trust is built by the organisation-publics interaction, the credibility of the information disseminated, and perception-built overtime (Corritore, Kracher & Wiedenbeck, 2003). In order to build trust, information sharing between the organisation and its publics should be complete, timely, and trustworthy (Gelders, 2005).

Furthermore, the information should be reliable, convenient, and accessible to citizens (Jaeger & Bertot 2010; Burnett, Jaeger & Thompson, 2008). Government as a communicator should appreciate the fact that for a message to be considered credible, the communicator must be trusted, and he/she should be an expert (Wathen & Burkell, 2002) or attractive (Ohanian, 1990). Source credibility is a factor that should be seen not just about the content of information, but also the message deliverer such as the government spokesperson. Government communication should thus cultivate long-term relationships and aimed at mutual understanding (Canel & Sanders, 2012).

As a public organisation, the government should appreciate the fact that organisational success largely depends on key stakeholders’ perceptions and attitudes; therefore, as an organisation, it should develop frameworks that prescribe steps toward the ‘strategic’ use of communication (Cornelissen et al, 2006). Government
communication plays a critical role in informing the citizens about policies, hence encourage citizen participation. Participation is the involvement of stakeholders in the decision/policy-making process in such a way that stakeholder input is considered and influences the outcome (Bickerstaff & Walker, 2001; Roberts, 2004).

The decision-making process requires that there be a two-way communication process for the stakeholders to be considered as participants (Welch & Fulla, 2005). Bohman (1996) argued that citizens should be empowered and authorized to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Thus, the government should consider purposeful communication with its citizens as a pragmatic practice and moral obligation derived from democratic principles (Viteritti, 1997). Two-way communication calls for a transparent process that emphasizes the provision of resources, support, and practices that facilitates participation in the democratic process (Fairbanks et al., 2007). Two-way communication enhances representation and transparency because it provides citizens with the information needed to interact with the government, and the opportunity to evaluate government (Graham, 2014).

The key purpose of government communication is to enhance democracy therefore, its communication should be open, timely, and without manipulation (Heise, 1985). Such communication calls for the upholding of transparency, trust, accessibility, and responsiveness (Pandey & Garnett, 2006; Spencer & McGrath, 2006; Fairbanks, Gaber, 2007; Zmerli & Newton, 2008; Salminen & Ikola-Norrbacka, 2010). After all, effective and resilient democracies are built on citizen representation and robust civil society (Norris, 2004). Democracy works best when people are directly involved in policy debate, actions and decisions (Scott 2006).

Traditionally, government communication was limited to the issuance of press releases and holding of conferences, but of late, governments have become
“communication machines” (Wright, 2001), that are building new communication frameworks to create interaction between government and its key stakeholders (Bertot, Jaeger & Grimes, 2010; Mergel, 2013). In democratic countries, communication frameworks have generated candid conversation among the publics, created open space for citizen participation, enabled citizens to cooperate with government, and stimulated innovation in the public sector (Criado, Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2013; Mergel, 2012). As a result, there has been increased meaningful communication between government and citizens.

Increasingly, governments have become more conscious of, and concerned about citizens’ perceptions about them, and are periodically monitoring public opinion. This allows them to make an important connection between the perceptions of the citizenry regarding government promises and performance against established policy results (Rimmerman, 1991). More important, however, there is an increasing appreciation of the notion that ‘publics around the organization must be taken into consideration and involved in the processes instead of merely being monitored and controlled (Luoma-aho 2008).

Based on this appreciation, the relationship between government and the citizenry should aim at cultivating mutual relationships with the citizens. Government communication should, therefore, be a tool that aids citizens in fulfilling their democratic responsibility (Luoma-aho, 2008). A strategic approach to government communication means that the “professionals involved in it should be part of the decision-making and communication be carried out as a strategic function (Canel, 2007, p. 201). When this happens, citizen participation becomes a key strategic goal.

Arguably, democratic societies are those that develop a framework of social and institutional conditions that facilitate free discussion among citizens, provide
favourable conditions for participation, association and expression (Cohen, 1997a). Also, these are societies where democratic accountability is enhanced and managers are provided with insight relating to how the publics thinks and reacts to government decisions (Lee, 2008; Garnett & Kouzmin, 1997). Democracy is thus, “evocative of rational legislation, participatory politics, and civic self-governance to the extent that it is based on a process of reaching a reasoned agreement for a decision to be legitimate” (Rehg, 1997, p. 321). To realise this, government communication should facilitate free deliberation, based on reason, equitable and have a consensus as to the overall outcome (Bohman 1997a).

2.4 Empirical Literature

The empirical literature reviewed in this section comes from 15-country comparative studies that were the basis of a book, Government Communication: Cases and Challenges, edited by Karen Sanders and Maria José Canel (2013). Canel and Sanders (2013) identified a gap in government communication since no considered examination of the subject exists that provides either an account of the contemporary landscape concerning government communication or an exploration of common and diverging themes on a cross-national level. They, therefore, explored how the central national government communicates today and sought to identify common cross-national trends (Ibid.).

The edited book carries case studies that provide descriptions and analysis of how government communication operates in specific contexts; and explains trends that they consider to be common to the 15 countries studied. For each country, common research questions were explored through the case study methodology (Canel & Sanders 2013). The unity of analysis for the study was the current situation
of central national government communication in Kenya: how it works and functions at the time of writing. However, this did not exclude references to the recent past.

The study followed a mixed-method research design. The analysis included the use of databases and information from research that relied on the secondary evaluation of material such as constitutions and legal texts, government reports, scientific studies and evaluation of statistical data, audience ratings and readership figures, published opinion polls and expert interviews (mainly with government communicators) (Ibid). Following Wirth and Kolb (2004), they adopted a pre-theoretical strategy with context factors and used mainly descriptive and exploratory research questions (Canel & Sanders, 2013).

Canel and Sanders used a framework for which allowed them to capture what they called structural elements (structure) and ongoing processes (process) in government communication. Canel and Sanders explained that the structural elements of their framework relate to two administrative organisational dimensions: formal rules and financial resources. While formal rules include all relevant legislation, policies, and guidance as well as organisational charts detailing communication roles, financial resources include budgets and reward systems. Canel and Sanders regarded human resources as “separate structural elements that include the skills, knowledge, and values of the communication workforce as detailed in the professional profiles, training and recruitment programs” (p. 14). Their framework of analysis also looks at communication processes related to information gathering, analysis, dissemination, and processes related to information evaluation.

The next two sections will discuss the findings of the study concerning three selected country case studies. The first section will deal with the influence of the political system on government communication, while the second will deal with the
structures and practices of government communication. The researcher chose Germany which is a parliamentary system with a President and Chancellor, Britain because it is run by a Prime minister, and South Africa because it is one of the few African countries with a documented and streamlined government communication.

2.4.1 Influence of the Political System on Government Communication

The overarching trends that pose challenges for government communication can be understood against the background of the specific features of the political and media systems of the specific countries. The political structures and processes provide systemic environmental and influential factors that explain the features of government communication in different countries (Hallin & Mancinni, 2004). This section will, therefore, review the empirical literature on the influence of the political system of government communication by focusing on case studies of three different countries, namely: Germany, Britain, and South-Africa.

In the case of Germany, Holtz-Bacha (2013) did the country case study and wrote the report titled “Government communication in Germany: Maintaining the fine line between information and advertising”. She began by looking at the political and electoral systems, stating that Germany has a parliamentary system where on the national level only the parliament (Bundestag) is elected by the people. The head of state is the president who plays a ceremonial role but is not elected by the people.

The most influential figure in the political system is the chancellor who is the head of government, is elected by parliament, and comes from the party with majority votes. An important feature of this political system is the fact that the importance of political parties, which dominate the system, is underscored by the constitution which
assigns them an important role in the formation of the popular will. The parties have complete control of the selection of electoral candidates.

The German political system has for a long time been dominated by two parties: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU/SCU), and the Social Democratic Party (SDP). One of these two has always formed the government in a coalition with a smaller party. Since 2005, Angela Markel of the Christian Democrats has been chancellor (p. 46). She was re-elected for a fourth term in March 2018 (Vonberg, 2018). The executive power is vested in the Cabinet which is composed of the Federal Chancellor and his Ministers. The Federal Chancellor is elected through the majority vote in the Bundestag and formally appointed by the President.

The election is often preceded by “extensive negotiations between those parties that plan to govern together and the leader of the party or coalition of parties winning the Bundestag election usually becomes the Federal Chancellor” (Bundesrat, n.d.). Holtz-Bacha identified federalism as another distinctive feature of the German political system and says that it provides for a decentralisation of power. This is between The federal republic (legislative power of the 16 states - Länder), and the federal council (Bundesrat).

The Bundestag (directly elected body) enacts and amends legislation, elects the Federal Chancellor, and monitors the performance of the federal government (Bundesrat, n.d.) The Bundesrat (indirectly elected) is comprised of 16 appointed representatives from all the states of Germany at the national level. Holtz-Bacha reported that the German media system or landscape is characterised by the private press on one side, and a dual broadcasting system (public and commercial broadcasting) on the other.
Further, Holtz-Bacha stated that a handful of nationally distributed newspapers, among them the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung and the liberal Süddeutsche Zeitung are regarded as quality newspapers and together with the political magazines’ Der Spiegel plays the role of agenda setters for the other media and the political elite (Ibid). She stated, however, that the majority of newspapers have a regional or local reach while the “television market is divided equally between the traditional public service channels and their commercial competitors” (p. 47).

Holtz-Bacha (2007) noted that according to a classification by Hallin & Mancini (2004), the German media system corresponds to the “North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model” featuring three characteristics which include the “simultaneous development of strong mass-circulation commercial media and media tied to political/civil groups; the coexistence of political parallelism and journalistic professionalism; and the coexistence of liberal traditions of press freedom and a tradition of strong state intervention in the media, which are seen as a social institution and not as purely private enterprises” (p. 47). She summarised the German media system that enjoys a high degree of freedom which is “guaranteed by the Constitution and upheld by the Constitutional Court” (Ibid).

While there are several features of the political system that have led to specific constraints for government communication in Germany, one of the key factors is that the management of government communication has always considered the concerns of the coalition partners and the interests of the sixteen state governments (Sanders et al., 2011). While government communication attempts to present the achievements and plans of the coalition, the government seeks support from its party and the opposition for its actions in the Parliament. But also, it must handle the ambitious
political actors/ministers who are only interested in building the image and brand for political gains (Holzt-Bacha, 2007).

In order to address the interests of all these actors, government communication ends up being used as a campaign tool. This is because, at the Länder level, Germany always has an election, therefore it is involved in a permanent campaign (Pfetsch, 2003). These complex relations might suggest that clandestine coordination would be the norm, but, more often than not, battles are fought out in the media (Sanders et al., 2011). While discussing the development of government communication and its legal background, Holtz-Bacha (2007) noted that the central institution for government communication in Germany is the Federal Press and Information Office (FPIO) which was established in September 1949 after the first parliamentary election in the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany.

Referring to Hofsahs and Pollman (1982), Holtz-Bacha (2007) said that FPIO developed into a separate institution in 1958, when its Director received the status of state Secretary, and it became directly subordinate to the Chancellor, since then, it has the status of supreme federal authority. Holtz-Bacha (2013) established that Germany was not free from partisan political influence on government communication and the media by those in power. But as explained below, the justice system saw to it that this influence was minimal and had boundaries. Due to what he saw as the media’s negative attitude, Germany’s first chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, sought what he thought were better ways to organize public support for his policy (p. 48). Konrad Adenauer, therefore, formed a parallel structure that partially provided a model for the organisation of government communication (Walker, 1982).

The parallel structure was supposed to develop public relations for democracy in the wider political sphere, addressing the constituencies beyond the media (Holtz-
As a result of this, the Consortium for Democratic Circles (ADC) was formed in 1951 as a joint venture of political interest groups engaging in public relations activities in favor of the government and also of Adenauer’s Christian Democrats (Ibid.). Holtz-Bacha (2013) opined that from the founding of the Federal Republic, the government have invariably used the resources of the FPIO without keeping the government’s and their parties’ interests separate. For instance, at the beginning of Adenauer’s chancellorship, the FPIO resources were used to conclude contracts with polling institutes conducting public opinion research (Kruke, 2007).

More importantly, conflicts arose over adverts in the media that could be regarded as electoral advertising by the government. This happened especially when elections were close and governments began campaigning by pointing to their achievements while in power. The matter was taken to the Federal Constitutional Court which decided in 1977 acknowledging the right of the government to active public relations, and stating that the government public relations are a necessity” (Holtz-Bacha, 2013). In the opinion of the court, for citizens to participate responsibly in the formation of the political will, they needed knowledge of the decisions and activities taken by the state bodies (Ibid).

The government was, however, forbidden from advertising and influencing public opinion in favour of any of the competing political parties. The court argued that the government communication reaches its limits where electoral advertising begins. The court differentiated between permitted communication activities of the government and inadmissible activities. It presented indicators to be used in determining whether communication activities of the government take on the character of electoral advertising and thus not permitted. The criteria included; a temporal factor, the design, and frequency of these activities.
The government communication activities are not permitted when they appear close to election day or if the informational content is overshadowed by its advertising character or if its activities increase closer to election day, thereby suggesting that they are electoral advertising that is not permitted (Ibid). Further, government communication was not allowed to use public funds to influence the public opinion of the majority or to fight against the opposition (Vogel, 2009).

The above regulatory background of government communication in Germany is an example of how government can misuse the resources for political gains of either individual political actors or political parties, and not for the interest of its citizens. It also demonstrates how political and legal systems define and influence government communication; in this case, the executive misused communication resources but the judicial system made an independent decision not to allow the executive to use state resources for electoral advertising.

In the case of Britain, Sanders (2013) carried out the case study entitled “The strategic shift of the UK government communication”. Sanders noted that Britain’s political system has permitted a degree of pragmatic flexibility in the development of government communication functions that has often occasioned controversy especially during the Thatcher and Blair governments. According to Sanders (2013), when the Labour Party assumed government in 1974, it inherited communication machinery that had developed since 1945.

Sanders identified three essential structural features in the UK government as Central Office of Information (COI) established in 1946 to develop communication campaigns and marketing services; Government Information Service (GIS) created in 1949 was responsible for media relations; Prime Minister’s Press Secretary that played a central role in government communication, typically the officers were
recruited from the civil service (Conservative government) or a political party though they needed to have a journalistic background (Labour government).

Sanders (2013) found out that during the time of Tony Blair as Prime Minister (1997-2007) reviews were carried out to examine government communication out of the need for modernizing it, but also as a result of controversies that resulted from the changes implemented by the Labour Party. For instance, the GIS was renamed the Government Information and Communication Services (GICS) to reflect the new proactive communication approach. The strategic communication unit was established to monitor the media, collect data and intelligence, devise and advice on strategies, and coordinate communication across government (Sanders, 2013).

The chief press secretary became the Prime minister’s official spokesperson who held daily press briefings. His appointment was seen as a tactic to institute a rapid response to the media (Smith, 2002). After his appointment, the chief press secretary instructed department heads of information to raise their game (Sanders, 2013). Sanders claimed that the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, went ahead and established communication structures and strategies that were directed at external audiences in a dynamic political environment (Ibid). The communication reforms emphasized on prime minister’s publics (Blair, 2007; 2010), and precipitated an unprecedented public, media and parliamentary scrutiny of the structure and process of government communication in Britain.

Sanders (2013) established that the restructuring affected government integrity and undermined public trust, spreading skepticism about politics. This is because Blair’s government was accused of replacing career civil servants (who had resigned) with staff without media background. For instance, out of the 19 departmental heads of information, 17 had resigned or been replaced as in July 1999 (HOLSCC, 2009, p. 
There was an increase in political appointees and special advisers that rose from 38 to 70 in the first year of Blair’s tenure. The special advisers were funded by the public purse but unlike civil servants, many took a party-political line on matters of policy and communication’ (Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2003).

In particular, the appointment of the Chief Press Secretary, Alastair Campbell, and Chief of Staff, Jonathan Powell, as special advisers with exceptional powers to instruct civil servants, brought unease within the government and publics (Blair, 2010). Campbell who accumulated considerable power given his unelected and non-civil servant status was the Director of communication and strategy, he headed the GCIS, the press office, strategic communications unit, and the research/information unit (Campbell & Stott, 2007). Jones (2001) argued that giving unelected officials such as power undermined accountability, and civil servants’ political neutrality was contaminated by partisan politics.

The Blair administration emphasized promoting and coordinating positive messages on government policies which were alleged to cross the line of acceptable civil service practice by straying into party promotion/public opinion manipulation rather than legitimate official government work (Mountfield, 2002). The aggressive use of media as a communication style was manipulative in the eyes of public opinion (Barnett & Gaber, 2001). This led to media an agenda setting being a “key goal of government communication, building coverage before, during, and after actual initiative” (Barnett & Gaber, 2001, p. 102).

Media relations was one of the concerns of the British government since the appointment of the first Prime Ministerial Principal Press secretary in 1932 (Seymour-Ure, 2003). Press secretaries became a permanent fixture especially after Churchill’s unsuccessful attempt to do without it in 1951 (Kavanagh & Seldon, 1999). The
importance of media relations is not just a British government phenomenon. The media’s prominent role in shaping public perception and their ability to define the symbolic capital of image and reputation are well-attested features of most liberal democracies (Stanyer, 2012). The case of the British government indicates the realisation that as much as government communication operates in a political environment, it also works within a media system that is always out searching for information that creates public discourse. Therefore, communication must be strategic and relational in dealing with the media and its publics (citizens).

Government communication was seen as a politicization factor since legitimate government communication was perceived as spin-doctoring; thus, the presentation of policy to achieve favourable media coverage, whatever the facts of the case, had become more important than the policy itself (Ingham, 2003). For this reason, “the media attacked the Labour spinning” (Powell, 2011, p. 203), but the most controversial issue was Blair’s alleged attempts to persuade the public in the case of the 2003 Iraq war (Larie, 2010). This alleged persuasion provided the ammunition for charges that government communication had crossed the ethical line (Sanders, 2013).

The Iraq war controversy reinforced an already growing distrust in government communication (Stanyer, 2004). The distrust was due to the number of incidents that had happened during the Labour Party leadership which fanned the flames of media attacks on Labour spins. The Blair government was accused of manipulating intelligence information to show that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction. The British forces invaded Iraq after the British House of Commons voted to go to war based on flawed intelligence.

The Chilcot report found out that Blair overplayed evidence about the dictator’s weaponry and ignored peaceful means to send the British troops into Iraq.
(Chilcot, 2016). Blair faced a public backlash in Britain over the decision despite having led the country’s Labour Party for three election wins, forcing him to resign in 2007. In the aftermath, Campbell resigned and an independent review chaired by media executive, Bob Phillis, was established with a remit to conduct a radical review of government communications (Phillis, 2004).

The 2004 report offered recommendations that were partially responsible for developments in government communication which included: the appointment of a top civil servant to head the newly created Government Communication Network; the strengthening of the civil service Propriety Guidance for government communicators; the reissuing of the Code for Special Advisors; and the creation of the U.K. Statistics Authority as an independent source of information about government statistics. The recommendation by the Phillis report shows the importance of political neutrality as an effective approach in government communication. Political neutrality builds trust in the structures and practices of government communication.

The recommendation on the formation of the Government Communication Network was a step towards a more professionalised communication. Professional bodies usually are formed to establish standards, train, and recruit qualified and appropriate staff members. The Phillis reports also called for the upholding of ethical codes and principles of good practice, and setting of standards of behavior in government communication (Phillis, 2004). When Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, his government implemented the Phillis recommendations: he appointed a civil servant as his Director of communication and official spokesperson.

A political principal adviser, and director of the strategy, was also appointed but was a non-civil servant. Brown also employed 78 special advisers despite the controversies surrounding this (Hansard, 2007); and he did this based on a ‘party-
political line’ as opposed to public service practice on matters of policy and communication. However, despite the above lapses, there was a steady increase in investment in communication resources driven by soaring media demands, growing pressure for transparency, and the impact of digital technology.

Sanders (2013) reported that Brown’s government introduced the use of digital communities by opening a twitter account and creating a new position called Director of Digital Engagement. The digital engagement role was extended into Cameroon’s administration, who added internet delivery of services and development of the “Networked Nation” that increased citizen-focused communication, and greater centralization of communication structures (HOLSCC, 2009, p. 37). When David Cameron came into power in 2010, he suspended the marketing and advertising activity of the COI and instructed for a review into its future (Sanders, 2013).

The civil servant heads of communication were asked to publish their report as per the new government’s twin policy priorities of reducing the country’s deficit and forging a smaller role of the government and a greater one for citizens (Tee, 2011). During the civil service platform plan of 2012, a new government communication structure was launched, called the Communication Delivery Board chaired by the minister for the cabinet. It was established to consider cross-departmental communication issues, oversee the Government Communication Network (GCN), and approve the annual integrated communication strategies that were developed through the inter-departmental structures (Hubs).

The changes introduced by Cameron resulted in a well-coordinated and specialised government communication, where professionals and government offices worked together for a coherent and consistent messaging. Sanders (2013) noted that the above changes drove the government towards speaking with one voice. The board
published the first communication plan, brought together more than 400 government websites into an interactive one-stop shop called gov.uk for government services and information (Bracken, 2011). The Government Communication Centre relied on the communication delivery board that was headed by a civil servant executive director who also acted as the head of the government communication profession.

Sanders established that the Centre coordinates three support service areas: media monitoring, planning, and campaign evaluation; policy and capacity which develops professional standards and training; campaign and strategy which works on strategies; planning and development in the seven hubs. In short, Cameron’s government brought together different communication arms and this ensured that there was a centralised communication system that was open, interactive, and engaging. The technological and communication changes saw adjustment towards a communication system that operated in an interactive and participatory manner (ibid).

In the case of South Africa, Maqeda and Makombe (2013) conducted a comparative study of Southern Africa. They recognised South Africa as one of the more democratic countries in Africa with a free and diverse media, and where there is freedom for citizen participation in the democratic process. They report that the post-apartheid government in South Africa sought to control the media and communication channels allegedly for nation-building purposes. The media and communication systems were also used to increase the concertation of political power among the new black political elite (Ibid).

The history of the political system in South Africa dates to 1948 when the National Party (NP) gained power by institutionalizing racial segregation (Apartheid). Apartheid was characterised by state repression and violence against blacks. Nelson Mandela became the first democratically elected president under ANC. South Africa
employs a proportional representation system where a political party is allocated seats according to the number of people who have voted for it (Sebola, 2017).

According to Maqeda and Makombe (2013), South Africa is a constitutional multiparty democracy and organised around three tiers – Local, Provincial, and National governments. It has two houses of parliament – National Assembly and National Council of Provinces. The national assembly is responsible for monitoring executive performance and passing legislation. The demise of the apartheid government saw the liberalisation of the media sector in South Africa.

Maqeda and Makombe (2013) established that the print media became an important channel of communication for the government since it gave it the ability to reach mass audiences who are potential voters. In March 2011, the South African government announced that it would launch a newspaper because it was being misrepresented by the independent media. The launch of its newspaper was a sign that government was concerned about how the media reports were portraying it while it was not able to control how the media reported its activities (Sowetan, 2011).

Maqeda and Makombe (2013) reported that the Government Spokesperson, Jimmy Manyi, said they would be launching a newspaper whose content could control and use to counter other media reports about it. He also said that the “newspaper called “New Age’ would be published in all the country’s eleven official languages and distributed nationally” (p. 192). Also, the government advertising budget was centralised and handed over to the Government Communication and Information Systems (GCIS) due to the negative coverage it was receiving from the media (Maqeda & Makombe, 2013). The budget was previously handled by each of the existing 74 national departments who would each procure their own advertising space.
and time. The government, therefore, controlled its advertising in terms of the content and the media in which to place the adverts (Independent, 2011).

Maqeda and Makombe (2013) established that before independence in 1994, the National Party (NP) used the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) as a propaganda tool. The SABC which is a public broadcaster funded by the license fee, advertising, and government subsidy would have its senior management leaders appointed depending on political ties rather than professional expertise (Horwitz, 2001). Just before the elections that brought the ANC into power, the outgoing National Party (NP) liberalised and attempted to democratise the broadcasting industry out of the fear that their major tool for maintaining political power, the SABC, was going to fall into the opponents’ hands (Maqeda & Makombe, 2013).

On its part, the ANC was worried that it would participate in an election in which the NP had effective control of the SABC. Since that time, the task of ensuring that the SABC board remains non-partisan and free from government interference has always been challenging especially as the government continuously comes to the SABC’s financial rescue (ibid). Just like in Britain and Germany, the government and other political actors are always concerned with the power of the media in shaping public opinion. The ANC’s and NP’s concern was with the ability of the SABC in building/destroying the reputation of the political party. Political actors always fear that the media will influence the public opinion, therefore, they will do whatever it takes for their interests to be represented positively by the media.

In 1995, Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, formed a communication taskforce (Comtask) to review the relationship between government communication functions at national, provincial and local levels (GCIS, 2002a). The Comtask report recommended the development of a professional communication unit within each
ministry and a centralised communication service agency, which today is called the Government Communication and Information Service (GCIS). In 2001, the government met with editors and senior journalists to improve their media relations. Their meeting conceived the Presidential Press Corps (PPC) that was aimed at providing easy access to the President, ministers, and senior government officials for accurate and up-to-date information for journalists (GCIS, 2002b).

Maqeda and Makombe (2013) discovered that the project kicked off on a negative note when part of the security clearance required the journalists to provide their sex and bank account details. This provoked an uproar and concern that the government was trying to obtain personal information for sinister motives, hence the minister of intelligence was compelled to apologise (ibid). Even though the PPC was supposed to improve communication and enhance media reporting, there was the feeling that PPC would be used by the government to manipulate the media (SADC Media Law, 2003).

Consequently, the PPC never took off because of the suspicions between the government and the journalists. Maqeda and Makombe (2013) argued that even though the media and political actors, including the government, always had a symbiotic relationship, the media viewed government communication as politically biased and did not trust them. Government communicators should, therefore, invest more in media relations that create trust and transparency between government and media. In 2001, the government founded the Presidential Participation Programme to provide a platform for face-to-face interactions with the citizens. The Cabinet introduced Imbizo (a forum for dialogue); the forum held at least one period/meeting each year for intense interaction between government and the people.
Later in 2002, the Cabinet approved the formation of two Imbizo each year to promote interactive governance and communication (GCIS, 2002b). During the Imbizos, the President would visit the provinces and communities where citizens would present their concerns and give feedback on the government’s programs (GCIS, 2002b). The Imbizo was seen as a rapid and cost-effective mechanism to policy evaluation that could potentially lead to the policy change, cancellation, or even introduction of new items on the policy agenda (Maqeda & Makombe, 2013).

However, in 2009, a new program called the Public Participation Programme (PPP) replaced the Imbizo; the program supported the President’s initiative in serving and engaging with the public. Unlike the Imbizo, the PPP aimed at involving the public in agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy formulation. Since public participation is a concept that is synonymous with democracy (Bozo & Hiemer 2016), public participation recognizes the public as the engine for policy formulation and decision making. Maqeda and Makombe (2013) found out that the government sought to demonstrate that it is in touch with the people and is willing to discuss with different stakeholders what needs to be done and improved.

2.4.2 Structures and Practices of Government Communication.

Traditionally, government communication is organised in line with the bureaucratic nature of government (Yates, 1989; Meijer, 2008). A bureaucratic mode of organisation is believed to result in efficiency, effectiveness, and reliability (Olsen, 2006; Perrow, 1986; Weber, 1968). This section will discuss government communication structures and processes across the three countries to bring out the general trends and variations in government communication. The section examined the systemic features of government communication in Germany, Britain, and South Africa. Each of these countries represents an example of a unique model of the
relation between media, communication, and political systems developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004): Germany uses a democratic corporatist model, Britain a liberal model, and South Africa a polarized pluralist model.

In critically analysing the government communication processes, this section examined whether and how the legal and regulatory framework in each country enhances accountability, transparency, and professional development. Regarding government communication structures, the section looked at the organisational chart, the representation of the communication profession in the decision-making process, how power and responsibilities are allocated, and whether the communication is considered of strategic importance. The communication practices were explored by looking at the communication activities such as press conferences, events, campaigns, websites, functions, and tasks of government communicators; and also, public feedback processes and channels such as polls, focus groups, media monitoring for analysis of government communication.

From her case study of Germany, Boltz-Bacha (2013) argued that government communication structures and processes are driven by the Federal Press and Information Office (FPIO). The head of the FPIO is also the government’s spokesperson who is officially tasked with the presentation of government decisions to the public (see also Pfetsch 2003; Die Bundesregierung, 2011). He/She is appointed by the chancellor and holds the position of a state secretary (Boltz-Bacha, 2013). The FPIO has 470 employees and is divided into four departments. The first one is administrative functions that are responsible for the technical realisation of public relations activities. The second one oversees media monitoring and analyses of German as well as foreign media. The third handles the press and public relations and
is divided into sections according to political areas of focus. The fourth one deals with inter-ministerial coordination, opinion research, internet, and audiovisual services.

Boltz-Bacha (2013) listed the tasks of the FPIO as: to inform the government and the president about world news; monitor public opinion as a basis for government decisions; inform the public and the media about the political activities of the government; provide information about Germany to other countries in cooperation with the foreign ministry; coordinate public relations activities of the ministries concerning of general political relevance; and, support German news services in Germany and other countries. When aggregated, the office has three main functions: receptive function (monitoring of news and public opinion), an operative function (information of the media and the wider public at home and abroad), and coordination function (Muller, 2001).

Holtz-Bacha (2013) noted that in addition to the FPIO which represents the government as a whole, the individual ministries have their press and PR departments. These deal with more specific issues that fall within the scope of each respective ministry. Holtz-Bacha observed, however, that to ensure that government speaks with one voice, the head of the FPIO is in regular contact with the spokespersons of the 14 ministries (Ibid). This is a sensitive and challenging relationship since the ministers come from the different coalition parties and are constantly in the public eye. Thus, there should be a clear line between ministerial communication activities and the minister’s communication efforts.

The FPIO spokesperson usually belongs to the inner circle of the Chancellor and takes part in the daily briefings in the Chancellery (Holtz-Bacha, 2007). Even though the FPIO and the government spokesperson work for the whole government, their role and relevance are very much influenced by the chancellor” (Holtz-Bacha,
2013). The spokesperson reports directly to the chancellor who appoints him/her and determines the extent of their influence. This means, therefore, that each Chancellor has the chance to shape government communication in their way (Ibid.).

Holtz-Bacha (2013) gave several illustrations of how this happened and even deviated from it. The first is that of Helmut Kohl of CDU who was chancellor from 1982 to 1989. He marginalized the FPIO during his time because of a deep-rooted distrust of journalists and the media. He kept the government spokespersons who served during his four terms out of the information loop. He had contempt for the FPIO and preferred that his close confidants handle his media relations from the chancellery. Holtz-Bacha noted that Kohl’s successor, Gerhard Schröder seemed to restore the FPIO to its earlier relevance. When he took office in 1998, he made a former journalist, who had already acted as his spokesperson when he was prime minister of Lower Saxony, the new head of the FPIO.

Holtz-Bacha (2013) stated that during Schröder’s time, the government was committed to a new communication concept of dialogue with the citizens and set out to modernize government communication. To ensure that there was a common look across government, they developed a corporate design that is still used by the government, the chancellery, the ministries, and the FPIO for their public relations work. However, when a new spokesperson was appointed in 2002, there was a decline in the importance of the government spokesperson because he was not part of Schröder’s close advisers.

Another contributing factor to the decline was the fact that Schröder had strong media skills which earned him the moniker ‘media chancellor’” and made him be regarded as his own and best spokesperson. Angela Merkel’s first spokesperson managed to restore the relevance of the position of government spokesperson. What is
important to note is that he was part of Merkel’s inner circle and had an office in the chancellery and managed to earn the trust of Berlin journalists. All this makes Holtz-Bacha conclude that it remains to be seen whether this restored relevance of the government of the spokesperson and the FPIO was just a consequence of a special relationship or heralded a continuing trend (Ibid).

In conclusion, it can be argued that the appointment of the spokesperson who reports directly to the Chancellor is an indication that the German government understands the important role that communication plays in the political process; communication is a management function that coordinates and manages relationships and perceptions. However, the case study has demonstrated that government communication faces several challenges. One of them is that the appointing authority (Chancellors, Prime ministers, Presidents) greatly influences the performance of the spokesperson since they appoint spokespersons who are in support of their political ideologies. In cases where there is no confidence in the spokesperson, like in the case of Schröder, the chancellor may bypass and even disregard him or her.

The fact that Chancellors have such powers over the spokespersons is an indication of how politics influence the structures and practices of government communication. This case study has also demonstrated that the use of the FPIO funds allocated for government communication remains a major concern since in the past the funds have been mismanaged. It took the justice system to intervene to prevent governments from using such funds for their party-political interests.

Another challenge is that in a political system where coalition governments are the rule, government communication in Germany risks being the source of conflict among coalition parties, ministries, and ministers. For instance, there is a tendency whereby individual ministers or the chancellor eclipse the government spokesperson.
altogether, as they prefer to speak directly to the media and take on the work of fashioning their image into their own hands (Rosumek, 2007, p. 226). This is an illustration of the fact that because government communication operates in a political environment, its structures and practices are, to a great extent, influenced by the political systems and actors. For this reason, government communication structures, legal and regulatory contexts, training, and support should be professionalised to avoid or minimize political interference.

In her study, Sanders (2013) indicated that Britain has a dual government communication system that was developed due to the need for political neutrality and communication credibility as per government policy. The dual system is comprised of, on the one hand, political appointees as special advisers whose work leans more toward political aims, and on the other hand, civil service employees that serve whichever political party is in government (Ibid). The dual system means that the special advisers play the role of briefing the media and advising the ministers on communication issues based on political motives. The civil servants, on the other hand, are expected to serve governments of all political stripes by providing advice and analysis on how best to achieve government policy goals (Sanders, 2013).

Sanders (2013) found out that the general dual organization of government communication is found also at the central government level. According to the Cabinet Office report (2010), each ministerial department has a civil servant (Director of Communication) who leads a team charged with policy communication operations but also special advisers on communication matters from a party-political perspective. The civil servants belong to the Government Communication Network and are headed by a permanent secretary who is based at the Cabinet Office. They contract the
services of the Central Office of Information (COI) for all communication and marketing planning and procurement (Sanders et al. 2011).

Within the Cabinet Office (the central coordinating ministry), there are two government communication units: The Prime Minister’s Office and the Government Communication Group (United Kingdom Cabinet Office, 2010). The prime minister’s official spokesperson (PMOS), a civil servant, is one of three directors of the Prime Minister’s Office and is responsible for briefing the media on behalf of the prime minister and managing civil servants engaged in communication tasks (Sanders et al., 2011). The permanent secretary for government communication is head of the Government Communication Group and provides professional oversight and coordination of all government communication. The prime minister has a Director of communication appointed as a special adviser; he/she is responsible for strategic communication and media advisory (Ibid).

Government communication in Britain is guided by the Civil Service Code and the Property Guidance and Communication Act as legal and regulatory frameworks. The former governs the work of civil servants (United Kingdom Civil Service, 2009) and it is supplemented by the Propriety Guidance (United Kingdom Cabinet Office, 2010), which sets out the expected standards of behaviour for civil servants working to safeguard impartiality. Special advisers who are temporary civil servants are bound by the Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and the general provisions covering permanent civil servants. They represent Ministers’ views on government policy, with a degree of political commitment that is not possible with permanent civil service (Sanders et al., 2011).

The fact that government communication in Britain is guided by codes of conduct shows that the country has a framework on how communication professionals...
should behave, perform, and effectively communicate in government offices. Sanders (2013) opined that a code of conduct calls for professionals to act in the best interest of those they serve (citizens), and it also promotes best practices. The standards that they contain a call for effective communication that is underpinned by appropriate skills, competency, and practices that exhibit transparency and accountability. Holtz-Bacha (2013) agreed that adherence to a professional code is a key characteristic of the professionalisation and is also an indicator of civic communication that aims at achieving the public good (citizen engagement and democratic process).

Sanders et al. (2011) found out that the Property Guidance and Communications Act includes provisions regarding government information campaigns that seek to maintain their non-political aims. The Act stipulates that the Cabinet Office should have a Propriety and Ethics Team responsible for the interpretation of communication matters. Government communicators must also ensure that they conform to the principles of the Data Protection Act, deliver information as per the requirements, and be aware of the Freedom of Information Act.

The head of the Government Communication Network is responsible for establishing standards of excellence and training for the civil service corporations engaged in communication (Sanders, 2013). It is arguable therefore that in Britain, there is a strong appreciation of government communication, due to its complex nature, government communication requires both a civil service ethos and a political orientation even as it is professionalised. That is why they have both political appointees as advisers and politically-neutral civil servants; with both cadres adhering to well-laid policies for professional conduct. The existence of advisers who are political appointees supports the view that politicians in government prefer persuasive rather than public-service communication.
In their study, Maqeda and Makombe (2013) established that Government Communication Information Service (GCIS) which was established in 1998, is the central communications agency of the South African government. The mandate of GCIS is to mobilize the nation behind the National Development Plan (NDP) showcase progress and invite citizens to work together to address challenges for the achievement of Vision 2030 (South Africa Yearbook, 2015/2016). The GCIS is led by a chief executive officer (CEO), who serves as the government spokesperson and the chair of the GCIS executive committee (GCIS, 2002b).

Maqeda and Makombe (2013) noted that the CEO reports to the cabinet and he/she is responsible for developing and maintaining an integrated communication plan that promotes government. They also realised that the appointment to this critical position is based on political ties. The department ensures that the government’s vision and policies are clearly understood through coordination of the Internal Communicators’ Forum and dissemination of information. The GCIS also informs citizens about the government’s work and shows them how they can participate in governance (GCIS, 2002b); thereby offering deliberation platforms.

According to Maqeda and Makombe (2013), GCIS reaches the citizens through various platforms including publications, news media, radio, television, and imbizos. It also established partnerships with strategic stakeholders within the three spheres of government and the broader society. GCIS has three departments each headed by a Deputy Director (GCIS, 2002b). The first department is that of communication and content management that majorly deals with media relations; the second is for corporate services, and the third is stakeholder management.

The communication and content management department coordinates the formulation and execution of the National Communication Strategy including
researching to assess and advise the government on public communication needs. It monitors media coverage of government and trains government communicators; coordinates foreign visits in collaboration with the Directorate of Communication Service Agency (CSA) and the ministry of foreign affairs. The CSA is responsible for branding the government and developing its corporate identity (Public Service Communication, 2010). It is also in charge of bulk media buying on behalf of the government and the distribution of information products.

The corporate services department is responsible for the management of support services, such as project management to enhance performance in the delivery of GCIS’s mandate (GCIS, 2002b). It also coordinates and implements effective strategic planning and performance monitoring. The department of government and stakeholder engagement is tasked with providing leadership and strategic advice on the communication system. Also, it provides direction on the interface between the national government and the provincial communication programs (ibid).

The GCIS has offices in all the nine provinces in South Africa which it uses to disseminate communication to the public. For instance, it runs the Thusong Service Centre, introduced by the government in 1999, to provide general information about government services. The Thusong Service Centres provide information through direct information sessions, meetings, and awareness programs with citizens (United Kingdom Public Service Commission, 2010).

The discussion above shows that the nature and practice of government communication in South Africa strive to engage with the citizens, even though it seems to be influenced by political ties, where critical positions such as the CEO of GCIS have been given to political allies and not qualified professionals (Maqeda & Makombe, 2013). The structures of government communication are well defined,
with functions clearly outlined. Furthermore, the development of information centers and multipurpose community centers is an indication of the use of unmediated communication, which is open and direct, between government and its citizens. The structure implies that there is a focus on strengthening government communication.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is an actual idea that encompasses all the concepts, assumptions, expectations and beliefs that support and inform a study. It explains the key factors, concepts or variables under study; and the presumed relationship between them (Maxwell, 2005). Figure 2.1 shows this study’s conceptual framework based on the nature of government communication, reviewed literature, theoretical framework and data collected. This conceptual framework is based on reviewed literature, theoretical framework and data collected on government communication in Kenya.

This study analysed the strategic and political dimensions of government communication in Kenya. The key variables for this study included: Strategic dimension (working environment, resources, and course of actions in achieving strategic goals); political dimension (decision making, political environment, structures and policies that guide the political actions); Central national government communication (communication that takes place at PSCU, OGS and Ministry of ICT).

The study was guided by three research objectives: Determine the structures and processes of government communication; Investigate whether government communication is strategically managed; Examine the role of the political system on the operations of government communication; and Assess the extent to which government communication facilitates citizen participation. The theoretical framework was formed based on two theories; Excellence theory of PR and Theory
of Deliberative Democracy. The research objective and theoretical framework were used in developing the study propositions, as discussed in chapter three.

Discussion

In order to be effective, government communication should be structured and practiced strategically following the principles found in strategic PR. Strategic PR advocates for scanning of the environment, two-way communication, trained
professionals, effective communication channels, communication as a management role, and feedback as a strategic tool. This conceptual framework advocates for excellent departments that are structured on the two-way symmetrical model and public participation. This framework proposed for an institutionalized structure that integrates communication into a single department/agency for effective coordination.

Just like excellence theory, this conceptual framework advocates for departments that have clearly defined structures, defined roles, well equipped, and have empowered public relations executive who operates at a management level. It also proposes communication programs that are based on formative research, have concrete and measurable objectives, use varying techniques in their implementation, and are evaluated. Professionals should also have direct reporting lines to the top management and should perform strategic functions and not tactical roles.

Moreover, deliberative democracy theory advocates for a deliberative society in which ordinary citizens can participate in political discussion and debate (Bohman, 1998). Deliberation should be determined by the extent to which participants have access to accurate and relevant information, the extent to which participants assess the merits of the information presented; and equal consideration. Dahl (1998) argues that each citizen should have equal and effective opportunities for an enlightened understanding of government actions and policies. Citizens need opportunities to also express their views; engage in discussion and deliberation; and question experts, political candidates and persons whose judgments they trust; and learn in other ways that depend on freedom of expression (Dahl, 1998).

Government communication should, therefore, facilitate policy understanding to foster a high level of policy compliance and support. Government communication is an enabler in strengthening relationships between the citizen and government, it
empowers citizens to understand what the government is doing and why (Liu, Horsley & Yang, 2012). However, government communication operates in a political environment, and politics is at the core of defining its operations and functions. It is therefore important that communication is institutionalised, centralised, and professionalised. To do this, the government must build quality and long-term relationships with its citizens. Communication facilitates dialogue with the publics which in turn produces mutually-beneficial long-term relationships.

2.6 Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature that is pertinent to the study’s objectives. The theoretical framework section discussed literature on the excellence theory of public relations and deliberative democracy. The chapter also endeavoured to explain the application of both theories to the study of government communication. The chapter also brought about literature on studies that have been conducted on government communication from various countries including Germany, Britain, and South Africa. The study of these cases was fundamental in contextualizing the case of Kenya; therefore, they were placed under empirical literature. The chapter concluded with the conceptual framework that brings together the variables that guide this study. The next chapter outlines and discusses the research methodology that this study adopted.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research process that was used to conduct this study. The chapter begins by introducing pragmatism as the study’s preferred paradigm. The discussion of pragmatism is followed by the research design; thus, the case study research methodology and the embedded single-case design that the study used. The chapter then discusses the theoretical propositions that helped in the data analysis and discussion of findings, followed by a discussion of the research procedures and techniques, data collection methods and analysis, and ethical considerations. The overall aim of this chapter is to ensure the validity and reliability of data, and the soundness of the study’s findings.

3.2 Case Study as a Multiparadigm Methodology

In any study, a researcher has his/her view or assumptions regarding what constitutes truth and knowledge and how to arrive at them. These assumptions guide the researcher’s thinking and beliefs, frame their view of the world, and constitute what social scientists call a paradigm (Schwandt, 2001). This study was designed based on the pragmatism paradigm because the case study was a multi-dimensional or multi-paradigm design that allows for theorising before the study begins.

Merriam (2009) described pragmatic as that which ensures case study research is manageable, rigorous, credible, and applicable. For Merriam, pragmatic provides the philosophy through which significant research processes provide quality in data collection and analysis, in an organized and systematized chain of evidence. Pragmatic paradigm helps improve communication among researchers from different approaches (mixed) as they attempt to advance knowledge (Maxcy, 2003; Watson,
1990); and sheds light on how research approaches can be mixed fruitfully (Hoshmand, 2003). The pragmatic paradigm was used to offer immediate and useful middle position philosophically and methodologically. The paradigm guided the researcher in selecting the right research methods to answer the research questions.

Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) argued that the pragmatic paradigm is a “practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry that is based on action and leads iteratively to further actions and elimination of doubt” (p. 17). In this study, the pragmatic paradigm was used to offer an explicitly value-oriented approach that shows the importance of the units of analysis, value of each dimension, and desired outcome. While many methodologies are aligned with philosophical orientations, case studies “has a practical versatility in its agnostic approach whereby it is not assigned to a fixed ontological, epistemological or methodological position” (Rosenburg & Yates, 2007, p. 447). A case study focuses “on one case but takes account of the context and so encompasses many variables and qualities” (Johansson, 2002, p. 5). It is ‘explicative’ as opposed to ‘experimental’ (one unit of analysis and a few isolated variables) and “reductive” (many units of analysis and a few variables).

In terms of philosophical underpinnings, case study research can be oriented from a “realist or positivist perspective where the researcher holds the view that there is only one single reality that is independent of the individual and that can be apprehended, studied and measured, through to a relativist or inter-pretivist perspective” (Harrison, Birks, Franklin & Mills, 2017, p. 11). The relativist or interpretivist believes that there are multiple realities and meanings, depending on the researcher who co-creates them (Yin, 2018). There are two dominant case study approaches: the first one is located in the social constructivist paradigm that is mostly associated with Stake (1995) and Merriam (2009), and the second, is in the post-

In choosing a methodological orientation, Harrison et al. (2017) argued that a case study researcher should take careful consideration of the different approaches to determine the approach that best addresses the goal of the study, and that aligns with the researcher's worldview. This should be done to ensure that there is “coherence between the researcher's philosophical position, their research question, design, and methods to be used in the study” (p. 33). However, Yin (2014; 2018) approached a case study from a realist perspective and strives to maintain objectivity in his methodological design. Yin sought rival explanations and falsification of hypotheses, the possibility for replication with a multiple case study design, and theoretical generalisations (not statistical). He emphasized the importance of minimising levels of subjectivity and advocates for the use of multiple methods.

As a postpositivist, however, Yin (2018) acknowledged that all measures are imperfect and that there is a need for the researcher to use multiple methods with triangulation to minimize errors and get as close as possible to the “reality.” Yin, therefore recognised the descriptive and interpretive elements of the case study (Harrison et al., 2017). On the other hand, Merriam (1998, 2009) is categorised as a pragmatic constructivist whose work was based on the argument that reality is constructed inter-subjectively through meanings and understandings that are developed socially and experientially. Like Yin (2014; 2018), she believed that when dealing with abstract concepts and information that is plentiful, it is important for the researcher to utilise processes that help interpret, sort and manage information, and adapt findings to convey clarity and applicability to the results (Harrison et al., 2017).
Merriam (2009) viewed case study as a methodology that can use both qualitative and quantitative methods, though when working on qualitative case studies, methods aimed at generating inductive reasoning and interpretation rather than testing hypotheses take priority. Merriam advocated for the careful planning and management of the case study process and the use of pragmatic structures to ensure that it is manageable, rigorous, credible, and applicable (ibid.). For Merriam, the researcher should use processes such as descriptive, thematic, and content analysis and triangulation to ensure the quality of a study.

In Merriam’s (2009) approach, theoretical frameworks or research questions are drawn from the literature and used to guide the study. Merriam’s approach demonstrated how pluralistic strategies can guide pragmatic constructivist being a blend or synthesis of both the pragmatism and constructivism. Stake (2006) categorised case study from a qualitative approach with a constructivist and interpretivist orientation. Though he also advocated a disciplined approach and acknowledged that case study can use quantitative methods, his arguments are grounded on the need for the researcher to discover meaning and understand experiences in context.

The researcher plays a key role in producing this knowledge through the interpretation process. The interpretative role assumes that reality is multiple and subjective, thus knowledge generated from the research process is relative to the time and context of the study and the researcher is interactive and participates in the study (Harrison et al., 2017). For Stake (2009), the researcher’s interpretation, experiences, and cases are shaped by the situation and context. Stake further argued that for the researcher to understand the case “requires experiencing the activity of the case as it occurs in its context and its particular situation” (p. 2). In this approach, the researcher
endeavoured to capture her or his interpreted reality of the case, and study it within its situation, thereby enabling an examination of the integrated system in which the case presents itself. Whilst granting that multiple sources and triangulation can be used in data collection, Stake (2009) preferred interviews, and observations.

In Stake’s (2009) approach, the researcher and participants are partners in the discovery and generation of knowledge where both direct interpretations and categorical or thematic grouping of findings are used. This discussion brings out the blended nature of the paradigmatic approaches used by the three foremost case study researchers. It is for this reason that Brown (2008) concluded that "case study is supported by the pragmatic approach of Merriam, informed by the rigour of Yin and enriched by the creative interpretation of Stake” (p. 9).

3.3 Case Study as a Research Methodology

This study used a case study research methodology. There is sufficient literature that considers a case study research as a viable research methodology for certain studies (Crowe et. al, 2011; Darke, Sanks & Broadbent, 1998; Dul & Hak, 2008; Hyett, Kenny & Dicson-Swift, 2014; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Meyers, 2001; Mills, 2014; Pearson, Albon & Hubball, 2015; Wedawatta, 2011). The case study research has undergone substantial methodological development (Harrison, Birks, Franklin, & Mills, 2017). The result of this evolution is that the research approach has become pragmatic, flexible, and capable of providing a comprehensive in-depth understanding of a diverse range of issues or disciplines.

Yin (2018) provided a two-part definition, which focused “on the scope, process, and methodological characteristics of case study research, emphasizing the nature of inquiry as being empirical, and the importance of contextual factors in understanding the case under study” (p. 15). Stake (1995), on the other hand, is more
flexible in that, while concerned with rigor in the processes, he focuses more on what is studied (the case) rather than how it is studied (the method). For Stake, a case study is the research of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances (p. 15). This study adopted the definition given by Yin (2018), with modifications and extensions drawn from Merriam (2009). For this reason, it is useful to treat his definition and perspectives in a lot more detail.

Yin’s (2018) definition of case study describes it as “an empirical method that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident” (p. 15). Yin (2028) contended that the case study is unlike an experiment that “deliberately divorces a phenomenon from its context so that attention can be focused on only a few variables”. It is also different from historiography which deals “with the situation between phenomenon and context and usually focuses on noncontemporary events” (p. 15).

A case study copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many variables than data points, and as one result; benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide design, data collection and analysis, and as another result; relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulated fashion (Yin, 2018). The case study research comprises an all-encompassing model of inquiry with its logic of design, data collection techniques, and specific approaches to data analysis (Yin, 2018). For this reason, case studies are not limited to merely data collection tactic or even a design feature alone (Yin, 2008).

Subsequently, the researcher chose the case study methodology because it provided an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and
uniqueness of government communication in a real Kenyan context. Case study methodology allowed the researcher to assume that the reality about government communication is constructed inter-subjectively through meanings and understandings developed socially and experientially by the professionals in government communication offices. The case study provided a rich holistic description that illuminates one's understanding of the central national government communication in Kenya.

Further, the researcher chose a case study because it allowed the use of mixed research methods that made the study superior to mono-method studies. After all, data was corroborated from different approaches for greater confidence in the conclusion. The mixed-method approach allows the researcher to take the rich empirical data yielded, and apply both quantitative and qualitative methods to the data (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2004a). The qualitative data can be quantified or quantitative data can be qualified to extract meaning from the data sets that might otherwise be hidden. Therefore, the mixed-method provides opportunities for the meaningful questions to be posed, measured, analyzed, and interpreted (Kitchenman, 2010).

The researcher chose a mixed-method approach because the study involved the combination or integration of qualitative and quantitative methods in data collection and analysis. While, the researcher used open-ended questions without predetermined responses to collect qualitative data, quantitative data was used in closed-ended questions and responses data. Triangulating data sources, literature, research methods, and tools (documents, interviews, questionnaires), and data analysis was used as a means for seeking convergence. In the analysis, both data were integrated; where quantitative data was analysed and presented, and then the researcher built on
the results to explain them in more detail with qualitative data. The quantitative data results were explained further with the qualitative data.

3.4 Research Design

The essential part of a case study design is theory development. Yin (2018) argued that case studies are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes. This is because the case study does not represent a "sample" or compute frequencies (statistical generalisation) but expand and generalise theories (analytic generalisation). One approach that Yin (2018) proposed for the development of theory is the use of illustrative types of theories to overcome the barriers to theory development, the researcher prepares for the case study by reviewing literature pertinent to the study (Yin 2018). This study used the approach of reviewing literature as conducted in Chapter Two.

In the case study design, the commonly recognised way of generalizing is doing “statistical generalization, where an inference is made about a population based on empirical data collected about a sample” (Yin 2018, p. 32). However, Yin warned generalising the results based on statistical generalisation because cases are not ‘sampling units’ that can be generalised. The appropriate mode of generalisation is where a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the theory. The case design is, therefore, about the phenomenon under study so as to help operationalise and make them more explicit.

According to Yin (2018), there are four types of case study designs: Single-case (holistic) design; single-case (embedded) design; multiple-case (holistic) design; and multiple-case (embedded) designs. This study used a single-case (embedded)
design, meaning that there was only one case but multiple units of analysis. The case in this study was the current situation of the central national government communication in Kenya, and how it works and functions at the time of the study. Embedded unit of analysis is when there are subunit/s within a case. In this study, the embedded units of analysis were: PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT.

While the focus was on the current situation of the central national government communication in Kenya (after the 2017 general election), reference was also made to the central national government communication in Kenya between 2013-2017 under President Uhuru Kenyatta’s first regime in power. The study critically analysed the central national government communication in Kenya from strategic and political dimensions. The contextual factors for this case study comprised of the structures and processes of government communication, strategic dimensions, the existing political system, and citizen participation.

The focus of this study was on the Executive (Central national government), which comprises of the Presidency and Cabinet Office. The central national government communication revolves around three agencies: PSCU, OGS, and, Ministry of ICT (State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication). The study focused on the top leadership at the three communication agencies. It also included all the public communication officers working under the Ministries, Departments, and Government Agencies.

In a study, such as this one, bounding the case was difficult as there were various variables intersect and overlap in the case study. In order to effectively identify the focus and refine the bounding system, the researcher developed three theoretical propositions embedded in the theoretical framework, as presented in Chapter Two. Bounding the case was essential because it helped in focusing, framing,
and managing data collection and analysis. This involved being selective and specific in identifying the parameters of the case including the participants, location, and/or process to be explored, and establishing the timeframe for investigating the case (Merriam, 2009; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2014). In the case of studies, Yin (2018) suggested that it is important for the researcher to state some propositions to move in the right direction. Yin argued that even when propositions are not stated, it is still important for the purpose to be stated for evaluative studies and criteria developed to guide the research. The researcher can develop propositions in the course of developing a theory to guide the study. The process of theory development before the conduct of any data collection is one point of difference between case studies and related methods such as ethnography and grounded theory (Yin, 2018).

Typically, these related methods avoid specifying any theoretical propositions at the outset of an inquiry. For case studies, theory development is essential, whether the purpose is to develop or test theory (Yin 2018). When it is informed by theory, the design will provide strong guidance in determining what data to collect and strategies for analysing data (Yin 2018).

3.5 Theoretical Propositions

As discussed in the theoretical framework, this study proposes that ‘to be effective, the government communication should be managed and practiced strategically following principles found in strategic public relations. Communication in the public sector, where government communication belongs, is more complex as it is affected by and should respond to a variety of political actors and influences.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on two theories that underpin the importance of the strategic and political dimensions of central national government communication. The two theories were; Excellence theory of PR and the
theory of Deliberative Democracy. This study was underpinned by three broad theoretical propositions. The first proposition was to be effective, government communication should be structured and processed strategically following the principles found in strategic public relations. This proposition was informed by the theoretical underpinnings in excellence theory that advocates for excellent departments structured on the two-way symmetrical model and public participation (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). Excellent departments should have clearly defined structures, roles, be well equipped, and have empowered public relations executives who operate at a management level (Grunig et al., 2002).

Communication programs should be based on formative research, have concrete and measurable objectives, use varying techniques in their implementation, and be evaluated formally (Grunig, 1992). The communication programs must be coordinated with clear messages that inform, influence, or persuade the publics in support of the organisational goal (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). The theory proposed for senior PR executives to be members of the dominant coalition and/or have a direct reporting relationship with the head of government. Further, excellence theory advocated for the organisation to institutionalise communication, such that communication is integrated into a single department or agency that provides a mechanism for coordinating all programs managed by the different departments.

The second proposition was that government communication should be institutionalised, centralised, and professionalised. The proposition was premised on the argument that government communication operates in a political environment and politics is at the core of defining its structures and operations. The study proposition was based on the theoretical underpinnings of deliberative democracy theory that advocated for a deliberative society in which ordinary citizens can participate in
political discussion and debate (Bohman, 1998). The theory assumed that deliberation forms the core of legitimate decision making and self-government (Bohman, 1998).

The theory further presupposed that deliberation should be determined by the extent to which participants have access to accurate and relevant information, the extent to which participants honestly assess the merits of the information presented, and equal consideration (Fiskin 2009a). Deliberative democracy theory presumed that deliberation increases the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Benhabib 1996). The government should provide channels and environments through which citizens can deliberate and interact; because government communication is a key factor in how the government plays its role of informing citizens, setting the agenda, and defining the public discourse (Dahlberg, 2007).

The third proposition was that government communication effectiveness occurs when an organisation achieves goals in consultation with its stakeholders. The proposition is based on the theoretical underpinnings in excellence theory that advocated for public relations as a tool used to make the organisation more effective, help build quality and long-term relationships with strategic constituencies (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). The theory is founded on the premise that communication facilitates dialogue with the publics which in turn produces mutually-beneficial long-term relationships (Grunig & Huang, 2000). The patterns of interaction, exchange, and linkages between an organisation and its publics define the organization–public relationships (Broom et al., 2000). Research informs organisations on how to communicate and interact with the publics, it facilitates dialogue and produces mutually beneficial long-term relationships (Grunig & Huang, 2000).
3.6 Population

A population entails all items in a field of research. The population is the total element upon which a researcher wishes to make inferences (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). It is the entire group of people, events, or things of common observable characteristics that differentiate it from other populations that are under investigation. It is the group that a researcher is interested in answering a question about (Sekaran & Bougie, 2011). The population must be carefully chosen and defined for the best results. For this study, the population was all the 54 staff members at PSCU, the six staff members at OGS, the 235 public communication officers (PCOs), and information officers at the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication under the Ministry of ICT as shown in Table 3.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.1: Study Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSCU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of ICT (2018)

3.7 Target Population

The target population refers to the population from which the study sample is drawn (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). It is a well-defined collection of individuals with similar characteristics within a larger population (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population is determined using selection criteria to select individuals of the general population who can, at best, share experiences and thoughts under the most convenient conditions (Asiamah, Mensah, & Abayie, 2017). Unlike the general population which is crude, the target population is refined to include members from the general population who are targeted for the study (Asiamah, Mensah, & Abayie, 2017). The target population for this study was the top managers at PSCU, the top...
managers at OGS, the Head of units, and all the PCOs under the state department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication.

Table 3. 2: Target Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PSCU</th>
<th>OGS</th>
<th>Head of Units</th>
<th>PCOs at MDAs</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of staff</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ministry of ICT (2018)

3.8 Sample size and Sampling Procedure

A sample is a subset or portion of the population under the study rather than the whole population is economical both in terms of money and time (Stringer, 2008). The general rule in research is to use the largest sample to represent and generalize the whole population (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). Researchers are encouraged to use the largest possible sample size to reduce sampling error.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting all government communication professionals in the three communication units. Purposive sampling is the selection of subjects or elements that have specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria (Wimmer & Dominick, 2004). In purposive sampling, subjects are hand-picked by the researcher because they are informative and they possess the required characteristics for the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In selecting the sample size for the OGS and PSCU, the researcher purposively sampled the two top managers in both units.

A census was conducted with all the 13 Heads of units at the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication, and will all the 75 PCOs posted at the MDAs. The respondents were selected for this study because they hold relevant positions in determining the structures and processes of the central national government communication in Kenya. Since government operates in different buildings and offices, some of these offices were unknown to the researcher or could
not be located or accessed without an appointment or security card, therefore, sought assistance from relevant authorities and colleagues.

In this study, the researcher recruited other respondents (Head of the units) through their acquaintances. After interviewing the first few respondents, the researcher requested the respondent to refer her to another head of the unit in the same unit. The researcher was aware of the Ministry of ICT, DIS and PSCU office location, but was not aware of the OGS, DPC, GAA, and PCOs office locations.

Government communication system is not well spelt out, the offices are scattered across MDAs, the professionals are located in different offices and buildings, and there is no central division to provide the necessary information. The researcher had to use the initial respondents (first interactions) to access the rest of the respondents and trace the location of all the required offices/buildings. This provided the opportunity for the researcher to access and communicate better with the respondents, as they were acquaintances of the first sample. The method was efficient and cost-effective to access respondents who would otherwise be very difficult to find.

The 75 PCOs under the MDAs were purposively selected because they manage communication at the ministries. The researcher accessed the PCOs through the Directorate of Public communication, who wrote to the PCOs introducing the researcher and the purpose of the study. The DPC also provided a list of the PCOs and locations of their offices. In order to access the sample frame at the PSCU, the researcher utilised the existence of Government information and public communication taskforce that was formed to review the policies and laws, structures, and practice government communication.

The researcher was granted permission to the oral submission by the chair of the Taskforce, after their submissions, the researcher used the opportunity to
introduce herself, and sought an appointment with the respondents. The sampling techniques applied by the researcher were to ensure that all the government communicators from different categories and agencies under the central national government had an equal chance of being included in the study. This was important as it ensured that the selected sample was a true representation of the study population.

3.9 Reliability and Validity of the Research Instruments

In order to determine the quality of the case design, the researcher increased construct validity by using multiple sources of evidence through triangulation of data; and triangulation of perspectives to the same data set (theory triangulation). Construct validity establishes the correct operational measures for the concepts being studied (Kidder & Todd, 1986). The internal validity was realized using pattern-matching logic, where there was a comparison between an empirically based pattern with a predicted one. If the patterns coincide, the results helped the case study to strengthen its internal validity. The external validity was concerned with generalization, where the study used its findings to generalize to theory on government communication by focusing on the strategic and political dimensions of the central national government.

Reliability was also ensured through the use of a case study protocol and the development of a database. A case study protocol ensured that data is collected and analysed systematically. The researcher maintained an inquiring mind during data collection to rich dialogue with the evidence. The researcher used the methodological and theoretical insights developed in chapter two to make analytic judgments. The researcher interpreted the information as it was being collected and noted the contradicting sources and information for further evidence. The researcher also used a case study protocol that provided an overview of the case study, the procedures and methods in collecting data, and the substantive questions reflecting the study’s line of
inquiry. The researcher ensured that data collected led to conclusions about the unit of analysis. All these were done to minimise the errors and biases.

3.10 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection is the gathering of information to address the questions being asked in the study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In data collection there are two major approaches to help gather information, they include primary data and secondary data (Kumar, 2011). Information that is collected firsthand from the sources is what is referred to as primary data. Secondary data is the information that was collected by someone else, but the researcher uses it for purposes of the research. The research uses data collection instruments to collect data. They are tools that the researcher uses to collect data (Kothari, 2008). In this study, data was collected using semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and questionnaires.

3.10.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews can be regarded as guided conversations rather than structured queries between the interviewer and interviewee (Yin, 2018). Although the researcher, as the interviewer, pursues a consistent line of inquiry, the actual stream of questions should be more flexible (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). For this study, the researcher endeavoured to ask questions in an open-ended manner while maintaining the study’s line of inquiry. Though conversational, the interviews followed a sequence of questions derived from the case study protocol. The questions allowed the respondent a fresh commentary or insight about the study as noted by Yin (2018). The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to refocus the questions or prompt for more information, especially when something interesting or novel emerged (Baškarada, 2011). The researcher audio-recorded the interviews since it was
difficult to record all details through taking notes. The recorded interviews were then transcribed using software called Otter before the data was analysed.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with the top management at the three government communication agencies: PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT. In total, the researcher conducted 20 interviews: two at PSCU, two at the OGS, two at PSC, 13 at the Ministry of ICT, and one at NGCC. The researcher proposed to conduct 16 interviews, however, due to the on-going structural changes, there were new posts created at the ministry of ICT and PSCU, making a total of 20 interviews.

3.10.2 Document Analysis

The second data collection instrument was a document analysis. The study used documents as a source of data or evidence. Lunenburg and Irby (2008) defined document analysis as a technique that is concerned with the analysis of documents for significance, meaning, and relevance within a context. In this study, the documents were used because they constituted a rich source of information about central national government communication in Kenya. Also, as an organisation, the government produces large amounts of records, whether public or digital (Patton, 2015). Documents provided details that were used to corroborate data collected from questionnaires or interviews.

Yin (2018) argued that documents can be used to make inferences that could lead to new questions and/or insights about the subject of study. They are useful in understanding a situation and setting the context. In this study, the documents analysed included: executive orders, booklets, press statements, policy papers, reports, newspaper articles, and websites. In total, the researcher collected 25 documents including three booklets, three press releases, four websites, five reports, five Executive orders, and five newspaper articles.
In analysing documents, the researcher adopted Altheide’s “Process of Document Analysis’ (1996), which includes the following steps: Setting inclusion criteria for documents; collecting documents; articulating key areas of analysis; document coding; verification; and, analysis. In selecting documents for the analysis, the researcher considered the three central national communication units, type of document to be reviewed, source of the document, the objective of the report, main issues raised, and conflicting or similar information with other sources.

The researcher collected the documents from the interviewees, websites of the three communication agencies (PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT), and newspaper articles from the two main Newspaper Dailies (Standard and Nation newspaper). The documents were reviewed and systematically coded, based on the analysis of the text and meaning, relevance and context, and for each theme, the document was assessed as “good (clear, consistent references to policy or process, and sufficient information for the researcher to judge the credibility), limited (brief reference, little contextual information), none (No information attributable to building a theme).”

Based on three themes (PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT), text relevant to the study was then thematically analysed to determine the trends and changes within the three communication agencies. Each document was analysed to determine the extent to which the content described the historical background, structures, and processes of the three agencies. To ensure the consistency and reliability of the documents, the analysis of every document was verified by a research assistant. Data was then triangulated with data collected from the interviews, for analysis and interpretation.

The researcher was careful, however, not to assume that all kinds of documents contain the unmitigated truth. There was note of the fact that every document was written with a particular purpose and to a specific audience other than
the respondents for this study. The researcher was, therefore, a vicarious observer who deciphered the importance of the study of document content which had been written for a different audience to achieve some other objectives (p. 87). The research endeavor to seek for official documents from the interviewee, stamped/signed documents, and official sources/websites.

3.10.3 Questionnaires

The third data collection instrument was questionnaires. Cooper and Schindler (2011) defined a questionnaire as a technique of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. Questionnaires are time-saving as the researcher does not require to interact with each respondent to collect the data. Kothari (2008) argued that questionnaires are ideal to gather descriptive information from a large sample within a fairly short time.

A questionnaire provides time for the respondents to think about the responses and are also easy to administer and score (Kothari, 2011). The researcher is also able to gather data over a large sample and it is administered to selected individuals (Kombo & Tromp, 2014), and the data from the source. This allows examining the correlation among the respondents’ responses (McBurner, 2001). A good questionnaire must have both open and closed-ended questions.

A total of 75 questionnaires were purposively distributed to all the PCOs at the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). The researcher used the questionnaire as a tool for this study because of various reasons. One is that the information provided was free from the researcher’s bias thus making the information credible. The other reason is that the respondents have more time to give well thought out information or answers. The questions were specifically formulated to answer questions about the strategic and political dimensions of government communication.
3.11 Data Analysis Plan

Data analysis is the interpretation of the evidence obtained in a study to generate findings. According to Yin (2018), data analysis consists of examining, categorising, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining evidence to address the initial propositions of a study. It can, therefore, be regarded as the most crucial part of any research. In analyzing data, the researcher cleaned and summarized the qualitative data before thematically analyzing it. While data from the interviews was transcribed using Otter, cleaned, and summarized; data collected through document analysis was cleaned and merged with the interview data. The questionnaires were numbered, cleaned and data entry was done in SPSS version 23.0.

The qualitative data was interpreted using analytical and logical reasoning to determine patterns and relationships, which were used to form sub-themes and themes. The quantitative data collected was analysed in SPSS as per the questions in the tool, data was then presented in the form of tables, figures, and charts. Data was then compared based on patterns related to the “how’s” and “why’s” of the study, guided by the theoretical propositions. Out of pattern matching, the causal sequences were developed in the form of narrative, tables, and figures that gave explanations.

Yin (2018) noted that of a higher priority in data analysis, is the need for an analytic strategy that helps the researcher to treat the evidence fairly, produce compelling analytic conclusions, and rule out alternative interpretations. The strategy should help the researcher to use the chosen tools and make manipulations more effectively and efficiently. As recommended by Yin (2018), this study relied on the theoretical propositions that were designed to address the study research questions.

To provide a theoretical basis for analysis, pertinent literature was reviewed in Chapter Two, with three theoretical propositions resulting from the theoretical
framework that were articulated earlier in this chapter under “Theoretical Framework and Propositions” section. These propositions shaped the study’s data collection and analysis plans since they articulate clearly the type of data that needs to be collected and suggest how they will be analysed. The theoretical propositions spell out the causal relations (the answers to "how" and "why") that were useful in data analysis.

3.12 Ethical Considerations

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006), it is important to do that which is right and acceptable while conducting a research study; failure to which the process may affect the respondents adversely, and at no point in the research should the subjects’ human rights be violated. The purpose of conducting research is to collect relevant data in the most ethical manner. The researcher took into consideration issues of harm, consent, deception, privacy, and confidentiality. Therefore, the researcher took various research ethical measures as explained here in after.

The researcher sought clearance from Daystar University’s Ethics and Review Board (ERB), which ensured full ethical compliance and checked every loophole which could compromise research ethics. The researcher further obtained a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), which is the Kenya government’s research regulatory body. Copies of the letter from Daystar University’s ERB and the research permit from NACOSTI, together with the introductory letter from Daystar University, were sent out in advance to the various study sites before the data collection process began.

Permission from the specific study site offices and respondents was sought before the start of the data collection process. Full disclosure of the intended purposes of the research was provided, and in cases where there was a need to record interviews. The anonymity of respondents was guaranteed following the professional,
legal, and ethical considerations required in research. The respondents were not exposed to any risks or harm and their safety and dignity was upheld.

Furthermore, data received from all the respondents were treated with confidentiality and only used for academics. The researcher stated clearly the purpose of the research in the informed consent form that respondents completed, to volunteer to participate in the research, including, the right to withdraw at any point during the research. The respondents were informed in advance that they were not to receive any stipend or benefits for participating in the study.

3.13 Summary

This chapter explained the research process that was used to conduct the study. The chapter began by discussing pragmatism as the study’s preferred paradigm. The discussion of paradigms was followed by the research design; the embedded single-case. The chapter then discussed the theoretical propositions that helped in the data collection and analysis. Next, the chapter discussed the research procedures and techniques that were used, including population and sampling, research tools, data collection and analysis, and ethical considerations. The next chapter presents the “case” description of the study, using data collected from document analysis.
CHAPTER FOUR

“THE CASE” AND ITS CONTEXT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from document analysis and thematically analysed. In responding to the first research question on the structures and processes of central national government communication in Kenya, the chapter analysis data on the historical and contextual background of the three communication agencies: PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT. The researcher collected a total of 25 documents including three booklets, three Press releases, four websites, five reports, five Executive orders, and five newspaper articles. Using Altheide’s (1996) “Process of document analysis, the researcher followed the following steps; set inclusion criteria for documents, collected the documents, identified the articulated key areas, coded the documents, and verified and thematically analysed. Using the thematic deductive approach, data was analysed into three main themes: PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT. Each document was analysed to determine the extent to which the content described the historical background, structures, and processes of the three communication agencies (PSCU, OGS and Ministry of ICT).

4.2 Presidential Strategic Communication Unit (PSCU)

This is the communication unit that serves the Presidency, including; the Executive Office of the President and Office of the First Lady (EOP, 2013). It was established in 2013 when President Uhuru Kenyatta came into power and announced his intent to overhaul how the government communicates and interacts with citizens (EOP, 2013). The current President not only introduced a new structure, but he also established a new unit called the Presidential Strategic Communication Unit (PSCU) that replaced the Presidential Press Service (PPS).
The PSCU is charged with providing media coverage for The Presidency and First Lady; research on policy, digitalisation, and branding of Statehouse events and functions (EOP, 2013). In a major departure from tradition, the new communication unit was to be headed and managed by a Secretary of Communications. Apart from being the Secretary of Communication and Head of PSCU, he also doubled up as Statehouse Spokesperson (EOP, 2013). The first head of the communication unit was Manoah Esipisu, who was a former journalist at Standard Media Group and Reuters. Manoah Esipisu also worked as a Spokesperson and Deputy Director of communication and public affairs at The Commonwealth. Until his appointment in 2013, Manoah Esipisu was the special assistant to the President of the African Development Bank (www.mobiletwitter/mesipisu).

In a press statement, the President also appointed five other Directors to the PSCU. The five Directors were; Mr. Dennis Itumbi (Director - Digital, New media and Diaspora), Munyori Buku (Director – External Communication and Media), Edward Irungu, formerly of PPS (Director - Press and Presidential Newsroom), Eric Ng’eno (Director - Messaging, Speechwriting, and Research), and James Kinyua, formerly of PPS (Director – Events and Branding) (www.president.go.ke). The PSCU later recruited other communication professionals into the team. The unit was comprised of speechwriters, digital media experts, data specialists, researchers, reporters, branding experts, media experts, photographers, videographers, and professional writers.
Despite having a vibrant and diverse team of professionals, wrangles and conflicts within the new unit made it almost impossible to deliver their mandate, especially in the first term of President Uhuru Kenyatta. According to Owalla (2018), the team appeared to be sabotaging the Presidency’s image. Their messages and media appearances constantly contradicted the president’s vision. The team made a lot of mistakes that made State House look disorganized. A case in point is the September 2013 confusion about the official account used by the president and statehouse. There were several Twitter accounts such as @PSCUDigital, @PSCUDiaspora, @NexusKE, @PresidentKE, all of which sent various messages contradicting the President’s brand. The accounts were packaged as the official presidential accounts (https://twitter.com/PSCU; https://twitter.com/PresidentKE).
In another controversial exchange between the PSCU and the New York Times (NYT), the newspaper published a story titled, “The Prosecutor and the President.” The June 22nd, 2016 article, dwelt on the 2007 elections and its aftermath (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/26/magazine/international-criminal-court-moreno-ocampo-the-prosecutor-and-the-president.html). In the article, the reporter pointed out that the murderous Mungiki group had openly supported Uhuru Kenyatta’s 2002 election. The reporter alleged that Uhuru Kenyatta was a reluctant politician who believed the presidency was his birthright, and that he was twice groomed for the seat (Verini, 2016). In a press statement, PSCU (2016) responded to Verini’s article claiming that the New York Times (NYT) continues its steady descent into the murky, rancid morass of the gutter press and has abandoned all pretense of journalistic decency. In response, the NYT said that throughout the process, President Kenyatta’s representatives were informed of the subject of the article and did not at any point address it (Verini, 2016).

In 2018, another crisis over the PSCU social media accounts emerged. The Chief of Staff had to streamline communication in government by discontinuing several social media accounts. The Chief of Staff discontinued @PresidentKE and @PSCU_Digitalunit as official accounts and directed that official accounts would be @StateHouseKenya, @UKenyatta, @FirstLadyKenya, and @KanzeDena. The Chief of Staff said, “All official communication originating from the PSCU will strictly be communicated through @StateHouseKenya, @UKenyatta, @FirstLadyKenya”.

Further, the Chief of Staff also appointed new executives into the office of PSCU (www.president.go.ke).

In his second term, the President appointed Miss Kanze Dena as the Deputy State House Spokesperson and Deputy Head of PSCU. Later in June 2018, the Chief
of Staff at EOP, Nzioka Waita, confirmed Kanze Dena as the Statehouse spokesperson and Head of PSCU in the acting capacity (www.president.go.ke). Miss Kanze Dena is a former News Anchor with Royal Media Services. She would deputise Manoah Isipisu in providing leadership for the communications unit including digital, messaging, research, branding, and press. Dena would assist in building the President's branding, media relations, and messaging in delivering the Big Four agenda. The President had also approved the formation of the Library, Museum, and Exhibition Centre within PSCU. The division would focus on the legacies of the former Presidents. It would be headed by Munira Mohammed. The Press statement read, “The Secretary of Communication reports directly to the President, and whenever there is a need, She consults the chief of staff and other Heads of Sections at the Executive Office of the President” (http://www.president.go.ke/2018/06/05/announcing-new-appointments-to-the-pscu/).

Currently, the head of PSCU (Secretary of communication) works with five Directors (EOP, 2013). The five Directors head different sections, which include; Speech Writing and Public Relation; Research; Messaging and Press relations; Production; and Library Services. The PSCU is comprised of Reporters, videographers, photographers, editors, producers, researchers, speechwriters, and public relations practitioners. In total, the PSCU unit is made up of 70 staff members drawn from different professions.

The above findings on the formation and restructuring of the PSCU are an indication of the goodwill from the President who came into power on the promise to run a disciplined integrated communications that would deploy multiple fronts, combined of strategic and tactical communication, including social media to push key messages successfully. The formation and re-structuring of the PSCU was an
indication of a government that is aware of the changing dynamics in communication but does not have the capacity and know-how of government communication. By restructuring and increasing the capacity of the PSCU unit; embracing the multiple channels of communication, including social media platforms that allowed messages to directly get to citizens; and it was a sign of a government committed to its citizens. It was a new era, at the same time a new challenge for government communication.

Further, these findings imply that PSCU was an experiment on the devolution and decentralization of government communication in Kenya. The unit which is domiciled at Statehouse was formed as a single communication engine room to drive all messaging using a top-bottom approach. Additionally, it sought to centralize all government communication functions and institutions. The findings also imply that there was a need to maintain one source and tighten the leash on all communication, such that government communication was infused into Presidential communication.

However, the structures failed to align these changes with the pre-existing government communication units, such as; OGS and the Ministry of ICT. As a result, there is disjointed messaging, poor coordination between Presidential and Government communication, and government speaking from contradicting voices. The formation and re-structuring at the PSCU also brought the challenges of contextualising content to various audiences, moving beyond just pushing messages, and creating a real-time credible feedback system. The PSCU unit grapples with mastery of communication abilities to develop coherent and consistent messaging that drives government agenda. It fails to differentiate government communication as a campaign and governance tool; hence equating it for political communication.
4.3 Office of the Government Spokesperson (OGS)

According to government spokesperson website, the Office of Government Spokesperson (OGS) and Public Communications Secretary was established in 2004 by the former President, His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki (http://www.communicaton.go.ke/). The position was considered one of the most powerful in government, as it operated from the Office of the President. Its main function was to transmit information from the government to the public and handle media relations on behalf of the government (Kimonye, 2009). The first officeholder of the OGS and Public Communications Secretary was His Excellency Hon. Alfred Mutua, who resigned to join politics after eight years of service. He was a former journalist and film producer. The second office holder was Kariuki Muthui, who had served as a media and communication advisor, seasoned communication expert, and a public relations professional (Ombati, 2012).

In August 2013, when President Kenyatta came into power, the Office of the OGS and Public Communications Secretary was shut down. In a press statement from the EOP (2013), the President stated that the decision was informed by the need to ensure coherence, clarity, and consistency in government communication. The statement further read, “The office of the Public Communication Secretary and Government Spokesperson does not fit within the new structure of President Kenyatta’s administration and has consequently been shut down.” (www.president.go.ke). However, in 2016, the President re-established the office, but this time it was renamed National Government Spokesperson.

In a press statement, the Chief of Staff at the EOP stated that, “The re-establishment of the Spokesperson office was informed by the need to ensure timely,
strategic and coordinated communication on all matters relating to the National Government agenda.” (www.president.go.ke). The President appointed Eric Kiraithe, as the third office holder as the OGS and Public Communications Secretary, which was renamed as the Office of the National Government Spokesperson. Eric Kiraithe is a civil servant, with a background in security and policing. The office was domiciled at the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000071529/n-a).

In May 2019, the office was moved to the Ministry of ICT, under the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication. In a press statement, the Cabinet Secretary (CS) at the Ministry of ICT announced the move and Colonel (RTD) Cyrus Odhiambo Oguna was appointed as the fourth office holder (https://ict.go.ke/government-reorganisation). The CS indicated that;

In line with directions from EOP through The Head of Public Service, the office of the Government Spokesperson will be domiciled at the Ministry of ICT. The officeholder will play an oversight role over Directorate of Information, Department of Public communication, NGCC, and the Government Media center. Besides, the officeholder would have a content oversight role over the KNA and MyGov.

Currently, the OGS has a total of six staff members, including the communication officers seconded from the DPC. The six staff members assist in coordinating and collecting information from MDAs, organise press briefings, and, disseminate the content and control messaging. Figure 4.2 shows the current organization structure and formation of the OGS.
The above findings on the re-structuring at the OGS are an indication that the government communication in Kenya is still on transition, yet to identify the best practices and structures that best suit the system. The new structure has provided a less restrained communication protocol that streamlines the flow of information; implying that the government has absolute control of all the content and messaging. The findings also imply that not only does the government have a systematic formula for collection and dissemination of information, but it also communicates in a coordinated manner and speaking in one voice. Hence, the new structure provides an opportunity for accountability and transparency to government communication.

These findings also show that the OGS is under-staffed, this can impede its ability to strategically perform. The unit should be adequately staffed with various specialists in strategic communication including researchers, strategists, publicists, journalists, digital media creators, and PR practitioners. The Government spokesperson acts as the contact person with the media, whose role specifically is to communicate with the press on behalf of the government. Therefore, having a
spokesperson positions at the MDAs and Counties is important in realising the full potential of the office of government spokesperson in Kenya.

The spokesperson holds bi-weekly press briefings, therefore, there is a need for a trained media relations spokesperson, with communication or journalistic background. Though the findings indicate that the position of a government spokesperson is a political appointment, whose background does not necessarily have to be in communication or be a civil servant, the current spokesperson has a communication qualification and a civil servant with a military background. Further, the above findings imply that there should be a communication strategy that synchronises OGS with strategies within the MDAs to generate an overarching strategy that brings together all government communication units. This requires a coordinated, goodwill, and strategic approach to government communication.

4.4 Ministry of Information, Communication, and Telecommunication

The Ministry of Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT) was created through Executive Order No. 2 of 2013. The Ministry is tasked with providing ICTs, broadcasting, language management policies, and public communication (EOP, 2013). The creation of the ministry of ICT was a commitment to creating and enabling environment for the public to access information as provided for in Chapter 35 (1) (a) of the 2010 Constitution (GoK, 2013).

The Strategic Plan 2013/2017 of the Ministry of ICT also states that ICT is a critical tool for expanding human skills and rests largely on a system of producing, distributing and utilising information and knowledge, that in turn plays a great role in driving productivity and economic prosperity (Ministry of ICT, 2013). It is the critical role that ICT plays that led to the creation of two state departments, namely: State
Department for Broadcasting and Telecommunications, and State Department for ICT and Innovation (EOP, 2016).

On one hand, the former was charged with the responsibility of developing national communication capacity and infrastructure, policy on automation of government services, promotion of software development, and e-Government. On the other hand, the latter was charged with gathering, producing, and dissemination of news and information through radio and television, training of mass media personnel, information marketing, advertising, and image building. Through press accreditation, it also regulates the activities of journalists to ensure the upholding of media professionalism and ethics (EOP, 2016).

This study focused on the state department of Broadcasting and Telecommunications, which is comprised of: Directorate of Information Services (DIS), Directorate of Public Communications (DPC), and Government Advertising Agency (GAA) (Ministry of ICT, 2013). The DIS is responsible for the: Interpretation and implementation of policies and strategies; conduct research and provision of appropriate strategies; cover government development projects and activities; disseminate information, and coordinate all information services.
The DPC manages public communication; brands promotes and maintains a positive image of government; research public opinion; provides appropriate interventions and strategies, engages citizen, prepares media reviews, and press statements. The GAA was formed to consolidate the processing, authorization, and publishing of public sector advertisements on behalf of public procurement entities. It centralized government advertising activities.

4.4.1 Department of Information Services (DIS)

The history of DIS can be traced back to 1940 during the Second World War when the colonial government created the Kenyan Information Services mainly to keep the public within the colony informed of the progress of the war (Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services, 1985). Back then, the office was divided into two sections: The Headquarters (Dissemination of Information), and the Field Section (Publication and Broadcasting). At the time, the department was mandated to oversee: broadcasting policy; broadcasting advisory board; film licensing.
and censorship; manage film projects, publications, and photographic services; offer administration and control over KNA and Press Office, Kenya Government Public Relations, and Voice of Kenya (Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services, 1985).

Today, DIS is structured into three distinct sections: Broadcasting and Press Office, Mobile cinemas, Film, and Photography. The department is charged with providing government departments with materials for carrying out specific policies and campaigns such as vaccination or dissemination of anti-subversive propaganda (Maina, 2000). The Ministry of ICT's Strategic Plan 2013-2017 indicates that the department has five distinct subunits, including Kenya News Agency (KNA), Rural Press, Central Media Services, Photographic Services, and Press Centre. Since the government believed that information management would facilitate socio-economic development, KNA was established out of the need to collect and disseminate information (Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services, 1985).

KNA was used as a medium to promote a sense of belonging and help form a common ideology. It acted as a national news agency disseminating government information to shape public opinion for development and cohesion since 1963 (Maina, 2000). KNA has 72 offices across the country, the offices are used as centers for providing news and information in multiple formats to government agencies, public and paid subscribers (http://www.kenyanews.go.ke). The above finding is an indication that KNA was not established under an Act of Parliament, this has led to structural challenges, making difficult to draw a demarcation between DIS and KNA. The agency does not operate like any other news agency in the world because it has an Editor-in-chief but operates as a sub-unit under DIS. The findings also imply that the DIS is the oldest existing communication unit within government.
The second sub-unit, Rural Press, was established in 1974 to disseminate information through the print media to the rural population in a language that they could understand (Gadsden, 1986). The Rural Press published in local news in local languages on issues affected the rural population. These publications aimed at changing the conditions of the rural population by giving information that acted as a catalyst to stimulate the growth of the economy (Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services, 1985). These publications included: Sauti, Ngao, Mwangaza, Sauti ya Pwani, Sauti ya Gusii, Nuru, Jicho, and Marrifa (Maina, 2000).

The third sub-unit is the photographic services that were initiated in the 1940s. It was established to: supply local media with photographs, hold photographic exhibitions and displays for publicity (Kenya National Archives and Documentation Services, 1985). During its inception, the photographic section did not have facilities of its own, therefore the films and photographs shot were developed and printed on an arrangement with commercial studios. Today, the section has its studio and personnel that develop and produce film and photographs for its photography library. In order to sustain their objectives, the section runs a historic collection of Kenya’s development record, that are sold to journalists and publishers.

The Press Centre is the fourth sub-unit, it manages media relations for MDAs. The Press center facilitates, initiates, and regulates media on behalf of the government. It does media monitoring and reviews; provides media dashboard reports; uses media reports to provide media direction that aims at setting government agenda, and disseminates government information (Maina, 2000).

The fifth unit in the Central Media Services which is the repository for all government data, information, and documents. The unit serves as a center for knowledge, documentation, and source of information. It also serves as a library that
has all information including speeches, circulars, reports, policy documents, press releases, and studies (Maina, 2000).

The findings on the establishment of the five sub-units is an indication that the DIS is a department that has existed since the colonial era, and continues to function as a key component of government communication. The findings also are a reflection of the realities and challenges that government communication face, and continue to operate in, given their capacity to survive the current communication environment. These findings provide an opportunity for the government to re-structure and empower the department to handle the dynamics and potential of communication in engaging citizens and achieving government agenda.

4.4.2 Directorate of Public Communication (DPC)

DPC was established in 2009 when the position of public relations officers (PROs) was created to address government media policies and relations. The department was to consolidate all communication to avoid issuing conflicting information. The PROs were to propagate government policy, project and shape government image, change public perception of government, and promote the services of the respective ministries (Ombara, 2001). The PROs were trained information officers, who at the time were working at the Department of Information Services (DIS), but were later considered public relations officers without the much-required training. The diversity of goals and activities led to the expansion and strengthening of the public relations roles in government (Ombara, 2001).

Later in 2007, the PROs’ job description was redefined and their job title renamed to ‘Public Communication Officers’ (PCOs). According to the Revised Scheme of services for Public and Information Officers, their Public service functions include; to carry out research on public opinion on specific sectoral areas and provide...
appropriate strategies to address the situation, formulate national public communications policy and design a Government communication infrastructure, assist in the preparation of ministerial speeches and press releases, advise senior management on relevant publicity programs, and create rapport between senior management and junior staff (Public Service Commission, 2007).

In March 2010, a task force for the review of the structure and staff establishment recommended the creation of the Department of Information Services (DIS) and Department of Public Communications (DPC) (Government of Kenya, 2019). The taskforce came up with a Public Sector Communication Policy that led to the creation of the new DPC, that was to transform public communications to build confidence and catalyse national development as well as project a positive image of government (Public Sector communication policy, undated). The ministry of ICT, for the first time, sent PCOs to various ministries to act as a link between the Ministry and the public, and, to improve government image.

According to the Public Sector Communication Policy (Government of Kenya, 2019) the PCOs were to; identify significant events which required media and the public attention, advise the government on the best media practices which would promote good government-media relations, propagate and promote government policies and programs, organize media/press briefs, prepare media supplements, documentaries, press releases, features, advise Ministries/Departments on matters of public communications, and dissemination of information.

However, how the DPC was formed has led to structural challenges and failed to realise the potential of the unit in fulfilling government mandate. The unit was not cushioned on any policy or laws, this has created a misunderstanding on the role and changed dynamics in public communication. Public communication is still equated to
publicity and media impressions, PCOs are merely expected to manage media coverage and the news cycle. If the press fails to cover the events, they are seen as having failed in their duties. They are also expected to receive guests, polish speeches, issue press releases, and perform day-to-day operations in their administrative portfolio. Ombara (2001) noted:

They work on short-term publicity programs that do not have plans and strategies to implement. They have been stereotyped and discriminated against, hence failure to have the desired impact. There is a lack of appreciation and understanding of the role of PCOs (p. 4).

Currently, the Directorate has seconded over 75 PCOs to various MDAs, but has based on several requests from the MDAs, the Directorate still has a variance of about 52 officers. Further, the Directorate does not have a database of all its officers because some of the PCOs who are politically appointed or recruited as advisers/consultants later join the system and recruited as PCOs (civil servants). Such cases are common, especially within the departments and agencies, but the directorate does not have their records and neither to such officers report to the Directorate.

These findings imply that the Directorate was formed without the necessary legal and regulatory frameworks. Meaning that there are no policies that deliberately influence the structures and laws on public communication in government. Hence, the poor establishment of PCOs units under the MDAs, inadequate capacity, and lack of clear structural procedures on the role of PCOs in government. The formation of DPC and secondment of the PCOs to ministries also shows how the PCOs were not well trained for the new position having worked as IOs, PROs, and now PCOs. The lack of training also implies that there were no instructive manuals, guidelines, and policies that provide uniformity or standards about their duties, making it difficult for many of
them to operate. There is, therefore, a need to start training programs in strategic communication for its officials.

4.4.3 Government Advertising Agency (GAA)

The Government Advertising Agency (GAA) was formed in June 2015, through a policy document called Government Advertising Agency: Rules and guidelines which stipulates new ways of GoK advert buying. The policy document Treasury circular No. 09/2015 on centralisation of public sector advertisement, stipulated that all government advertising will be done through GAA (Government of Kenya, GoK, 2015). GAA was therefore formed to consolidate the processing, authorization, and publishing of public sector advertisements on behalf of public procurement entities. Previously, government advertisement was decentralized and done without policy guidelines, therefore, GAA was formed to centralise the advertising activities. All MDAs and semi-autonomous government agencies are required to advertise through GAA (GoK, 2015).

Initially, GAA was a sub-unit under DPC, but due to the restructuring process at the ministry of ICT, GAA became semi-autonomous and the third Directorate under the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication. Even though GAA has the hallmarks of a state corporation, its formation is still a question of legality, as to whether it is aligned to the structures and policies of the government. The formation of GAA is not anchored in law, government does not have advertising laws therefore it cannot claim to implement certain policies (Mathenge, 2019).

Further, its formation was not aligned to the Public Procurement Oversight Authority Act, and the ministry policy and strategy procedures (Government Advertising Agency, n.d). Yet, GAA went ahead to provide new mechanisms for
media planning and buying of adverts with standardised advertising rates to enable them to have better negotiation power and eliminate duplication (www.mygov.go.ke). The government argued that before the formation of GAA, it was spending 8 billion but it is currently spending 6 billion on advertising.

However, the media claimed that the centralisation of government advertising is a tool being used to infringe on the rights of the media (Mathenge, 2019). The media accused the government of using GAA to intimidate media into shaping editorial decisions in the newsroom. They disagreed with the idea of centralising government advertising activities and how GAA was formed and called for a review of the process. The media has gone to court accusing GAA for abuse of office, conspiracy to commit an offense of economic crime, fraudulent acquisition of public property and making a false document, aiding the commission of a felony and willful failure to comply with procurement laws (Ombati, 2018). Due to the ongoing cases at the court, GAA had not been in operation since August 2019. Although in April 2019, the CS of the Ministry of ICT appointed Gwaro Ogaro as the Acting Director.

These finding on GAA is an indication that the consolidation of the advertising rendered some of the communication units with no budget to conduct their activities. Communication officers may have been left with no option but to source for other means to run their activities. While some units, such as Yearbook came up with the book concept and decided to sell the book at a cost, the Kenya Film Classification Board (KFCB) had to negotiate with Treasury to supplement its budget to efficiently operate.

The above findings also imply that the operations of the GAA have been affected by the ongoing cases in court over failure to pay 2.5 billion debts that the government owns media houses. Its formation largely affected the functions and
activities of public communication offices. The centralisation means that all the advertising and media briefing budget was diverted to GAA, hence the PCOs do not have a budget allocation for their activities. Further, the formation and re-structuring of GAA had an impact on the structure and process of government communication, because its formation was not founded on any law, therefore, it did not outline the structure and policy to guide its operations and linkage to other government units.

4.4.4 Scheme of Service

In order to determine the structures and processes of the central national government communication, this study established that there is a clearly defined structure for recruitment, training, and practices for government communication stipulated by the PSC. According to the Revised Scheme of service for Information and Public communication officers, the defined structure is outlined in the Scheme of Service, which prescribes the standards for recruitment, training, and advancement within the career structure based on qualification, knowledge of the job, merit and ability as reflected in work performance and results (Public Service Commission, 2007). The scheme of Service also provides for well-defined job descriptions and specifications with clear delineation of duties and responsibilities at all levels within the career structure. The Scheme of Service is administered by the PS, Broadcasting and Telecommunication, in conjunction with the PSC, and in consultation with the PS in the Public Service (Public Service Commission, 2007).

The Scheme of Service establishes nine grades, each in the cadres as follows: Communications Officer III (Job group H), Communications officer II (Job group J), Public Communications Officer I (Job group K), Senior Communications Officer (Job group L), Chief Communications Officer (Job group M), Principal Communications Officer (Job group N), Assistant Director of Communications (Job group P), Senior
Assistant Director of Communications (Job group Q), Deputy Director of Communications (Job group R), Director of Communication (Job group S), and Public/Information Secretary (Job Group T) (Public Service Commission, 2007)

The position of Director of Communication (Job Group S) is the highest grade, and the incumbent heads the Communication Unit at the Ministry of ICT. The position of Senior Deputy Public Communications Secretary (Job Group S) and Public Communications Secretary (Job Group T) are specific to the Office of Public Communications and are, therefore, not covered under the Scheme of Service (Public Service Commission, 2007).

According to the Revised Scheme of Service for Information and Public communication officers (Public Service Commission, 2007), the Scheme of Service for communication position in government recognises qualification in any of the following fields; mass communication, communication studies, journalism, international relations, social sciences, or any other approved equivalent qualifications from a recognised institution. Also, the officers must have done management course lasting not less than four (4) weeks from a recognised institution. Important to note is that the scheme of service does not constitute authority for the creation of post(s). Any additional posts required under the grading structure must be included in the ministry’s establishment proposals for consideration and approval by the PS - Public service (Public Service Commission, 2007).

The findings above on the Scheme of Service imply that the structure and practice of government communication can be re-adjusted and more posts can be created by the ministry of ICT or EOP, subject to approval by the Ministry of Public Services. As is the case of the restructuring and creation of the five Directors at the PSCU by the EOP, the same case as CS of the Ministry of ICT, decision to have the
OGS domiciled at the Ministry of ICT, and, the creation of GAA and creation of posts under that specific department.

4.5 Unique Data Findings

This section presents the unique themes that emerged during data collection and analysis. They are the findings that the researcher did not envision before the data collection process. As much as the researcher collected data within the defined scope of the study, these findings emerged as critical issues in discussing the structure and process of the central national government communication in Kenya. From the documents analysed, it emerged that there are other communication units under the central national government: National Government Communication Center (NGCC), and, duplication of roles and structures within the communication units.

4.5.1 National Government Communication Centre (NGCC)

There are three communication offices under the Ministry of Interior and Co-ordination of National Government: Public Communication Office, Office of the Government Spokesperson, and the National Government Communication Centre (NGCC). NGCC was formed in 2016, as a rapid response communication unit under the National Security Advisory Council and charged with the responsibility of ensuring consistent, cohesive messaging across platforms and channels, connecting the general public to the work of government.

NGCC helps the government develop messages on security-related issues. National Security Advisory Council is a security unit under the Presidency that exercises supervisory control over national security organs and perform any other functions prescribed by national legislation. The Council integrates policies relating to national security to enable the security organs to co-operate and function effectively;
assess and appraise the objectives, commitments, and risks to the Republic in respect of actual and potential national security capabilities (GoK, 2010).

According to the Article 240 of the Kenyan Constitution, the National Security Council consists of the President; Deputy President; Cabinet Secretaries responsible for defense, foreign affairs, and internal security; Attorney-General; Chief of Kenya Defence Forces; Director-General of the National Intelligence Service; and Inspector-General of the Police Service (GoK, 2010). During its formation, NGCC was placed under the National Security Advisory Council, but later in 2018, there were re-structuring where the unit was moved to the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. NGCC functions were re-defined to be a unit that seeks to form cohesive and integrated communication management for crisis communication, through strong media relations, engagement, and shaping messages for government communication.

However, in May 2019, NGCC was moved to operate under the OGS and be domiciled in the ministry of ICT (Ministry of ICT, 2019). The Press statement from the Monistry of ICT (2019) read;

The OGS office shall be domiciled at the ministry of ICT, the officeholder shall oversight the role of all Government of Kenya communication channels under the ministry of ICT. These include Directorate of Information, Department of Public communication, NGCC, and the Government Media Centre. Besides, the officeholder shall have a content oversight role over news gathering and dissemination channels of KNA and MyGov.

The establishment and existence of the NGCC is an indication of how adhoc, decentralised, and uncoordinated government communication is. Its formation was done contrary to the public service commissions’ guidelines, thus, its operations do not compliment the existing structures and processes of other communication departments/agencies. NGCC works independently from the DPC, DIS, and the
Ministry of ICT. Even after the CS of the Ministry of ICT provided new operational guidelines that NGCC should work under the supervision of OGS, it is still not clear how, who, and why NGCC was formed, where it is placed, and how it should function within the context of the current government communication structure.

4.5.2 Duplication of Communication Roles and Structures/Unit

The second unique findings were the duplication of communication roles and structures. The Executive Order No. 1 of 2019 establishes and gives power to the National Development Implementation and Communication Cabinet Committee to provide coordinated strategic communication to the public and other stakeholders on the progress of national government programs and projects (EOP, 2019).

The Executive Order did not, however, provide communication guidelines and structure within which the committee should operate. The Committee reports to the President and is chaired by the Cabinet Secretary of Interior and Co-ordination of National Government, the same ministry that hosts three PCOs, NGCC, and initially hosted OGS. Due to failure in defining the communication office or the structure of the Committee, there have been different units and officers reporting on the proceedings of the committee.

A further concern was that the Presidential Delivery Unit (PDU), whose primary mandate is to improve coordination of national government programs, also packages and disseminates information on government projects being carried out by the MDAs. The unit that was formed to monitor, evaluate and report on the President’s development priorities has a well equipped and funded team of communication professionals who produce documentaries, photographs, content, and messages on government projects.
There seems to be an overlap and duplication of roles between the PDU, PSCU, DPC, and DIO. Although PSCU and PDU seem to be operating from the same EOP, there seem to be no linkages or synchronisation between the two units. These findings not only raises concern on the organisation and coordination of communication at the executive level, but also the existence of an overarching communication strategy, and, the structure of government communication in Kenya.

4.6 Overall Structure of the Central National Government Communication

Central national government communication has three units: PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT, however, it also includes NGCC. These communication units work independently, with each of them seeming to be guided by different communication philosophy. These implies that government communication does not have an overarching communication strategy, thus, its communication is decentralized and uncoordinated. The decentralisation of government communication is an indication that there are overlapping, duplication, or contradiction of roles and functions, or worse is that some units/professionals are redundant. These findings are also indicate that there are two structures in government communication; one that is defined by the PSC, and the other that is determined by the political structure and actors in power.

On one hand, the PSC develops government capacity to provide a high caliber of professionals in the government workforce, ensures that the recruitment and selection processes of the workforce adhere to the professional standards, and supports the government in achieving positive budget outcomes through strengthening the capacity of the government workforce. On the other hand, the political system defines the process for making government decisions; the system is elected and, therefore, gets into power with the view of fulfilling its interest. The ruling political
powers/system end up develop structures that contracting or overlap with the existing structures that were put in place by the previous political power/system.

While PSC lays structures and policies based on the needs and standards of the country, the political powers/system pronounce structures and policies based on the political interests, such that in each political cycle, there are ad-hoc changes made that interferes with the best practice and flow of government communication. The PSC views government communication from a professional perspective but the political system views it from a political communication perspective. Such contradictions result in poor coordination, decentralization, and inconsistencies.

In conclusion, the historical background of the three government agencies; PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT, provides contextual analysis and lays the
foundation on the structures and processes of the central national government communication in Kenya. The data presented in this chapter provides an understanding of the current landscape of central national government communication. The data lays the foundation on the formation, organization and re-organization, structures and re-structuring, trends and challenges that the three agencies have undergone through to form what is currently referred to as government communication. The data presented further provides the information on the structures and processes on government communication, that is necessary for; analyzing and interpreting data on whether government communication is strategically managed, examining the role the political system on government communication, and whether government communication facilitates citizen participation in Kenya.

4.7 Summary

This chapter endeavored to present and interpret data that was collected through document analysis about the structures and process of the central national government communication. The data presented and analysed provides a contextual overview of the three communication agencies (PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT), and describes the formation, restructuring and the functions of each of the units. The chapter further teased out the unique findings that the researcher did not envision during the proposal writing, and provides the frameworks for each of the tree units. The next chapter presents, analyses and interprets data collected from the questionnaires and interviews on whether government communication is strategically practiced, the role of political systems in government communication, and whether government communication as currently practiced facilitates citizen participation.
CHAPTER FIVE
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION, AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected through questionnaires and interviews. This study aimed at critically analysing the strategic and political dimensions of the central national government communication in Kenya. To this end, the study had four research questions: What were the structures and processes of central national government communication? Is the central national government communication in Kenya strategically managed? What was the influence of the political system on the operations of the central national government in Kenya? Did the central national government in Kenya as currently practiced facilitate citizen participation? The quantitative data collected through questionnaires and was analysed using SPSS, and the qualitative data collected through in-depth interviewers and thematically analysed, in which the research questions formed the main themes. This chapter, therefore, presents and interprets data as collected and analysed.

5.2 Response Rate

The researcher conducted 20 interviews: two at PSCU, two at the OGS, two at PSC, 13 at the Ministry of ICT, and one at NGCC. The researcher had proposed to conduct 16 interviews, however, due to the on-going structural changes at the central national government communication agencies, there were new posts created at the Ministry of ICT and PSCU, hence the increased number of interviews from 16 to 20. The researcher also distributed 75 questionnaires to the PCOs, out of which only 67 questionnaires were duly filled and returned, thus, making the questionnaire response rate to be 89.3%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is adequate, 60% is good, while 70% and above is excellent for data analysis, as it
guarantees accuracy and minimizes bias. Therefore, this study’s questionnaire response rate of 89.3% was excellent in providing adequate data for analysis, drawing conclusions and making recommendations.

The questionnaires were purposively distributed to all the PCOs at the Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Similarly, the interviews were purposively conducted with the two top-ranking government communication officers within the three communication agencies. At the Ministry of ICT, the interviews were conducted at the offices of Principal Secretaries of Broadcasting and Telecommunication, Information Secretary, Directorate Public Communication (two interviews), Directorate Information Services (two interviews), Directorate GAA, Central Media Services, Editorial-KNA, Kenya YearBook, KFC, KFCB, and Directorate Film Services Commission. Interviews were conducted at the Office of Government Spokesperson, and, Directorate of Communication. While at the PSCU, two interviews were conducted at the Office of Secretary of Communication/Director of PSCU, and Directorate of Messaging and Press relations. At PSC, two interviews were conducted, and one interview was conducted at the NGCC Office.

5.3 Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

5.3.1 Staff Establishments of Communication Professionals at the Ministries

The findings of the staff establishment at the Ministry of ICT were as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Establishments</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officers recommended for upgrading</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings in Table 5.1 indicate that there was one officer in job group S, which is the highest job group and at the level of Director. Twenty six (26) officers were in job group R–Deputy Director level, five were in job group Q-Senior Assistant Director of Public Communications, three were in job group P-Assistant Director of Public Communication; 15 in job group N-Principal Public Communication Officer; and 25 in job group M–Public communication Officer. These findings imply that there was only one officer at job group S, and this is because at this level the officer is expected to be the Head of the Public Communications Division at the Ministry of ICT, and he/she reports to the Information Secretary. The officer oversees the professional, administrative, and operations of public communications at the Ministries/Departments. He/she is responsible for the deployment of PCOs; succession planning as well as ensuring training and development of PCOs.

The findings also indicate that there were variances in all job groups. In total, the government had a variance of 138 communication officers to various levels. These imply that government did not have enough public communication officers to be posted in all the ministries and departments. As a result, there was an increased workload and less supervision, thus, decreased productivity and inadequate implementation of functions and strategies of government communications. For efficient service delivery, government, through the PSC, needs to recruit more qualified professionals to the communication units.
5.3.2 Staff Establishment at the OGS

The findings on the staff establishment at OGS were as presented in Table 5.2

Table 5.2: Establishment of Communication Staff at OGS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Staff members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The OGS staff establishment is also defined by the same scheme of service as that administered by the PS, Broadcasting, and Telecommunication, in conjunction with the PSC and consultation with the PS, Public Service. The researcher was not able to establish the job groups of the communication staff in OGS, due to the nature and structural issues faced by the OGS. During the data collection, the OGS was in the process of restructuring, awaiting instructions from the PSC. However, the study established that there were four male and two female communication officers at OGS.

5.3.4 Staff Establishment at the PSCU

Table 5.3 shows staff establishment at the PSCU.

Table 5.3: Staff Establishment at PSCU
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Group</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>Q</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-post</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

At the PSCU, the study found out that there was one staff at job group S, one at group R, five at job group Q, and 47 at job group P. The structure of the PSCU is defined by the Executive Office of the President structure (EOP, 2013). The EOP is the President’s Front Office and is headed by the Chief of Staff. It consists of Senior Advisors whose role is to advise the President on the performance of his mandate. The office is organized by the wishes of the incumbent President and is directed by staff chosen by the President. The tenure and durability of an Executive Office Advisory position are dependent upon its usefulness to the President.
The Senior Advisors counsels the President in such matters as he may direct. Upon the president’s request, the Senior Advisors provides the President with requested information, and the President condense and summarize it for his or her use. Senior Advisors are Heads of their respective offices and are supported by a core team of staff, including: Directors, Technical Officers, and interns (EOP, 2013). In this case, the Head of the PSCU was the advisor to the president on matters of communication, and worked with a total of 54 staff members, including Secretary of communication, five Directors and 48 technical officers.

5.3.5 Nature of Government Communication

Table 5.4 shows the findings on the nature of government communication.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Politically oriented</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Oriented</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings in Table 5.4 shows that most of the PCOs at 40(59.7%) indicated that the nature of government communication was politically oriented, 24(35.8%) of said that it is both politically public-oriented, while a few at 3(4.5%) said that it was public-oriented. The findings from the 21 interviews that were conducted indicated that 12(57%) of the key informants, those were career civil servants, felt that government communication was public-oriented, 6(29%) who were employed as communication consultants said it was political, while 3(14%) who were seasoned public servants felt it was both political and public-oriented.

These findings imply that majority of communication professionals in government believe that communication functions is a political tool rather than a citizen engagement and democratic tool. Government communication should be
directed to the citizens, played out in public space, for the public good, and subject to public scrutiny. These findings also imply that because communication in government is headed by political actors, there is a tendency of manipulating to suit their personal or political party’s interests. Consequently, the findings are an indication that due to the political environment in which government communication operates, it is difficult to distinguish government communication from political communication.

5.3.6 Description of Government Communication Functions and Activities

The central national government of Kenya has various government communication functions and activities. Table 5.5 presents the findings on the description of government communication functions and activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions and Activities</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Media briefing and information publication</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>82.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media, corporate relations, and research</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public/Digital engagement and research</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of the respondents (PCOs) at 55(82.1%) described government communication as that which mainly involves media briefing and information publication, while 7(10.4%) of them described the functions and activities as mainly social media, corporate relations, and opinion research, while 5(7.5%) of the PCOs felt it was public/digital engagement and citizen insight research. The findings from the interviews indicated that the respondents generally described government communication function as misplaced and limited to media briefing and monitoring. For instance, Respondent 2/22/2/19 described it by saying:

*Coordination of communication functions in all ministries where it deploys PCOs and carries out media monitoring and research.*

Respondent 1/1/4/19 described government communication function as;
That which coordinates different segments to work as a unit called Government. It is the newsroom of President newsroom, that shares information with the publics.

However, Respondent 4/27/3/19 noted;

The efficiency and effectiveness of government communication function are affected by bureaucracy and the red tape. Since independence, subsequent governments have recognized the role of communication differently and thus the importance and prominence of government communication offices changed with the change in leadership.

Also, Respondent 3/1/4/19 argued that;

The current government attaches little if any importance to communication. Lack of understanding of communication function has led to poor organisation of communication in the government structure and poorly implemented or under-utilized.

These findings are an indication that government communication is multi-layered and diverse, it wrestles with considerable complexities that may hinder it from operating on long-term goals. The fact that it operates in a political environment, means that political interests and cycle determine its operations. In such a way that communication professionals may politically be appointed for political interest. The short-term functions of communication focus more on publicity, media relations and information publication, rather than strategic functions such as planning, coordination, research, stakeholder mapping, and engagement.

5.3.7 Characteristics of Government Communication

Table 5.6 shows findings on the characteristics of government communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Government communication</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positioned on a lower level</td>
<td></td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oriented to the pursuit of short/medium-term goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioned at senior management levels</td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substantial development of specialized communication units</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proactive dialogue in pursuit of long-term goals</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

140
The findings in Table 5.6 indicate that 35(56.5%) PCOs described the characteristics of government communication as communication that is oriented in pursuit of short-term or medium-term goals, 24(38.7%) described it as communication positioned at senior management levels, 22(35.5%) said it was positioned on the lower level, 10(16.1%) said it permits proactive dialogue in pursuit of long-term goals, while 6(9.7%) said there is a substantial development of specialised communication.

However, Respondent 2/22/2/19 from the interviews opined that;

*Since President Kibaki’s regime, the government hires consultants and advisors to help it address issues on communications. Most of the advisors are hired for political reasons and connections.*

Worse still, Respondent 2/22/2/19 claimed that they are hired for tasks which communication officers can do and which they eventually do, though the advisors are the ones who end being paid hefty fees. The respondent further pointed out that the advisors who are appointed by the CS came in at very high job grades. In support of these views, Respondent 3/1/12/19 argued that;

*Communication officers hold junior positions due to political appointment of officers into higher job levels than the civil servants.*

The findings on the existence of the two categories of government communicators imply that there was interference by those in power/leadership who appoint “their officers” to work as communication officers for the same job description assigned to the PCOs within the ministries. These findings are an indication there could be conflicts, disharmony, and political interference in government communication. The existence of the two categories of communication officers could also result in demoralization and demotivation of the civil servants who do the majority of work at lower pay than the consultants.
Further findings indicated that government communication is characterized by a lack of or inadequate budgets, which make it difficult to function, and by lack of coordination between communication offices and inconsistent messaging. Respondent 2/1/12/19 claimed that;

The MDAs have formally been requesting for PCOs, but to meet the demand it would call for more staffing into the requested cadre. This is because most PCOs have stagnated in one position for a longer period, therefore some of the job levels do not have qualified officers.

In support of the claim, Respondent 2/1/12/19 gave an example whereby the Ministry of ICT has only one PCO at job group S (Director) against a variance of 21, still, other PCOs in lower job groups are soon retiring or leaving civil service.

These responses are an indication that government communication is characterized by the pursuit of short/medium-term goals that mostly emanate during crises; strong political influence; limited specialized communication units; positioned at lower organizational levels. Government communication is considered to be a tactical tool rather than a strategic tool. The lack of planning and updated database of the kind of workforce government has is an indication that there is still lack of accountability and transparency in the recruitment and appointment of professionals.

5.3.8 Ratings of Government Communication Structure

The respondents were then asked to rate the structure of government communication in Kenya. Study findings were as shown in Table 5.7

Table 5.7: Clear and Structured Reporting Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat good</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>87.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very bad</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As per the findings in Table 5.7, 28(41.8%) of the PCOs felt that the structure and reporting lines of the government communication were good, 13(19.4%) said they were somewhat good, 17(25.4%) felt they were bad, while 9(13.4%) respondents said they were very bad. The findings from the interviews indicated that the structure and reporting lines of the government communication were confusing, incoherent, and had bureaucratic reporting lines.

Respondents 3/1/12/19 clarified that the Public Communication Officers (PCOs) and information officers (IOs) report and are evaluated by the Head of Administration or HR Manager under the appointed ministry. Also, the DPC, DIS, and Director of GAA all report to the Information Secretary, who in turn reports to the PS for Broadcasting and Telecommunication. These reporting lines had led to poor or inadequate coordination of the public communication function.

Initially, the OGS was under the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. But, in May 2019, the Cabinet Secretary directed that the OGS be under the ministry of ICT. In a press statement, the CS said;

The office holder shall have an oversight role of all communication channels under the Ministry of ICT. These include Directorate of Information; the Directorate of Public Communication; NGCC; and the Media Center. The OGS will also have an oversight role over KNA and MyGov.

However, some respondents expressed concern on the functions of the OGS and were also skeptical about the newly appointed office-holder. Respondent 1/22/2/19 said;

Since the tenure of the first office holder of the OGS, no efforts have been made to institutionalise his role. It remains fractured and adhoc. The appointment of the officeholders has always been done based on the political lines and interests.

Respondent 1/13/2/19 added;

I find it quite odd that they keep picking the government spokesperson from the uniformed forces, he is a retired Colonel, I thought a civilian career public
communication professional would be better placed for such a role. I am not sure how much success it will bring to government communication.

But Respondent 2/26/3/19 said that;

_The saving grace is that the newly appointed (spokesperson) is from the government so he knows how government works. He also has a good background and experience._

Structurally, the Head of PSCU is the Secretary of Communication/Director of PSCU and she/he reports directly to the President. She/he is assisted by five deputy directors who are in charge of; Speechwriting and Public Relations, Research, Messaging and Press Relations, Production, and Library Services. Under the Deputy Directors are Heads of Units, including; Reporters, Videographers, Editors, Producers, and Researchers. PSCU had a total of 54 staff members. Respondent 1/16/4/19 said;

_The Secretary of Communication reports directly to the President, but whenever there is a need, she consults the Chief of staff and other Heads of Sections at EOP._

The response above by Respondent 1/16/4/19 suggests that the OGS placement is under the ministry of ICT, with new functions and roles, maybe a direction towards the improvement of communication, such that government communication is well-coordinated, efficient, and consistent in terms of messaging. The appointment of officeholders may also imply that the Head of Communication Units/Agencies are appointed on a partisan basis rather than using a professional criteria. This means that government communication is still politicized and used in promoting the interests of political parties/actors.

Similarly, these findings imply that there is increased relevance on the Presidency as a central role of government communication. There is a growing need for the President’s public opinion approval ratings, which citizens are now using to
evaluate the President’s performance. PSCU has, therefore, adopted new forms of communication, such as; speeches, message development, social media and video clips; and direct communication. The findings on the positioning of Head of PSCU close to the President, and to report directly to him, is an indication of the strategic role of communication at the Presidency.

In addition, these findings suggest that government communication is decentralised, fragmented, and uncoordinated. There seems to be a move towards centralization where the government can speak with one voice, but the process is delayed and constrained by political interests. Government communication should be directed to serve the public rather than the political actors (non-partisan). But, as currently constituted, government communication needs to professionalise, develop policies and guidelines to improve on the structure and process, and the emphasis is placed on communication practices and strategies.

5.3.9 Government Communicators Involved in Decision /Policy Making

The study sought to know the extent to which government communicators are involved in decision and policy making. Table 5.8 presents the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always involved</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often involved</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes involved</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely involved</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never involved</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid response</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 5.8 on the decision and policy-making process indicate that most of the respondents (PCOs) at 27(40.3%) were sometimes involved, 18(26.9%) were rarely involved, 8(11.9%) were often involved, 3(4.5%) were always involved, while 9(13.4%) were never involved. Additionally, the findings from the
interview conducted indicated that communication professionals were partly involved in the decision-making process. However, Respondent 1/22/2/19 pointed out that, the Government only involves consultants/advisers during decision and policymaking. The consultants and advisors take the lead in determining the nature and policy framework of government communication.

Further, the study established that PSC provides two positions of advisors/consultants for each CS to help in addressing technical issues that may require expertise that the government does to have. This was confirmed by Respondent 1/13/2/19, who said;

*The advisors/consultants for each CS are usually employed on contract as requested by the CS or top government official.*

The privilege of cabinet secretaries to hire advisers has been abused in some cases. Respondent 2/2/4/19 stated that;

*Some Cabinet Secretaries have more than three communication advisors who have been hired for the tasks which communication professionals can do, and which they eventually do.*

Respondent 2/1/12/19 also claimed that;

*The consultants and advisors are inadequate in the role given, and even so, are paid hefty fees than the professionals themselves.*

These findings have demonstrated that the consultants are hired into higher job grades, thus, creating, conflicts and disharmony amongst communication professionals. As a result, the civil servants stagnate in the same job grade leading to the demoralised workforce. The hiring of communication advisers in government, in the end, should have a policy to avoid situations associated with regime change, when senior information and communication officers are made to work under advisers and end up doing the work that the Advisers are hired to do.
To some extent, the responses from the respondents suggest that both top-ranking and middle-level PCOs at the MDAs are partly involved in the policy/strategy formulation. On one hand, the interview findings partly agreed with the quantitative data that 40.3% of PCOs were sometimes involved in the policy/strategy formulation, 11.9% were often involved, and 4.5% were always involved in the policy/strategy formulation. On the other hand, the findings from the questionnaires suggested that 26.9% of the PCOs at the MDAs were rarely involved in the policy/strategy formulation while 13.4% were never involved. Strategic communication should not be equated for media publicity, if done, then communication professionals will not be involved in decision making, and government’s image will continue to suffer.

Decision and policymakers in government have continuously equated public relations to publicity. Respondent 4/12/12/19 claimed that;

They keep hiring journalists who are not trained in public relations or strategic communication to be communication managers. Most of the time it ends up in failure.

Government must introduce a communication course for PSs and CSs to enable them to understand and appreciate the strategic function of government communication. In agreement, Respondent 3/1/4/19 said;

In good governance, professionalism overshadows other considerations. Government communicators should be made to have a bird’s eye view of the government, they should be involved in decision making so that they can respond to certain communication in government.

5.3.10 Role of Research in the Strategic and Policy-making Process

This study’s findings on the role of research in the strategic and policy-making process regarding government communications were as shown in Table 5.9.
Table 5.9: Role of Research in Strategic Policy-making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much Informs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somehow Informs</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never informs</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never at all inform</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>21.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 4.9 indicate that research does not necessarily inform the strategy and policy making formulation, though some respondents said research plays a role in the strategic and policy-making process. While 14(20.9%) of the respondents said that research informs the strategy and policy making formulation, 21(31.3%) said it somehow informs, while 32(47.8%) said it never informs the strategic and policy-making process.

The findings from the interviews revealed that government communicators do not conduct research, therefore, their strategies and policies are not informed by the citizens' concerns or the environment of its operation. They further noted that communication in government was not well funded, and the inadequacy of budget makes it difficult to conduct the simplest research. Respondent 3/25/2/19 gave an example;

*The PCOs who have no budget allocation to implement communication plans in MDAs, thus, they rely on administrative budgets in MDAs. In addition to the challenges of funds for research, government communication is faced with serious staffing shortages that they may not have the capacity to conduct research that informs decisions and policies.*

The ideal research calls for collection, management, and evaluation of multiple data, that may take time and various resources. Respondent 2/25/3/19 said;

*Most of our communication department does not have resources for management, and evaluation of multiple data.*
Unless the staffing levels are improved, the communication function may not be fully achieved. Most communication departments are running at half capacity with an aging workforce whose attrition is very high. By way of the example Respondent 2/25/3/19 expressed how by 2023, DPC will lose 26 officers through mandatory retirement, and in the same period, there was no indication that the government shall hire new staff.

However, government communication can still conduct simple research that does not require huge budgets, in order to understand the basic communication needs of the publics. Respondent 1/13/2/19 argued that;

*Social media has significantly changed the communication landscape. It has made it easier and cheaper to reach the publics, thus communication professionals should embrace social media for research.*

Additionally, communication professionals can strengthen synergies with other public institutions involved in research and retrieval of content, such that their decisions and policies are informed by data and evidence.

The study findings that have been presented on the role of research in the strategic and policy-making process imply that government communication is not informed by research, probably because it operates as a tactical function rather than a strategic one. The qualitative findings indicate that government communicators rarely conduct research and neither does research inform their decisions, 47.8% response suggests research never informs the strategic and policy-making process. Though 20.9% said it does inform and 31.3% sometimes informs the strategic and policy-making process.
5.3.11 Cross-tabulation of Reporting Lines, Communicators Involvement, and Role Research in the Strategic and Policy Decision Making

Figure 5.1 presents a cross-tabulation of the reporting lines, communication involvement, and the role of research in the strategic and decision making.

The findings in Figure 5.1 indicated that there is no relationship between the structures, government communicators involvement, and decision-making process. These findings imply that decision made in government communication does not necessarily follow the structures and procedures outlined by the Public service commission (PSC), instead those decisions are made depending on the leadership and interests in place or persons in charge.

The lack of linking research to strategic/policy decision making is an indication that publics (citizen) needs and concerns are not considered in the strategy/policymaking process, and if it does, then it does not take into consideration the information and analysis done by the communication professionals on behalf of the government. This means that government communication does not address environmental issues and publics (citizens) interests.
5.3.12 Effectiveness of Government Communication Channels

The study findings on the effectiveness of government communication channels were as summarized in Table 5.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.10: Effectiveness of Communication Channels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somehow Effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.10 shows that 27(40.3%) of the respondents (PCOs) said the government had effective communication channels, 18(26.9%) said the communication channels were somehow effective, while 18(26.8%) respondents said the channels were not effective. The interview findings revealed that the government did not have effective and efficient communication channels. The findings from qualitative data re-affirmed the quantitative data finding of the 26.8% respondents who said the communication channels were not effective, and partly the 26.9% who said it was somehow effective.

Currently, government communication channels are Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), Kenya News Agency (KNA), Mygov newspaper supplement, and MDA’s websites. Respondent 2/25/3/19 pointed out that;

_These channels are inadequate in communicating information and agenda; there is a need to find other channels of communication within government. Government should consider abolishing subscription fees for Kenya News Agency content in the spirit of Article 35 of the Constitution on access to information._

In agreement with Respondent 2/25/3/19, Respondent 1/13/2/19 added that;
Apart from Head of MDAs providing periodic progress reports via government media center, Public Communication Officers should be given status and authority to release select information to the publics.

The Central Media Services needs to be re-established and equipped to serve as a library for government speeches, circulars, reports, policy documents, press releases, research studies, and any other data materials about government. The study findings on the effectiveness of the communication channels imply that there is a need for modernization, restructuring, rebranding, and revamping of the communication channels. The government needs to optimize its capacity through the communication apparatus that is supported by requisite technologies.

For the government to effectively propagate its message, Respondent 2/25/3/19 proposed that;

*Government should empower County Information Officers to act as Spokespeople for their respective counties. They should liaise with the leadership and produce news, features, press statements, and photographs for release to the public as a way of getting out the Government agenda.*

Respondent 2/25/3/19 further suggested that the Department’s Mobile Cinema Unit should also be re-activated to ensure the content generated by the departments reaches the public living beyond the tarmac, audio-visual media is a powerful channel of communication. Respondent 6/1/4/19 added;

*Information and communication officers need retooling to keep abreast of best practices, and the changing landscape. Also, the government should establish its national newspaper and revamp KBC and MyGov website as the premier outlets for government news and information. Government should further consider establishing a national editorial service to handle all professional editing for government documents.*

These findings suggest that the government did not have sufficient communication channels to reach out to all its citizens. It had not adopted the changes and dynamics of the communication environment. The current communication
environment offers enormous opportunities for new approaches and methods of communication. One of this opportunity is the increased use of the internet and mobile telephony, that offers creative, cheaper, efficient, and instant new ways for information dissemination and citizens engagement/participation. Therefore, the government communication can adopt new channels such as social media, mobile telephony, websites, and face to face to ensure that government widely and constantly avails information for citizen engagement and participation in the democracy.

5.3.13 Involvement of Citizens in Government Communication

The study’s findings on the level government communication of involves citizens is presented in Table 5.11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Involved</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Involved</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not involved</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not involved at all</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invalid response</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Generally, the findings in Table 5.11 show that 17(25.4%) of the respondents said that the government involved its publics in communication, 18(26.9%) said the government somewhat involved its publics in communication, while 30(44.8%) said the government communication does not involve its citizens. But the findings from interviews with key informants indicated that government did not involve citizens in its communication, instead, communication was conducted on the assumption that government understands the citizens’ needs even without engaging them. The findings from the interviews reaffirmed the 44.8% of responses from the PCOs that
government did not involve its citizens. For instance, Respondent 7/2/4/19 examained;

I look at government as an organisation, ministries as departments, the president as the CEO, and ministers as the HoD of departments, the citizens are the clients. Therefore, government operations should be geared toward meeting the clients’ needs and concerns.

Involving citizens in communication can be done in various ways including research in order to understand their concerns, providing services and feedback, and communicating government agenda, programs and progress. According to Respondent 6/1/4/19, communication plays a key role in involving the citizens, thus, the reason why it should be positioned in a strategic place. Communication should be at the vantage point to coordinate from the center and not at the periphery. However, Respondent 6/1/4/19 noted that;

Government philosophy is that it exists on the goodwill of the citizens. To sustain the goodwill, government must consistently tell the citizens what it is doing for them. That duty must be well planned, executed, and evaluated.

Respondent 1/22/2/19 added;

The professionals charged with the responsibility to tell government story are frustrated. There is a need for a firm policy on how government communicates with its people, the level of involvement and engagement, the communication channels, and the designated office/persons to do it.

Citizen involvement should be anchored on a policy framework that advocates for systematic continuous engagement and participation. Respondent 1/22/2/19 claimed;

A unified and harmonized structure of communication will empower Information and Public Communications Officers to communicate with the public even at the regional level.

These findings imply that lack of research and environmental scanning by the government had resulted in ineffective government communication. These are an
indication that citizen needs and concerns are not part of decision-making and policy formulation, instead, government sets its agenda through the media. The lack of involvement and participation of citizens in government decision/policy making is also an indication of a lower democratic index. It also implies there is ineffective and insufficient two-way communication, lacks transparency and accountability. Citizens’ involvement and participation determine the level of transparency and governance and define the democratic index of any given country.

5.3.14 Relationship between Communication and Service Offered

Figure 5.2 presents findings on the relationship between government communication and services offered by the government.

![Figure 5.2: Rating of Government Communication](image)

On average, the findings reveal that there seemed to be a neutral relationship between environmental scanning, effective communication channels, and involvement of the publics/citizens in communication. Generally, the government did not have effective communication channels, did not involve the publics/citizens in its communication, and did not scan the environment of effective communication.
These findings are an indication that there is need to allocate more budget to research and information processes, that inform the messages and channels to be used in government communication. The findings also imply that government needs to adopt more and advanced channels of communication that are sufficient and effective in the current communication environment. Through the necessary content/messages and effective channels of communication, government should reach out to all its citizens, by engaging and involving them. Government must, therefore, develop strategies that resonate with the current trends and speaks to its citizens.

5.3.15 Co-ordination and Planning of Government Activities

The findings on the co-ordination and planning of government activities are presented in Figure 5.3 below.

![Figure 5.3: Coordination and Planning of Government Activities](image)

Regarding the coordination and planning of government communication activities, Figure 5.3 shows that 36(54%) of the respondents said the process was fragmented and unplanned, 19(29%) said it was a functional role/task, and 11(17%) said it was clearly defined in the structure and activities of the government. The findings imply that government communication was highly fragmented and unplanned, not defined in the structures and activities of the government, and did not
play a functional role. The findings from the interviews support these findings. For instance, Respondent 2/22/2/19 claimed;

*Government has multiple and duplicate centers and units of communication. There is Government Spokesperson, Government Communications Centre, National Communication Secretariat and Presidential Delivery Unit (PDU), aside from DPC and Department of Information.*

Further, Respondent 1/22/12/19 said;

*There is no clear structure spelling out the scope and boundaries of each of them. Lack of clarity creates confusion as the functions are overlapping or duplications of functions.*

These findings are an indication that the government views communication through media functions and sees publicity as constituting the whole scope of communication, it is seen as a tactical tool and not strategic. Government communication should strategically be managed not only for media relations but also for reputation management, stakeholder mapping, and engagement, transparency, and governance tool. The findings further imply that communication is uncoordinated, unplanned, and centralized in government, this has resulted in conflicting and duplication of roles, misallocation of communication resources, understaffing, misrepresentation, and misunderstanding of communication functions.

5.3.16 Facilitation of Communication Activities

Table 5.12 presents findings on the facilitation of communication activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.12: Facilitation of Communication Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundantly Facilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adequately Facilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poorly Facilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not facilitated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings in Table 5.12 show that most of the respondents at 26(38.8%) agreed that the government facilitated communication activities, 28(41.8%) indicated that the government poorly facilitated communication activities, while 13(19.4%) noted that the government did not facilitate government communication.

The findings from the interviews confirmed that to a large extent government facilitates communication activities, although more facilitation could be done. Presidential communication is designed towards achieving specific goals that will build and maintain the brand - The President. Therefore, all the communication practices and activities are informed by the tactical and strategic perspectives. Respondent 1/2/4/19 claimed that;

The PSCU runs the President’s newsroom that includes messaging and media relations, plan his events and activities based on research and assessment, that most of the time is informed by traditional and social media.

The PSCU systematically manage communication planning, public relations, research, and assessment that is put in place by the EOP. The presidential strategic communication unit has a total of 54 professionals who take up various communication roles in the President’s Communication Office/unit. The roles of PCOs range from organizing national events, such as; Madaraka Day, Mashujaa Day and Jamhuri Day celebration; projection of a positive image about government; research on public opinion; promote stakeholder engagement and public participation; monitoring and managing digital content; publish information communication materials that enhance government image; and media monitoring.

However, Respondent 1/13/2/19 claimed that;

Inadequate budget, untrained and incapacitated staff, positing of government communication at a technical or junior level, misunderstanding on the function of communication, has led to poor or inadequate facilitation.
These findings imply that government communication at the presidency is well facilitated and planned, but communication at the ministry of ICT is not well facilitated and coordinated. The structures within the EOP clearly defines the functions and roles of communication, but at the ministry level, there is a general overall stipulated by PSC which does not give specific job descriptions for communication professionals. The interpretation has been left to the CS and PS to define their role. Yet, the highest number of communication professionals and information is found under the Ministry of ICT - State department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication, where the Ministry hosts OGS, DPC, DIS, and GAA.

Further, these findings are an indication of the inadequacy by government in handling the communication demands is an indication of a lack of strategically planned communication that can generate, produce, and disseminate the information successfully. Due to the inadequacy of resources and facilitation, there is fragmented, uncoordinated, and poorly planning of government communication.

5.3.17 Government Communication as Action-Oriented and Minimal Barriers

The study’s findings on whether government communication is action oriented is presented in Table 5.13 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much action-oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Oriented</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>29.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Action Oriented</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Little Action Orientation</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>31.1</td>
<td>93.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not at all action orientation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.13 shows that, on average, government communication was not action-oriented and had barriers. Some of the PCOs at 18(26.9%) indicated that the
government communication was action-oriented, 20(29.8%) said it was somewhat action-oriented, 19(28.3%) indicated that it was little action orientation, while 10(15%) said that it was not action-oriented. The findings from the interviews revealed that the government communication was generally not action-oriented due to historical injustices, communication being a fairly new practice in government and lack of professionalization. For instance, Respondent 2/9/5/19 said;

There are no standards, expectations or precedence; we are a transiting unit. Therefore, we do not know the ideal structure and process of government communication, units, and professional standards.

Respondent 2/22/2/19 added;

Until we find the right structure, it will be a trial and error. Also, to note is that in government, performance is not rewarded and neither are their consequences for non-performers.

However, Respondent 2/9/5/19 argued that;

When it comes to our action and activities, we are not a unified front, we do not talk to each other but talk to ourselves. As a result, we have been inconsistent and contradictory. Of course, this has not been easy due to historical injustices, stagnation, and lack of appreciation for communication.

These findings imply that the productivity and actions of the communication professionals are driven by many other factors including past injustice, working environment, synergy, reporting lines, reward systems, professional ethics, value system, and standards. The findings also show that if government was to have effective communication, then it must adapt to the best practices, standardise and professionalise government communication.

5.3.18 Government Fosters Diversity and Strong Communication Mechanisms

The study sought to find out, whether government fosters diversity and strong communication mechanisms. Table 5.14 below presents the study’s findings.
Table 5.14: Fosters Diversity and Strong Mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very much Fosters</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosters</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.9</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Fosters</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A little Fosters</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not Foster</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 5.14 show that government fosters diversity and builds strong mechanisms for effective communication. Generally, 20(29.9%) of the PCOs indicated that the government fostered diversity and strong communication mechanisms, 19(28.4%) said the government somewhat fostered diversity and strong communication mechanisms, 13(19.4%) felt that the government fostered diversity and strong communication mechanisms a little, while 15(22.3%) said the government did not foster diversity and strong communication mechanisms.

However, findings from the interviews indicated that government did not foster diversity and strong mechanisms due to structural challenges and lack of understanding of the role of government communication. For example, Respondent 2/9/5/19 said:

Our diversity has been our biggest weakness that has resulted in short-term and catches up strategies and goals. Further, poor internal communication and structures, where we do not talk to each, I do not think it is deliberate, but it is more of cultural thinking in government. Our poor communication has led to mistrust amongst ourselves and even government not trusting us. As a result, DPC and DIS have been left alone for a long time, funding is not available for the department because they did not know whether the professionals are for us (government in power) or against us.

Further findings from the interviews revealed that there is a poor communication culture. Respondent 2/9/5/19 claimed;
Professionals do not communicate to each other as we should, we do not exchange or share information, update each other, or receive feedback. Instead, we compete, we hid information and use it against each other or to beat the system. It is the government’s way of operations. As a result, we have divided and demoralized professionals.

On the ideal structure and process, Respondent 1/9/5/19 added;

There is lack of an ideal, where we are working, but in our mind, we do know what communication is supposed to do for government. I am not sure if in our mind we understand what a communication unit is, what it is supposed to do, or even functions and the deliverables of communication in government.

Respondent 2/9/5/19 also claimed that;

The lack of an ideal means government communication does own things, no standards and uniformity, poor structures and reporting lines, hence lack of understanding and appreciation.

In addition, Respondent 1/9/5/19 explained;

A lot of these issues facing government communication are historical, and things have now come to a head, where now we have to resolve matters and professionalise communication. We are on the right path; we should see a change.

These findings imply that while government communicators at the management level believe that government doesn’t foster diversity and strong communication mechanisms at the middle and lower level, communicators at the middle and lower level believe that government fosters diversity and builds strong communication mechanisms. These findings demonstrate that at the top level management, there is no appreciation for stronger communication mechanisms, but at the middle and lower level, there is a clear understanding and appreciation for strong communication mechanisms.

These findings further imply that the failure by government to foster diversity and strong communication mechanism is as a result of a culture of mistrust, political diversity, misunderstanding on the role of communication, lack of ideal
communication structure and process, and lack of appreciating communication as a management function. Government should build excellent communication units that provide a conducive working environment.

5.3.19 Communication Policies and Strategic Needs

The study findings on the whether government recognizes communication policies and the strategic needs are presented in Table 5.15 below.

| Table 5.15: Government Recognition of Communication Policies and Strategic Needs |
|---------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------------|-----------------|
|                                 | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent  | Cumulative Percent |
| Very much recognises            | 9        | 13.4    | 15.0           | 15.0             |
| Recognises                      | 20       | 29.9    | 33.3           | 48.3             |
| Minimally recognises            | 21       | 31.3    | 35.0           | 83.3             |
| Does not recognise              | 17       | 25.4    | 16.7           | 100.0            |
| Total                           | 67       | 100.0   | 100.0          |                  |

From the findings in Table 5.15, 29(43.3%) of the respondents (PCOs) believed that government recognised communication policies and strategic needs, 21(31.3%) indicated that there was minimal recognition, while 17(25.4%) said that the government did not recognise communication policies and strategic needs. The interview findings corroborated the findings from the PCOs by indicating that government recognizes communication policies, but they are not based on the strategic needs.

Research in government communication offices had been difficult because of a lack of resources. Respondent 1/5/19 highlighted how the office of the information secretary did not have a budget and could imagine the case at the PCOs level. Yet communication professionals were expected to come up with plans that could meet the current communication landscape. Interestingly, the management was aware of
the severely limited resources when it comes to identifying the information needs that could inform policies. Respondent 2/5/19 said,

*A lot is to be done, but it is a working progress. We recently brought a media monitoring firm to help us with data and research needs, to have a basis for our decisions.*

These findings imply that the government of Kenya is yet to appreciate the important role of communication in governance. Communication is critical in ensuring transparency and access to information, that if government recognised the strategic role of communication, it would communicate based on the needs of its citizens, engage the citizens and ensure communication enhances democracy.

5.3.20 Implementation of Effective Communication Strategies

Table 5.16 below presents results on the implementation of effective communication strategies within government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimally</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 5.16 show that 20(29.8%) of the respondents said government implemented effective communication strategies, 25(37.4%) said the strategies were somehow effective, while 14(20.9%) indicated that the strategies were not effective. The findings from the interviews revealed that the government did not implement effective communication strategies, as it was confirmed by 20.9% of the quantitative data. Respondent 1/1/2/19 argued that;

*Our implementation of policies and strategies has not been good because of the political cycles and ‘Big man syndrome’. The syndrome has hindered...*
information flow, because the PCOs keep complaining that they do not have access to the right information, again because of the level they are at, which is a structural challenge.

The current communication system had failed the PCOs in performing their duties. Therefore, their strategies were as good as it did not exist. Although, lack of budget and understaffing have been a major hindrance to the implementation of communication strategies and policies. Respondent 2/22/2/19 said;

*I am sure if you asked our PCOs, they are likely to tell you that If there is no budget to run a unit, where will the budget to conduct research that would enable the effective communication strategies to come from? We almost do not expect the existence of communication strategies.*

From these findings, there are indication of the failure by the government to provide adequate resources for research and planning and for a reliable and realistic assessment of the strengths, weakness, opportunity, and threats. This might have resulted into ineffective or lack of communication strategies. The findings also imply that government did not have an overarching communication strategy that coordinates communication from the three agencies. Each of the units operates based on their understanding of communication, while some units have a strategy, some do not.

The findings would also imply that other units did not have adequate resources to develop a communication strategy. While some of the units were over-resourced, others were under-resourced not just because government did not have the resources needed due to poor planning and political interferences, thus, where some of the resources were diverted to other units.

5.3.21 Formalised and Hierarchical Reporting Lines

The respondents were asked whether government has formalised and hierarchial reporting line that affect the flow of government communication. The findings are presented in Table 5.17 below.
Table 5.17: Reporting Lines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Formalised</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalised</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>54.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat Formalised</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>37.1</td>
<td>91.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Formalised</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.17 shows that on average, government communication had formalised and hierarchical reporting lines. Almost half of the PCOS at 34(50.7%) of the respondents said government had formalised and hierarchical reporting lines, 23(34.3%) said the government had somehow formalized reporting lines, while 10(15%) said the government did not have formalized and hierarchical reporting lines. Further, the findings from the interviews indicated that government communication was extremely formalised and had hierarchical reporting lines. Respondent 2/9/5/19 said;

*Government by nature is secretive and bureaucratic, it is structured on secrecy and not so open. A lot of useful information has not been utilized; most officers shy off from providing information because they are sworn to secrecy.*

According to Respondent 2/5/19, the Office Secret Act has always been used against an officer who provided information to the public, even when it was necessary. He/She said;

*It is not the ideal way to work but we act in wisdom. By keeping quiet, we protect ourselves from victimisation. The problem is when you keep quiet there is a lot of misinformation, alternative sources, and mistrust that you end up playing catch up.*

The study found out that government is bureaucratic that even media and citizens seem incapable of understanding. Bureaucracy is not a bad thing, but what it
means is that information does not flow as quickly as it ought to. Respondent 1/1/2/19 argued that:

As a communication officer, I can sit here and know something, but I cannot comment because I am not the person mandated to comment. Therefore, I have to go through my reporting lines, to my line manager, to the principal secretary (PS), to the cabinet secretary (CS), and it will not be me speaking but the CS or President, by the time that information is out, it is also outdated.

These findings show that the government had very formalised and hierarchical reporting lines, which were a hindrance to the free flow of information and effective communication. The findings also imply that the laws and policies on communication flow restrict transparency and hinder the governance process. Government communication is therefore, seen as a tool used to fight against democracy.

5.3.22 Position of Government Communication in the Organizational Chart

Figure 5.4 below presents the findings on the position of government communication in the organisational chart.

![Diagram showing Position of Government Communication in the Organizational Chart](image)

**Figure 5.4: Position of Government Communication in the Organizational Chart**

Findings in Figure 5.4 shows that 41(60.6%) of the respondents believed that government communication was defined on the organisation chart, but its status kept changing, 15(22.7%) stated that the position of government communication was not
defined, while 11(16.7%) said the position was defined and fixed. This findings show that communication is defined in the government structure, but its status keeps changing depending on the political regime in power. Findings from the interviews revealed that government communication was not clearly defined in the structure. To an extent, the findings from the interviews corroborate with the findings from the PCOs whereby 22.7% said government communication was not defined. Though 60.6% of them indicated that government communication was clearly defined in the government structure, it keeps changing or 17.6% fixed.

The communication function of government is a unit in transition, that has evolved depending on the political cycle. Respondent 1/1/2/19 said;

*We have had the initial structure where we got different small communication units all over the place, some not quite defined and others formal, but all they existed and functioned in various capacities.*

As a result, communication functions and activities did not have a unified front, communication had not performed so well, each unit had been doing its things with no consultation or coordination, thus, they all speak from different angles. Further Respondent 2/9/5/19 claimed;

*There are so many historical injustices, stagnation, understaffing and lack of appreciation for communication that have led to the lack of action-oriented and poor performance.*

Further changes in the structure and practice of government communication should be done in a consultative and strategic manager. Recently, there were changes in the structure where the OGS, NGCC, DPC, and DIS and all other official government communication agencies and channels were placed under the Ministry of ICT. Even before this new change, there was yet an attempt to streamline government communication. Respondent 1/1/2/19 said;
Government communication is in transition, therefore we will keep on working and modifying it until we get to the right place and have a unified action-oriented force.

Given these findings, it implies that government communication is not professionalized in such a way that all professionals and units work in a coordinated and standardised form. Government communication does not have an overarching structure and strategy that flows from the Presidency down to the PCOs at the ministries. These findings are an indication of a fragmented and uncoordinated communication structure, that operates without a planned strategy.

The findings further imply that the structure of communication in government is defined by the political organization, party, or actors in power. Further, the findings implies that the structure is based on the President’s communication as a central figure, and the CS’s political interests. There is also an implication that communication in government is on transition, even though government has begun to recognise a need for increased visibility of communication as a management and leadership function.

5.3.23 Influence of Legislation, Policies, and Conventions

Figure 5.5 presents results on the influence of legislation, policies and conventions to government communication in Kenya.

Figure 5.5: Influence of Legislation, Policies, and Conventions
Figure 5.5 shows that a majority of the respondents at 57(85.1%) said that there were legislation, policies, and conventions that influence their operations, while 10(14.9) (n=10) said there were no conventions, legislation, and policies. The findings from the interviews were in line with these results. The majority of the interview respondents, 15 out of 21, agreed that there exist legislation, policies, and conventions, two respondents said that they exist but they were limited, while four respondents indicated that there was a need to strengthen the already existing legislation and policies, and to introduce specific ones to address not just the defined structure of government communication but also to institutionalise and professionalise the practice of public communication into government structures.

These findings suggest that government has extensive legislation, policies, and conventions regarding communication. Clear and publicly known legislation, policies, and convention provide a proper understanding of communication. The findings also imply that the existing legislation, policies, and conventions are limited to information flow and not so much into the operations and structures of government communication. Further implies that the existing legislation and policies do not facilitate communication as a management tool nor empower professionals to operate at the management level.

The findings further show that the existing legislation and policies do not protect government communication from political interferences, the legislation and policies do not give a clear bordering between government communication and political communication.

5.3.24 Range of Legislation, Policies, and Conventions

Figure 5.6 presents findings on the range of legislation, policies and conventions about government communication in Kenya.
As per the findings in Figure 5.6, out of the 56 respondents, 41 (61.2%) said that communication legislation, policies, and conventions were limited, 16 (23.9%) respondents said that there was a wide range of communication legislations, policies, and conventions on government communication, and 10 (14.9%) respondents said that there was lack of specialised communication legislation, policies, and conventions. Respondents 3/9/5/19 said:

*The legislation, policies, and conventions are limited to Access of information, Information and Communication Act, PRSK code of ethics, MCK Act, and Official Secrecy Act.*

These findings imply that there are no specific policies, conventions, and legislation on the practice of public communication and professional standards in government communication. The findings are an indication that there is a need for specific legal frameworks to professionalise government communication in Kenya.

### 5.3.25 Cross-tabulation on the Roles of Communication

Figure 5.7 presents cross-tabulation data on the roles of central national government communication in Kenya
Figure 5.7 indicate that, on average, communication management in government mainly focuses on media relations and crisis communication. On one hand, government communication is characterized by limited strategic planning and implementation at the departmental level. Apart from PSCU that had an existing communication strategy, OGS and PCOs did not have an operating strategy or plan for communication at the Ministries. At the Ministry level, communication has been majorly focusing on media relations and public relations campaigns. On the other hand, strategic planning and research assessment are done at NGCC and PSCU.

These findings are also an indication that government communication is majorly focused on publicity and media relations, rather than the strategic role of communication that of research and environmental scanning, relationship and reputation management, communication strategies and management. The findings
further imply that communication is not at the managerial task level, where research assessment is a key component of communication management.

5.3.2.6 Financial Information

The results in Figure 5.8 below are responses to the amount of financial information provided to communication professionals within government.

Figure 5.8: Financial Information on Government Communication

Figure 5.8 shows that communication professionals do not receive quarterly and annual financial information about their activities and programs for MDAs. The lack of financial information about funds allocation, expenditures, and evaluation of their financial performance was due to lack of budget allocation to communication officers at the ministries. Forty (62%) respondents said there was limited financial information about government communication, 14(21%) said there was intensive financial information on government communication, and 11(17%) respondents said there was no financial information about government communication.

Data from the interviews indicated that a majority of the respondents did not receive systemic financial information. They indicated that the poor communication
structure and nature of government was a key factor in not receiving this financial report. Respondent 1/1/2/19 said;

Poor structures have hindered communication professionals from controlling any budget, such that their operations and activities are not reflected in government budget lines.

Respondent 2/9/5/19 added;

The Office of the Information Secretary does not have a budget. The office has been directed to get its budget from DPC yet that directorate is already struggling.

Respondent 2/9/5/19 claimed;

The DPC receives a budget of about 12M per year, which is not sufficient to pay rent. The other day, they were locked out due to rent arrears. Also, the nature of government is in such a way that it does not provide feedback, officers are required to provide reports, but no feedback is provided from the government side.

These findings imply that government needs to provide the financial information necessary for communication professionals to assess the resources allocated versus their performance and productivity. The financial information will be an indicator of the government investment in communication, gauging the capacity of communication, evaluating the deficiency, building capacity, unified distribution of resources and needs assessment in enabling strategic communication.

The findings on financial information imply that government communication is not driven by accountability, there are no set expectations and a way to measure achievements, accountability, and transparency. It is also an indication that there is no unified financial understanding amongst employees, government communicators do not have an understanding of the government operations, they are not empowered to take action, and neither do they have a sense of collective responsibility, hence no job satisfaction resulting to decreased performance.
5.3.27 Role of Government Communicators

The findings on the role of communication professionals in government is presented in Figure 5.9 below.

![Figure 5.9: Role of Government Communicators](image)

The findings in Figure 5.9 show that most government communication officers provide administrative and advisory roles to the government. 31 (47.7%) of the respondents said that they did administrative functions, 20 (30.8%) respondents said they played the advisory function, 10 (15.4%) respondents indicated that theirs was a ceremonial function, while 4 (6.2%) respondents said they did executive functions. However, the findings from the interviews showed that most communication professionals played an advisory role. Respondent 3/1/4/19 said;

*As much as communication functions are defined by the person heading the unit/office ‘the owner of the voice’, professionals are there to provide expert advice, the owner of the voice has a choice to regard/disregard the actions. Professionals play an advisory role.*

Respondent 2/22/2/19 added;

*In an ideal situation, the role of communication officers at the ministries should be advisory, but due to structural challenges, most communication officers at the ministries (apart from the consultants) report to and are evaluated by, the MDAs who have a poor understanding of the role of
communication, therefore most PCOs play the role of publicists, media relations and personal assistants.

The nature and understanding of communication in government are in such a way that communication comes into play only during a crisis and publicity. Even then, Respondent 1/1/2/19 said;

_They are called upon to play administrative roles of media relations and crisis communication, and not advisory. The role of communication is poorly understood and not clearly defined._

Respondent 2/9/5/19 added;

_Most communication officers end up doing administrative work, more of personal assistant and publicity clerks. As a result, the PCOS and IOs have been placed in one category – journalists._

These findings suggest that there is a lack of a clear understanding of the role of communication in government. Majority of those in leadership view communication as a media relations or publicity function, and not a communication management role. It also implies that communication does not enable government to be impartial, transparent, and accountable, as well as opens ways of engaging and allowing citizens to participate in the governance process.

The findings further indicate that there is a need to streamline and redefine the role of communication in government such that communication professional work in a structured and standardized manner. It also implies that professionals believe that communication has a strategic significance in defining the long-term goals and relationships, planning coordinated communication for reputation management.

5.3.28 Employment Status of Government Communicators

Figure 5.10 below shows the results about the employment status of communication professionals in government.
The findings in Figure 5.10 show that most communication professionals in government were permanently employed: 48(71.6%) of the respondents said they were permanently employed, 15(22.4%) respondents said they were employed as consultants, and 4(5.9%) respondents said they were employed on contract. The findings from the interviews revealed that 15 of the respondents were permanently employed and six respondents were employed on contract.

These findings show that the majority of the professionals in the government communication were permanently employed, therefore, the communication can function in a consistent and long-term way. The findings also imply that the communication professionals who had been recruited on a contract basis, as communication advisors/consultants might have managed to find their way into the system to be employed permanently. The findings would also mean that majority of the communication professionals have been in government for a long period, thus, the government should have consistent communication strategies and programs.

5.3.29 Professional Background

The study’s findings on the professional background of the government communicators is presented in Figure 5.11 below.
Government communication professionals have a professional background in the field of communication. The findings in Figure 5.11 show that 35(52.2%) of the respondents had professional background in mass communication, 15(22.4%) respondents had professional in public relations (PR), 8(11.9%) had professional in information technology (IT), 6(8.9%) in languages, and 3(4.5%) had education background in other fields. These findings imply that the majority of government communicators have a professional background in the communication field with major specialization in PR, IT, and languages increasingly considered acceptable in performing communication functions.

These findings further imply that communication in government reflects the long-held presumption that communication is equivalent to media relations or publicity, the tactical communication approach, and not the relationship management and research-oriented towards the strategic approach. The findings are also an indication that government acknowledges that communication is a wide field that needs various skills and specialization, which for government seems to be one of the requirements for employment into government communication positions.
5.3. 30 Level of Education

Figure 5.12 below presents findings on the level of education amongst communication professionals within government.

![Figure 5.12: Level of Education of Government Communicators](image)

The findings in Figure 5.12 show that most of the government communicators at 46(68.7%) had a Masters degree, followed by 17(25.4%) with Bachelors degree, then 3(4.5%) had PhD, and 1(1.5%) had a Diploma. Out of the 21 interviewees that were conducted, it was established that six respondents had a PhD, twelve had a Masters degree, while three had a Bachelors degree.

These findings indicated that government has high levels of educated communication professionals. On the contrary communication, professionals are not involved in strategic decision making, communication is positioned at the lower level of the government structure and is still ineffective. The finding implies that educational qualification does not equate to high performance in government, instead of other factors that play the performance of communication. As the researcher earlier found out, such factors may include; poor structural processes, lack of planning and evaluation, political interferences, stagnation, and lack of a reward system.
5.3.31 Professional Bodies or Associations

The study’s findings on the membership of government communicator’s into professional bodies/associations is presented in Figure 5.13 below.

Figure 5.13: Membership of Professional Bodies Associations

Figure 5.13 shows that the majority of the respondents were members of professional bodies: 52(78%) were members of Public Relations Society of Kenya (PRSK), 6(9%) were members of Media Council of Kenya (MCK), 5(7%) were members of ICT Association of Kenya (ICTAK), and 4(6%) did not belong to any professional body/association. The findings from the interviews revealed that all the 21 respondents were members of the PRSK and MCK. Respondents 1/1/2/19 said that Ministry of ICT pays the membership annual fees for all PCOs and IOs.

The professional body membership provides an opportunity for the officers to enroll in the specifically tailor-made courses. Government does not have a professional body that can specifically address the professional standards in communication, instead, all PCOs and IOs are expected to enroll for short civil service courses at the Kenya School of Government (KSG). These courses include; Strategic Leadership Development Program (SLDP), and Senior management course (SMC). Respondent 1/1/2/19 explained that;
KSG does not offer any specialized communication course, we acknowledge the gap, and we have therefore taken the initiative to facilitate the membership fees to PRSK and MCK for all our communication officers.

Respondent 2/9/5/19 further said;

We appealed to PRSK to assist in offering training and filling the gaps especially with PCOs which is the tone of the most misunderstood function of communication in government.

These findings imply that government communication had not yet been professionalised, cannot, therefore, function as per the expected professional standards. Government communication lacks the capacity in terms of structures, processes, knowledge, and framework for good practice. A professional body will ensure that principles of good practice, codes, and guidelines are enshrined within government communication, and a clear career structure is institutionalized.

5.3.31 Opportunities for Professional/Career Development

The findings on the opportunities for professional or career development within government is presented in Table 5.18 below.

| Table 5.18: Training and Skills Development for Government Communicators |
|---------------------------------|------|------|------|------|
|                                 | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Lack of opportunities for professional development | 9 | 13.4 | 14.8 | 14.8 |
| Available opportunities for professional development | 43 | 64.2 | 70.5 | 85.3 |
| Limited opportunities for professional development | 15 | 22.4 | 14.7 | 100.0 |
| Total | 67 | 100.0 |

Table 5.18 shows that 43(64.2%) of the respondents said professional development opportunities were available, 15(22.4%) respondents said there were limited opportunities, and 9(13.4%) respondents said there was lack of opportunities for professional development in government. However, findings from interviews
showed that almost all respondents have had training and skills development in communication, and the opportunities for professional developments were available.

Respondent 1/1/2/19 argued;

*Depending on the job groups, our officers enroll at KSG for training in leadership and civil service courses. The officers are also encouraged to advance their educational background, where the government facilitates the cost of the program.*

Further findings indicated the PCOs and senior communication officers have limited opportunities for professional development; most of them have not had any training for the longest time, thus, they were still operating on the old skills and knowledge. This is against the communication landscape which had drastically changed. Respondent 3/1/2/19 claimed;

*The lack of training is due to the continuous restructuring of the communication units.*

Respondent 2/1/2/19 added;

*This is a ministry in transition, some of the professional gaps have been due to the transitional changes.*

For instance, the role of the Information Secretary had recently been re-defined, part of his/her job description is to ensure that the PCOs and IOs are well trained and facilitated to do their job. It is a mandate that should be taken seriously because there is a serious gap. However, the major challenge is on the set-up in terms of structure and budget; the current structure in almost all the communication units does not favour professionals. This was noted by Respondent 2/1/2/19 who explained;

*Such that even if you wanted to train the PCOs and IOs, the DPC does not have that budget, and that budget cannot reside with her. The training budgets are under the ministries where the communication officers are deployed. The situation is so tragic that even the ministry does not have the files of the communication officers to even know the skills and needs gaps for training, the files are not in this ministry, they are with the ministries that have*
deployed our officers. I propose for PRSK to assist in filling the gap, in terms of training at an affordable cost.

These findings suggested that the training and professional development opportunities are limited, not systematic, and specialized to communication needs. It also implies that the professionals are not offered advanced and professional courses could sharpen their skills and understanding of the ever-changing communication trends and environment. The findings are a further indication that there are no comprehensive and mandatory programs to sharpen communication skillsets or offer specialization into the diverse field of government communication.

5.3.32 Recruitment Process for Communication Positions

Figure 5.14 presents findings on the recruitment process for communication positions within government.

Figure 5.14: Recruitment Process for Communication Positions

Figure 5.14 shows that most of government communicators at 41(61.2%) were recruited through the selection process, followed by 12(17.9%) who were appointed, then 8(11.9%) who were recommended, and 4(5.9%) who were headhunted. Findings from the interviews indicated that those interviewed at the OGS and PSCU were all appointed, those at the ministry of ICT were all civil servants except for Principal
Secretary Information Secretary and the Head Of Central Media Services who is a seasoned civil servant.

These findings revealed that there are different categories of deployment, the career servants are those that were recruited through selection, most seasoned career servants are those that are recruited either through recommendation or headhunted as consultants but later selected into certain job groups with government, such professionals are civil servants but also work for the private sector. The last group is those that are appointed; they are recruited by government officers in the senior positions such as CS, PS, or the President. Respondent 2/22/2/19 said;

*These are the groups that are deployed as political appointees, and sometimes their tenure of working in government ends with the political cycles, though some of them, find their way into government offices even after elections.*

Respondent 1/22/2/19 further claimed that;

*How the officers are deployed plays a critical role in their functioning, availability of resources and positioning into the job level.*

The above findings are an indication that other than an educational qualification; government communicators are also deployed based on the political system. The political appointees are recruited into the structure by political powers, while the appointees, recommended and headhunted may have been recruited for other interests other than the PSC basic requirements and procedures, the selected may be civil servants who were recruited through the PSC guidelines. Each of the officer’s roles and tasks as defined by their respective appointees. Such complexity may result in conflicts if there is no clear division and clear guidelines of the tasks and may lead to uncoordinated and inconsistent communication. The findings also imply that government communication recruitment process at times does not follow the laid procedures and processes by the Public service commission (PSC).
5.4 Summary of Key findings

The findings indicate that there were variances in all job groups. In total, the government communication units had a variance of 138 communication officers at various job levels. These imply that the government did not have enough communication officers as required by the MDAs. As a result, there was increased workload and less supervision, leading to decreased productivity, and inadequate implementation of functions and strategies.

The findings showed that the government communication is both public and politically oriented. Government is a public institution that is constituted by the citizens' consent and charged to enact the citizens' will. Its communication is directed to the citizens, played out in public space, for the public good, and subject to public scrutiny. Therefore, it considers the diverse and complex groups of stakeholders including politicians, media, and all kinds of citizens.

Due to its both public and political orientation; the study found that some of the professionals were recruited through political appointment or selection. The appointees might have been recruited for political interests, and, the selected might be civil servants whose communication serves the citizens. Such diversity and complexity might have resulted in uncoordinated communication. There should be a clear division between the selected, appointed, and recommended government communicators, such that their roles are defined and tasks differentiated in a way that unifies government communication.

The government communication is multilayered and diversified, it wrestles with considerable complexities that might hinder it from operating on long-term goals. The study found out that the fact that the government communication operates in a political environment, it means that political interests, cycles, and culture determine
its operations, in such a way that communication professionals may politically be appointed to fulfill the political interest but in the short-term. This may result into inconsistency and poor planning. Further findings showed that the government communication is characterized by the short or medium-term goals that mostly emanate during crises, strong political influence, limited specialized units, and positioned at lower organizational levels. Government communication is considered to be a tactical tool rather than a strategic tool.

The OGS placement under the Ministry of ICT, with new functions and roles, might have been a direction towards the improvement of communication, such that, communication is well-coordinated, efficient, and consistent in terms of messaging. The appointment of the office holder may also imply that the head of communication units/agencies are appointed on a partisan basis rather than using the professional criteria. Meaning government communication is politicized and used in promoting the interests of political parties/actors in government.

The researcher found out that there was increased relevance on the President as a central role. There is a growing need for the President’s public opinion approval ratings, which citizens use to evaluate the President’s performance. PSCU had, therefore, adopted new forms of communication such as speeches, message development, social media and video clips; and direct communication. The positioning of the Head of PSCU close to the President, and reporting directly the President, is an indication that communication at the Presidency is strategically positioned and expected to perform the strategic role.

Further findings suggested that government communication is decentralised, fragmented, and uncoordinated. There seems to be a move towards centralisation where government can speak with one voice, but the political system seems to delay.
and interfere with the process. Political actors/interests are using government communication as a political tool for their interests and not as a democratic tool for the interests of the citizens. Government communication needs to be professionalised, structurally re-organised, and resourced. As it stands, communication is not informed by research, because it operates as a tactical function than a strategic function.

The study found out that the government did not have sufficient communication channels to efficiently and effectively reach out to all its citizens. Government can adopt new interactive and effective channels that would ensure wide coverage and availability of information for citizen engagement and participation. Due to insufficient communication channels, the study also found out that citizens were not involved in agenda setting, decision-making, and policy formulation. Yet citizen involvement and participation are concepts that are synonymous with democracy, involvement, engagement, transparency and good governance.

Government views communication through media functions and sees publicity as constituting the whole scope of communications, yet there is more to strategic communication, stakeholder mapping and engagement, and, reputation management. The study found that communication in government was seen as a technical tool rather than a strategic tool.

Communication at the Presidency is well facilitated and planned. However, at the Ministry of ICT, communication was poorly structured, not well facilitated, and uncoordinated. The inadequacy to handle the communication demands is an indication of a lack of strategically planned communication that can generate, produce, and disseminate the information successfully. The failure by the government to provide adequate resources for research and planning, for reliable and realistic assessment, may have resulted to ineffective communication.
The study findings indicated that government did not foster diversity and strong communication mechanisms due to a culture of mistrust, political diversity, misunderstanding on the role of communication, lack of ideal communication structure and process, and lack of appreciating communication as a management function. Further findings revealed that formalised and hierarchical reporting lines hindered effective communication and the free flow of information. Therefore, government should form structures and flexible reporting lines that promote and sustain the diverse free flow of information.

The government has extensive legislation, policies, and conventions that provide a proper understanding of the role of communication. However, the study found that there were no specific policies and conventions on the practice and professional standards in government communication. The researcher also found out that there was lack of clear understanding of the role of communication, its functions, and its importance. There seemed to reflect the long-held presumption that communication is equivalent to media relations or publicity, the tactical communication approach, and not the relationship management and research-oriented.

The study found that the government had educated communication professionals. On the contrary, these professionals had not been involved in decision making, because communication was structurally positioned at the lower level. Besides, training and professional development opportunities are limited, not systematic, and specialized in communication needs. There is a need for a comprehensive program that offers opportunities for professional advancement, development of communication skillsets, and specialised knowledge and expertise.
CHAPTER SIX
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction
This is the last chapter and it discusses the overall key findings of the study based on research objectives. The discussion is informed by the study’s theoretical framework and literature reviewed as provided in Chapter Two. Further, the chapter provides the study’s conclusions, recommendations on the ways to improve government communication, and suggestions on the areas for further research based on gaps identified during the study.

6.2 Discussion of Key Findings

6.2.1 Structures and Process of Central National Government Communication
This section discusses the findings of the first research objective, which aimed at determining the structures and processes of central national government communication in Kenya. In critically analysing the structure and the process, the study examined the organisational chart, the representation of the communication profession in the decision-making, and how power and responsibilities are allocated at the central national government communication in Kenya.

The communication environment in Kenya has become more complex and diversified, hence the need for a specialised, coordinated and strategic approach. The existing structures should enable communication to meet the citizens' needs through the most appropriate channels and messages. Government communication should not be circumscribed to developing messages without carrying out citizen insight research for engagement. Communication activities should be distributed/allocated in a manner that gives its professionals the power to make decisions and policies that enhance
government-citizens communication. The study found out that the structure is decentralised and the functions of the three communication units are devolved.

The study established that the PSCU is charged with managing the President’s Newsroom, press relations, messaging, and digitization of presidential communications. The OGS plays the role of content oversight of all government communication channels, which include; DIS, DPC, NGCC, Media center, KNA, and MyGov. The Ministry of ICT is responsible for the following; interpretation and implementation of strategies and programs, coordinating information services for the ministries, and gathers, digitises and avail government information. The PSCU is organised at the Presidency through the EOP and headed by a Secretary of Communication/Statehouse Spokesperson. The OGS and State department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication are domiciled at the Ministry of ICT, and they are headed by a Director and Principal Secretary respectively.

The communication structures anchored under the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication comprises of well-trained and experienced communication officers (PCOs and IOs), who are seconded to MDAs and OGS. However, the formation and re-structuring of the PSCU not only disrupted the already pre-existing structures, but also took over major functions of the State Department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication. The process saw PSCU managing both Presidential and Government communication, without or with minimal engagement of the communication officers at MDAs. More concerning was the fact that PSCU took over all these functions without an overarching strategy, that could synchronise all communication activities and professionals. The study noted that the existing structure at the central national government communication in Kenya does not separate Presidential Communication and Government Communication.
The formation and re-structuring of PSCU, OGS and State department of Broadcasting and Telecommunication is an indication that the government of Kenya sought to centralise communication and elevate it to the top-tier level of the organisation’s chart. Consequently, the head of the units were given more power and responsibilities by the President (Appointing Authority) and PSC (Scheme of service). It also implies that the central national government communication in Kenya is organised as per the beauratic nature of the government in power and political interest. These findings corroborate with Meijer's (2008) arguments that government communication is organised in line with the bureaucratic nature of the government in power.

The current administration in Kenya came into power on an integrated communication that deployed multiple strategies and tactics to push key messages during the campaign, they intended to devolve and centralise communication.

The current regime appreciates the role of communication in governance, therefore, recognised and restructured communication in the organisational chart. The restructuring is important in driving the delivery of the core business of the government, and to facilitate an effective and efficient process through which the government can achieve its agenda and strategic intent. However, the process has not been successfully managed to place communication into a single unit/agency that could drive communication in a top-bottom approach. As a result, communication has not been well-coordinated, leading to inconsistent and lacks good-will from the political actors/parties. Government communication has been approached from a tactical angle, which is keen on creating a good image and publicity but fails to connect communication to citizen engagement. It has been characterised by disjointed messaging and speaking from different voices.
The government has politically organised communication in such a way that OGS and Ministry of ICT’s functions have been grouped with PSCU to realise the strategic objectives of government communication. The modalities for designing communication structures has been done through two parallel structures: the PSC and the political system in power. On one hand, PSC recruits, selects, and standardises the professionals as per the provisions of the Public Service Commission Act, 2017 (https://www.publicservice.go.ke/index.php/homepage/mandate). On the other hand, the political system provides a structure that relies on the political cycle.

The appointing authorities can establish new units, appoints the Head of the units, and define their powers and responsibilities. These parallel structures have led to either missing, inadequate, or lack of documentation that has resulted in functional overlaps, duplication of roles, and undefined responsibilities. In the PSC Guidelines on the design of the organisational structure (Government of Kenya, 2015), in some cases, the review of the structures is done in an unstructured manner that creates disparities across public service.

While several features have led to specific constraints in government communication, the study found out that the communication structures are influenced by the existing systemic environment and political system. The governance structure is a devolved system, though the national government is composed of Executive, Judiciary, and Legislature arms of government. The Executive is in charge of policy formulations and implementation of government projects, and it is headed by the President, who is elected by the Kenyan citizens for a five-year term. The President exercises executive powers, and works with the Cabinet, which comprises of the Deputy President and 21 Cabinet Secretaries who are in charge of various ministries. Kenya is a multi-party system whose hallmark is a parliamentary democracy.
The current governance structure influences the organisation of government communication. The structure is based on the political party/leader in power, therefore, communication always considers the concerns of the ministers and political actors. The structure is politically instigated, hence, communication performs political functions for political actors/parties’ interest leading to misuse of resources for political gains, and not for the interests of the citizen. Government communication is used as a campaign tool that handles the political actors/parties’ interest in building their brand for political gains. These findings are similar to Sander et al.’s (2011) arguments who insisted that the political system permits a degree of pragmatic flexibility in the functions and performance of government communication.

The finding also revealed how the government has failed to infuse communication efforts with a clear policy agenda through a comprehensive master plan, hence, the politicisation of government communication, misuse of communication channels, lack of an overarching communication strategy, and increased need for messaging control. The government has continually struggled to reconcile political communication and government communication; President’s agenda and Government agenda and to strategically communicate government agenda without losing public goodwill. The organisation of government communication in Kenya is similar to that of Germany, where the ministries have their communication units and professionals. The Chancellor/Government spokesperson is appointed by the Chancellor and answers directly to the Chancellor. The Chancellor therefore has the power to shape government communication structure (Holtz -Bacha, 2007).

Consequently, the appointment of the heads of PSCU, OGS, and State Department in Kenya is similar to that of Britain. When Tony Blair, former Prime Miniter of United Kingdom (UK) between 1997-2007, assumed office he renamed
Government Information Service (GIS) as Government Information and Communication Services (GCIS) (Sanders, 2011). GCIS was established as a strategic communication unit to monitor the media, advise on communication strategies, and coordinate communication across government. When Gordon Brown, former Prime Minister of UK between 2007-2010, came into power in 2007, he restructured the GCIS by creating a Government Nommunication Network (GCN) that was responsible for establishing standards of excellence and training for all government communicators (Mountfield, 2002). Gordon Brown appointed a civil servant as the Director of Communications and Official Spokesman. He also appointed a special adviser as the Director of Strategy to advise on communication.

It was a similar case in South Africa, where Thabo Mbeki, former President, established the Government Communication Information Services (GCIS) and appointed a CEO who was aligned to political ties (Maqeda & Makombe, 2013). The CEO served as the government spokesperson and chaired the GCIS Executive Committee (Exco). He/She was the most senior official and directly reported to the Presidency and the Cabinet (GCIS, 2002a). These case studies are a confirmation that government communication structures are influenced by the systemic environment, governance structure, and political actors/parties in power. Government communication must, therefore, be organised in such a way that it sublimated to government functions and citizen needs.

Based on this discussion, it is clear that governance structure and political interests limit the operations and potential of government communication, therefore, political neutrality is important in building trust and credibility of the government. Government should, therefore, establish structures that are well-coordinated and specialised for coherent and consistent messaging. The organisation of government communication as a network that aligns with the systemic environment and political interests is essential.
communication should bring together all communication units for a centralised system that is transparent, interactive, and engaging.

6.2.2 Whether Government Communication is Strategically Managed

The study sought to investigate whether the central national government communication in Kenya was strategically managed. The discussion in this section is based on the literature and theoretical underpinnings of excellence theory and findings on the strategic dimensions. Excellence theory propagates that communication programs should be based on formative research, have concrete and measurable objectives, use varying techniques in their implementation, and be evaluated formally (Grunig, 1992a). Communication programs must be coordinated with clear messages that inform, influence, or persuade the public in support of the organisational goal (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). This is because communication plays a key role in mediating between the organization and the publics (Grunig, 1992).

The theory proposed for senior PR Executives to be members of the dominant coalition and/or have a direct reporting relationship with the head of government. The PR Executive should be involved in strategic management and have the power to influence key organizational decisions (Grunig & Grunig, 2008). The PR executives should be able to think strategically to conceptualise and direct PR programs, and have the critical knowledge of strategic communication. Further, excellence theory advocated for the organisation to institutionalise communication, such that it is integrated into a single department or agency that provides a mechanism for coordinating all programs managed by the different units or departments.

Due to the complexities and dynamics of the structure of communication in Kenya, the study found out that government was unable to infuse all its
communication efforts into a single department/agency. The study found out that the government operated and functioned through several communication units, which tend to overlap and duplicate each other, they include; PSCU, OGS, IS, DPC, DIS, GAA, NGCC, and NCS. Further, the study found out that research did not play a role in the formation of communication strategy, therefore, communication programs were not informed by research or citizens’ needs. Government communicators were unable to conduct research due to inadequate funds and lack of budget allocation. Though the researcher was not able to obtain financial reports or budget allocation specifically dedicated to communication, the researcher established that publicity and advertising budget for all communication units within the MDAs was domiciled under GAA.

The study found that the budget allocation for the PCOs is tied to the administrative officers at the respective ministries, and their communication activities can only be funded subject to the availability of funds. While the PSCU’s finances were attached to the EOP budget and were also subject to availability of funds, the OGS and the Directorates of Public Communication, Information Services, and GAA had their budgets domiciled at the Ministry of ICT. These findings are an indication that the government communication of Kenya is not well funded or facilitated, hence the inability to operate as a strategic function. A major challenge for the researcher was the difficulty in obtaining data on financial and staffing/human resources dedicated to the three communication units. It was difficult to obtain complete data of the total number of PCOs working in both the Ministry of ICT and PSCU, details of political appointees, skills, and development of the communication professionals at the central national government in Kenya.

The study also found out that communication programs were not well coordinated and lack a clear strategy to persuade the publics to support government
policies and projects. This is because communication does not involve citizens nor does it have adequate and effective channels. It, therefore, lacks clear directions and objectives on how to enhance public knowledge on the operations of government.

While the PSCU had a communication strategy, the OGS and the Ministry of ICT did not have a working communication strategy. The findings indicate that PSCU had a five-year working strategy that was developed in 2015. The Ministry of ICT last implemented a communication strategy in 2013-2017. The central government, as a whole, did not have an overarching communication strategy. It is no wonder that respondents pointed out the lack of coordination as one of the key challenges.

These findings are an indication of a lack of a plan of action and understanding of the citizens’ needs, poor coordination, ineffectively drafted, and conflicting messages. The failure to plan, coordinate, and implement communication had resulted in poorly systematized structures, inadequate and unequal resource allocation, delayed or wrong decision-making, and reactive approaches to communication. Communication requires a more proactive and strategic approach (Kiousis & Stromback, 2011), where organisations identify the publics’ needs and incorporate them into their strategy. Further findings revealed that the government had the necessary human resource capacity needed for the strategy-making process, but government somewhat engages the professionals only during the implementation.

Communication professionals at OGS and Ministry of ICT act based on instructions from PSCU or Cabinet Secretaries, and are not involved in the planning and development of the strategies. This was reflected by how communication was formally structured at the Presidency with clearly defined roles, and how unstructured communication is at the OGS and Ministry of ICT, with not well-defined roles. Yet, both communication professionals were not only qualified but had experience and
expertise. They held Master's and Bachelors's degrees in communication and/or PR, and had also completed management courses at KSG. They had the strategic knowledge to select, lead, integrate, coordinate, and execute communication through planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. The government has the human resource capacity to effectively communicate, but it is also incapacitated by financial constraints that hinder it from operating as a strategic management function.

The strategic dimensions of government communication in Kenya are different from that of Germany, where communication is well planned, coordinated, and operates strategically. Notwithstanding the political system that exists in Germany, government communication is managed from a single communication unit called the Federal Press and Information Office (FPIO). Government communication operates in a complex and dynamic position, where the interests of both coalition partners have to be well taken into consideration. The communication strategies, therefore, allow the Ministries to have their communication units that directly communicate with the media and public (Holtz-Bacha, 2013). But at the same time, oblige the FPIO to coordinate the activities of the communication units.

The FPIO and government spokesperson work for both coalition partners (Holtz-Bacha, 2013). The strategy in place has enabled the government to function strategically by putting a clear distinction between political and government communication. The government of Germany has laid down policies on the operations and functionalities of communication, it has specified the communication roles and strategies, and takes into consideration the citizens’ concerns (Sanders, Canel & Holtz-Bacha, 2011). The case of Germany is an indication that excellence theory’s propagation for excellent PR departments, strategic programs, elevated PR
functions, and empowered PR executives can be well implemented if a clear line is
drawn between political communication and government communication.

However, in fragile democracies such as Kenya, where the government
communication is on transition and driven by political interest, differentiating
political communication from government communication may be a challenge as
proven by this study’s findings. Government communication takes place in a public
sector environment; where coordination, implementation, and integration of
programs, empowerment of professionals, and distribution of resources, may be
hindered by various factors that are not similar to those in the private sector. In
Kenya, government communication operates within a political environment that is
driven by political actors and interests, and its functions are dictated by the existing
governance structure, which leads to structural changes defined by the political cycle.
Such complex and complicated dynamics may limit the operations of communication
from functioning as a strategic tool in achieving government agenda.

6.2.3 Political Dimension of Central National Government Communication

The third objective of this study was to examine the political dimension of the
central national government communication in Kenya. This section discusses the
findings based on the theoretical underpinnings of deliberative democracy theory, and
the literature as outlined in Chapter Two. Deliberative democratic theory advocated
for a deliberative society in which ordinary citizens can participate in political
discussion and debate (Bohman, 1998). The theory assumed that deliberation forms
the core of legitimate decision making and self-government (Bohman, 1998, p. 401).

Further, the theory pre-supposed that deliberation should be determined by the
extent to which participants have access to accurate and relevant information, the
extent to which participants honestly assess the merits of the information presented;
Deliberative democracy theory presumed that deliberation increases the legitimacy of democratic institutions (Benhabib 1996). The government should provide channels and environments through which citizens can deliberate and interact; because government communication is a key factor in how the government plays its role of informing citizens, setting the agenda, and defining the public discourse (Dahlberg, 2007).

However, the study findings revealed that the government communication in Kenya does not involve its citizens; it has ineffective and inadequate communication channels. This means that the Kenyan government did not provide adequate, relevant, and accurate information for the deliberation and participation of its citizens. The study further found out that politics restricted the accessibility of accurate information, defined the extent to which citizens participate in the deliberations, and was a hindrance to equal participation. Politics was at the core of defining the operations, functions, and appointments in government communication. Holtz-Bacha (2007) confirmed that government communication remains a political instrumental at the disposal of those in power. The study established that appointments of the Director of Communication of PSCU, who is also the Statehouse Spokesperson (media background) and Government Spokesperson (military background) did not follow the PSC recruitment process, such appointments were politically considered.

The study found out that political actors appoint officials into communication positions as a reward for helping them win or retain the office. The study established that the political appointees existed in all the communication units: PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT. They were appointed to the highest positions, as civil servants remained at the middle and lower-level positions. Also, the ever-changing structures
and changes at the PSCU, OGS, and Ministry of ICT are an indication that
government communication is a tool that is often used by political actors for their
interest. As much as the political appointees work for the government, their roles and
relevance are influenced by the appointing authorities. For instance, the current Head
of PSCU, OGS, Cabinet secretary, Principal Secretary, and Information Secretary in
charge of Communication were all appointed by the President. Their powers and
responsibilities are, therefore, prescribed by the appointing authority, the President.

The study findings indicated that the appointing authorities in government
communication, who are the President and the CS of the Ministry of ICT, determine
who occupies the two offices, and the extent of their influence. Each appointing
authority, whether it is the President or the Cabinet Secretary has the power to shape
government communication. For instance, the Director of Communication at the
PSCU, the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry of ICT, and the Principal Secretary of
the Ministry of ICT report to the President. The Directors of Public Communication,
Information Services, and GAA report to the Information Secretary. The PCOs report
to the Administrators/Human Resource Office at the MDAs. These appointing
authorities determine the structures and reporting lines of the appointees or operations
of the communication units.

The appointing authorities have the power to influence the amount of
resources and budget, define the powers and responsibilities of the officer/units, and
form and re-structure government communication. As much as some of these
appointees have the necessary qualification and skills needed for the jobs, the
researcher was unable to access further details on the process of these appointments
and their performance in the appointed jobs. The above findings are a confirmation of
the complexities and political influences in government communication. Falsca and
Nord (2013) argued that the complexities and different interests are not isomorphic, but such changes may lead to fragmented and uncoordinated communication.

Similar appointments were done in South Africa where the CEO of GCIS and Government Spokesperson was appointed by the President. This appointment was aligned to political ties between the President and the appointee. In German, the Spokesperson and Head of FPIO report directly to the Chancellor, who is the appointing authority. In Britain, the appointment of the Chief Press Secretary - Alastair Campbell and the Chief of Staff - Jonathan Powell as special advisers was done by the Prime minster. The Chief Press Secretary was given exceptional powers to instruct civil servants (Blair, 2010, p.170); this brought conflicts and disharmony that led to the resignation of several heads of information. The Press Secretary occupied the central role in government communication and typically was recruited based on political party connection and a journalistic background (Seymour, 2003).

In government communication, political actors constantly push the envelope for their interest and that of their political parties (Holtz-Bacha, 2007a). They do this to increase their popularity, especially during campaigns and electioneering period. For instance, the government of Germany repeatedly used resources of the FPIO for political interests, it placed adverts in the media that were regarded as electoral advertising. The opposition accused the government of using FPIO resources to campaign, during the electioneering period. Government was ordered by the court to abstain from advertising in favour of any of the competing parties, and of giving any impression of influencing public opinion to the advantage of any political party. The court argued that government communication reaches its limits where electoral advertising begins (Holtz-Bacha, 2013). The court also distinguished between permitted communication activities of the government and inadmissible activities.
The findings on the political dimension of government communication in Kenya confirmed the theoretical underpinnings in this study. They are in alignment with the arguments that the governance structure and political systems to a large extent define the structure and process of government communication. The political actors and interests shape the structures, units/departments, professionals who occupy communication positions, influence resource allocation, and budgets for communication activities. As a result, communication is limited to publicity, media management, and propaganda, as opposed to strategic communication. Such political factors expose communication to external interferences, restricts accessibility to accurate information, defines the extent to which citizens can participate, and limits its potential in enhancing transparency and accountability in government, for a better democracy. There is a need for professionalisation of government communication, such that it operates from a standardised and ethical approach, that differentiates government communication from political communication.

6.2.4 Role of Government Communication in Facilitating Citizen Participation.

This section discusses the findings of the fourth research objectives that assessed the extent to which the central national government communication facilitates citizen participation in Kenya. The findings are discussed based on the literature review and the theoretical underpinnings in both Excellence theory of PR and Deliberative theory. Deliberative democracy theory postulates that democracy is based on deliberations that produce a reasonable and well-informed public opinion that is anchored on discussions, transparency and accountability (Chambers, 2003).

It is a “talk-centric democratic theory” that views democracy as the arena in which fixed preferences and interests compete via fair mechanisms of aggregation.
The theory advocates for a government that contextualises its communication to the various audiences and move beyond just pushing messages, into creating real-time and credible feedback system. Communication that facilitates dialogue and produces mutually-beneficial relationships (Grunig & Huang, 2000). This study established that in Kenya, government communication did not have adequate and effective channels of communication to reach out to its citizens.

The PSCU mostly used Twitter, Facebook, Website, and traditional media (TV, Radio, and Newspaper), OGS used press conferences, and, the Ministry of ICT used websites, traditional media (TV, Radio, and Newspaper). The Kenyan government communication was one way; it had adopted ‘top-down’ and two-way asymmetrical approach, where government only issues Executive orders, directives, circulars, and press statements. Instead of a two-way approach that creates awareness, interacts with citizens, provides a feedback system for decisions.

Further, the researcher found out that communication professionals did not have models that assessed the needs of the citizens nor involve citizens in the policy formulation process. There was also a lack of evaluation on the performance and effectiveness of communication in government. These findings contradict Grunig et al. (2002) arguments that communication is an evaluative tool to be used in measuring the attributes and practices of an organisation, that build quality and long-term relationships with strategic constituencies. An organisation can achieve its goal when it effectively consults its stakeholders (Grunig et al., 1992).

These findings also imply that there is a lack of dialogue, interaction, and exchange of information between the government and its citizens. Contrary to the Public Participation Act (2018) that considers public participation a crucial pillar of democracy in Kenya (CoK, 2010). Public participation provides the publics with the
opportunity to take part in the decision-making process. Such processes include; budgeting, legislative, public procurement, and tendering. During public participation, communication provides patterns of interaction, exchange, and linkages between the organisation and its publics (Broom et Al., 2000).

Deliberative democracy theory also advocates for the communicative processes of opinion, will-formation that precede voting and accountability replaces consent as the conceptual core of legitimacy (Cooke, 2000). Communication that secures a central place for a reasoned discussion, where accountability is primarily understood by publicly articulating, explaining, and justifying public policy. For such communication to take place, research must be conducted to understand the citizens' needs and inform the content to be disseminated. It should also guide the use of effective and multiple communication channels that encourage open and proactive communication. Communication should, therefore, be free and equal, in such a way that it forms the core of legitimate political decision making and self-government.

In Kenya, the government is yet to infuse its communication efforts with a clear master plan and to deliberately use communication channels to influence policy or promote its agenda. The current government came to power on the premise of integrated communications that deployed multiple channels to push key messages. It opened up multiple social media platforms to directly push content to citizens. Digital platforms became key tools of communication, they conveniently and interactively facilitated government-citizen engagements. Initially, PSCU managed to communicate and engage citizens through Twitter, but it was not long before controversies emerged from the use of the President’s Twitter accounts. Some accounts were closed and others remained inactive. The communication on digital platforms was disorganised and poorly coordinated; the President’s communication
on twitter constantly contradicted his image and that of government.

The central national government still struggles with reconciling its agenda and deploying its persuasive powers to strategically communicate without losing public goodwill. This study found out that government heavily relied on tactical communication and is keen on creating a good image, rather than putting its efforts toward citizens' engagement and participation. The government did not have a communication strategy/approach that facilitates access to information and open dialogue for transparent and accountable decisions. Communication should facilitate deliberations that produce a reasonable and well-informed public opinion that is anchored on discussions, transparency and accountability (Chambers, 2003). Citizens not only expect service delivery from their government, they want to be part of the deliberations, be involved in decision making, trust, and support government agenda.

Even though provisions in the constitution advocate for public participation and access to information, the government had continuously restricted accessibility to crucial information by introducing or using certain Acts of Law. In withholding critical information and restricting public participation, the government had used various laws, including Defamation Act; Preservation of Public Security Act, Section 52 of the Penal Code, Books and Newspapers Act, Computer Misuse and Cyber Crime Act, 2018, Prevention of Terrorism Act, and National Assembly (Powers and Privileges) Act. For instance, the government uses the Secrets Act to restrict civil servants from sharing information that is of public interest. Professionals who have been open and proactive to share such information have either been victimised or blacklisted, yet the information shared was critical for an informed citizenry.

In South Africa, the government involves its citizens, conducts research, and offers communication channels/platforms for government-citizen interaction. The
government strengthens communication through GCIS, Thusong Services center, Presidential Press Corps, Imbizo, and Public Participation Programme. GCIS informs citizens about government projects and offers ways for them to participate in governance and democracy (Maqeda & Makombe, 2013). GCIS reaches citizens through publications, meetings, awareness programs, new media, radio, television. It also reaches out through Imbizo (a forum for dialogue) that increases and promotes interactive governance, in all the nine provincial offices (GCIS, 2002b).

The other platform is the Presidential Press Corps (PPC) that offers face-to-face interaction and ease access to the President, ministers, and senior government officials for accurate information for both the journalists and citizens (GCIS, 2002b). Public Participation Programme (PPP) also engages the public through agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy formulation. The formation of all the above-mentioned channels/platforms is an indication of the use of unmediated, open, and direct communication between the government and its citizens. They are an indication of a government that directs its communication on mutuality and long-term relationships. Citizens are seen as partners, they are involved in decision making.

6.3 Conclusions

Government communication in Kenya is yet to be professionalised due to the political systems and environment under which it operates. Professionalisation advocates for well-managed communication protected from conflicting interests that infiltrates its structure (Negrine, 2007). The number of the profession, the structures, and resources allocated to communication is the major challenges. It is, therefore, critical that the government communication is re-examined in terms of staff, resources, tasks and functions, strategies, and structural issues. To have an efficient
and reflective organization of communication, there is a need for a clear distinction between political communication and government communication.

In the past, there have been structural changes both at the PSCU, OGS, and the Ministry of ICT, but these changes have been viewed from different perspectives. While some view it as a natural reflection of the increased information demands, some view it as a timely expansion of capacities from the old ways of communicating, with the sole purpose of maintaining power and influencing political agenda. Either way, the government communication needs to shift into an effective, long-lasting, and strategic approach to communication. Currently, the government communication is organised in a decentralised (lacks central management systems), fragmented, and tactical ways. It lacks the overarching strategy that ought to centralise the units for a coordinated and unified communication. Each unit operates in an Adhoc and independent way that contradicts and duplicates the roles of the other.

The lack of an overarching strategy has also resulted in fragmentation of audiences, messages, and objectives. While the aim of the political appointees is political and aimed towards achieving personal branding; the civil servants aim to inform and communicate government policies and programs on behalf of the government. The two cadres of communication officers should strategically be managed and aligned to the main communication objective so that communication is not poorly coordinated and speaks with different contradicting voices.

In order to coordinate and keep up with the current communication environment, government should have an overarching communication strategy that holds together the three communication units. An overarching strategy that is sensitive to the trends and changes taking place in the environment, including the internet. The internet is opening new possibilities for transparency, citizen
engagement, and participation, the government should take the opportunity to introduce new and improved ways of engaging its publics on policies. The internet provides more channels and fast means of disseminating information, that can enhance interaction and effectiveness.

The government communication in Kenya is transitional, its structures keep changing depending on the existing political power and governance structure. The structures and processes are defined by political actors/interests; who determine the resources, operations, and professionals that work in those units. For instance, the formation and restructuring at PSCU, OGS, DPC, and GAA. The changes at OGS not only instruct the DIS and DPC to report to the OGS, but also leaves a structural gap on the role of the IS. This is a demonstration of how politics shape government communication, politics uses communication as a political tool to fulfill their interests. It is, therefore, important that the government puts in place policies and structures that distinguish government communication and political communication.

6.4 Recommendations of the Study

From the research findings, the study made the following recommendations:

The government needs to evaluate the communication environment, improve and empower communication units and professionals. The communication environment has shifted to a litigious environment, where there are: informed citizenry, fragmented audiences, increased mistrust towards government, higher demand for accountability and access to information, vibrant and private media, and internet penetration that expanded the digital platforms and social media usage.

This study, therefore, recommends a paradigm shift in the structure and organisation of government communication. The government needs to professionalise communication, form a new framework and policies that are encultured on the precept
of strategic communication. Frameworks that appreciate the importance of research, strategies, dialogic communication model, standardised and defined structures, and empowered professionals that are not easily manipulated by the political system/actors. The government should also allocate adequate budget and resources for communication activities, improve staffing levels, strengthen synergies between communication units for a unified and harmonised structure.

In order to have well-coordinated and strategically planned communication, the government needs to develop a unified and harmonised structure that reflects and represents the central national government. All communication units within government, including; the PSCU, OGS, and ministry of ICT, should be centralised. The reporting lines should present a practical and professional method of interaction between government communicators at various levels. There should be a systematic Intra-government communications policy framework that encourages consistent and coordinated communication. Also, through policies and legislation, there should be a clear distinction between civil servants and political appointees.

In addition, the new structure should also advocate for a better scheme of services and career progression for all communication professionals. For instance, the ministries should declare the staff establishment for PCOs to the Ministry of ICT as the scheme administrator so that the vacancies and inadequacies can be filled; ministries should adopt a standard staff establishment for communications units; redefine the role and position of the Information secretary; expand the PCO’s scheme band to introduce more communication officers to build capacity and to address the succession managements concerns; serving PCOs should be promoted to higher post levels taking into considerations years served cumulatively to solve the stagnation concerns, and communication at the ministries should be restructured to perform
management function and not tactical, the PCOs should report directly to the respective Cabinet Secretaries. This means that the government of Kenya needs to streamline and harmonise their internal communication to avoid duplication of roles/mandate among the communication units and professionals.

Further, the study recommends the formation of a systematic and standardised structure of training and skill development for all professionals in the government communication units in Kenya. The communication professionals need re-tooling to keep abreast of best practices in the industry. Besides, the government of Kenya should form a communication professional body to standardise training, and empower communication professionals. This is because the government communicators operate in a complex and dynamic environment that is different from the other communication professionals in the private sector.

Lack of budget and understaffing were found to be among major challenges in the government communication in Kenya. The PCOs were unable to conduct research or develop strategies due to a lack of funds. This study, therefore, recommends for provision of resources and specified budget allocation for PCOs. Ministries should be allowed to introduce budget lines specifically for communication, allocate funds and resources specifically for communication.

The performance and effectiveness of the government communication in Kenya are dependent on the vibrancy and interactiveness of citizen engagement and participation. Therefore, the government should be able to provide channels/platforms of communication to its citizens. Accessibility to information and participation in decision making is necessary for a transparent and accountable democracy. Consistent and coordinated communication is, therefore, key in building credibility, trust, and reputation of the government. Such communication calls for an open, proactive, and
interactive approach that ensures a common understanding between the government and its citizens. This study recommends that the government establishes well thought out policies, strategies, and processes for such a communication approach. The government should revise and implement the drafted Public Sector Communication Policy that will guide in the formation of an overarching communication strategy.

The government tends to use certain laws and policies to withhold information and restrict public participation. Public communication officers hoard critical information of public interest, for fear of being reprimanded. Such acts increase speculations, half-truths, and misunderstanding/misrepresentation of government. This study recommends that the government should review, align and strengthen the legal frameworks for free, open and accessible information.

The researchers experienced difficulty in accessing historical information about central national government communication. Data collected through document analysis presented in chapter four was not easily accessed. While some documents were either on hard copy or documents could not be shared, referenced, or retrieved, others were personal copies where individuals were in possession and could not be found in any government offices. Most government offices do not have archives or libraries to store information. Documentation and archiving of information are key to the preservation of an institution’s distinct history, culture, and heritage for reference, continuity, setting, and context. Documents are important they provide evidence of policy decisions, operations, and blueprints for decision making, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. This study, therefore, recommends that the government should have an archival system or storage where information about the history, policies and laws, budgets and blueprints can be accessed.
The misunderstanding and misrepresentation of communication in government are reflected in how communication is organised in government. The re-structuring and formation of units is a clear indication that communication is on transition and the government is yet to have a clear understanding of the important role of communication in democracy. The organisation of communication under the ministry of ICT shows how government gives priority to information technology more than public/human communication. This study, therefore, recommends that communication functions should be consolidated into one communication unit. A well-coordinated and targeted communication would help not only to avoid overlaps and duplication of roles but enhance efficiency in government operations.

The study recommends that there should be a clear distinction of roles between the civil servants, political appointees and consultants/advisors. The PSC should provide a standardized framework for recruiting, training, job descriptions and specifications, grading structure and scope of Consultants/Advisors and political appointees. Since these cadres of professionals play different roles, the framework should clearly differentiate the role of Consultants/Advisors from that of the civil servants. While civil servants deal with the politically impartial informative communication, promote the agenda of government, and address the issues within their respective ministries; the consultants/advisors are seasonal and deal with specially agendas, crisis communication and image/reputation management.

6.5 Areas for Further Study

Over the last few years, the study found out that the government of Kenya had strived to strengthen and streamline its communication structures and practices. However, the government is still struggling with the institutional, human resources,
budget constraints and technical know-how to make the shift. This study, therefore, proposes further research on professionalisation of the government communication in Kenya and benchmarking be conducted for best practices.

This study faced a major challenge of accessing data on human resources and financial reports about central national government communication in Kenya. It was very difficult to find data on the staffing levels and capacity, communication activities and resources, who manages and controls communication, issues of budgeting and finances. The researcher, therefore, proposes further research on data assessment on the human resource, projects and tasks, and budget allocation/resources allocated to government communication for planning and capacity building.

There is an increase in the uptake of new technology by the government of Kenya and the use of digital platforms such as e-government, websites, and social media. It would be interesting to research how the government can use digital technology in empowering or controlling citizens’ engagement/participation in democracy. Further research should be carried out on e-government communication and its role in citizen better engagement and participation for a better democracy.
REFERENCE


Broom, G., Casey, R., & Ritchey, J. (2000). Toward a concept and theory of


Committee on Standards of Publics Life. (2003). Defining the boundaries within the executive: Ministers, special advisers, and the permanent service. London: HMSO


219


Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? American Political Science Review, 98(2), 341-354. doi:10.1017/S0003055404001182


236


APPENDICES

Appendix A: Informed Consent

Please accept my invitation to be part of this study, that seeks to “Critically analysis of strategic, political and relational dimensions of central national government communication in Kenya”. The analysis aims at determining the structures and practices of government communication, whether government communication is strategically practiced, the political dimensions and whether its communication facilitates citizen participation. This study is being conducted purely for Academic purposes, and any information provided will strictly be confidential. Your participation in this study will highly be appreciated.

If you have questions about this study, or you experience adverse effects as the result of participating in this study, you may contact the researcher whose contact information are:

Ruth Owino
PhD Candidate (Daystar University)
School of Communication, Language and Performing Arts
rowino@daystar.ac.ke or ruthie.owino@gmail.com (+254726331859)

STUDY PROCEDURES:

Interviews will be 50 -70 minutes long, and the questionnaires will take you 25 -30 minutes to fill.

The interviews will be audio recorded; however, the recorded content will be transcribed and only used in analyzing data for the purpose of this study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary, therefore you may decline to answer any or all questions and you may terminate your involvement at any time if you choose.

There will be no direct benefit for your participation in this study. However, the researcher hopes that the information obtained will determine the communication structures and practices that are not working well, or ineffective, and suggest possible improvement, regulation, and replication.

For the purposes of this study, your comments/response will be anonymous. Please do not write/pronounce any identifying information during this process. Every effort will be made to preserve your confidentiality including: Assigning code numbers, and, Keeping notes, interview transcriptions, and any other identifying information in a locked file in the personal possession of the researcher.

I kindly request your co-operation in signing this consent form. Even after signing, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. Withdrawing
from this study will not affect the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher. If you withdraw from the study before data collection is completed, your data will be returned to you or be destroyed.

CONSENT

I have read and I understand the provided information and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason and without cost. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study.

Participant's signature ____________________________ Date __________

Researcher's signature ____________________________ Date __________
Appendix B: Case Study Protocol

SECTION A: Overview of the case study
- Mission and goal of the organization
- Research questions and propositions
- Theoretical framework (Key readings)
- Role of protocol in guiding the researcher

SECTION B: Data collection procedures
- Name of the contact person
- Data collection place (type of evidence to be expected, interviewees, events to be observed, and documents to be analysed)
- Expected preparation prior to the fieldwork (information to be reviewed)

SECTION C: PROTOCOL QUESTIONS
1. What are the structures, processes and practices of central national government communication in Kenya?
2. Is the central national government communication in Kenya strategically managed?
3. What is the influence of the political system on the operations of central national government in Kenya?
4. Does central national government in Kenya as currently practiced facilitate citizen participation?

SECTION D: Tentative outline of the case study report
- Audience for the report and the stylistic preference for writing the report
- National government communication structures, processes, and practices
- Strategic management of the national government communication
- Political system of the national government communication
- Government -citizen relationship, and citizen participation
- Outcomes
- Exhibits to be developed (chronology of events, outcomes, logic model for the practice, arrays of presenting data, references to relevant documents, lists of persons interviewed, and, events observed.

END
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Guide

The interview will be guided by the following questions:

1. How long have you held your current position?
2. What does your role as communicator entail?
3. Discuss the organisational structure that currently exists?
4. How is government communication practised and processed in Kenya?
5. As a government communicator, who is your target audience?
6. How do you communicate with your target audience?
7. How do you build and maintain relationships with your audience?
8. Would you say you have met the government communication strategic goal?
9. How strategic is your communication, as a government practitioner?
10. Does politics play a role in how communication is structured, processed and practiced in your organization?
11. How does government communication play a role in the mediation between government and citizens in Kenya?
12. What are communication channels used in facilitating citizen participation?
13. How does the environment scanning of the citizens inform the strategic planning or policy making?
14. What is the role of research in government communication?
15. What role do you play in government decision/policy making?
16. What is the role of the media in government -citizen relationship?
17. What is the working relationship between your office, the Office of the Government’s Spokesperson (OGS) and the Ministry of Information, and Communication and Technology (ICT).

END
Appendix D: Questionnaire

This questionnaire will take you 25-30 minutes to fill. It is being administered purely for academic purposes, and any information provided will strictly be confidential. Your participation in filling this questionnaire will highly be appreciated. Carefully, read the questions and feel free to respond by ticking the most suitable answer in the respective box.

In case of any comment/concerns, Contact Ruth Owino on 0726331859 or email ruthie.owino@gmail.com

SECTION A: Communication structures and process

1. a. By nature, government communication in Kenya is:
   - [ ] Politically oriented
   - [ ] Public oriented
   - [ ] Both

   b. Explain your response in 1a
   ---------------------------------------------------------------
   ---------------------------------------------------------------
   ---------------------------------------------------------------

2. Which of the below best describes government communication functions & activities
   - [ ] Mainly media briefing & Information publication
   - [ ] Social media, corporate relations and opinion research
   - [ ] Public/Digital engagement and citizens’ insight research

3. Which of the following characteristics best describes government communication in Kenya? (You can tick more than one response)
   - [ ] Communication positioned on a lower level
   - [ ] Communication oriented to the pursuit of short/medium-term goals
   - [ ] Communication positioned at the senior management level
   - [ ] Substantial development of specialized communication units
   - [ ] Communication permit proactive dialogue & pursue long-term goals

4. How is the coordination and planning of government communication?
   - [ ] Fragmented and unplanned
   - [ ] Defined as a function/role/task
   - [ ] Clearly defined in the structure(s)
5. Based on the below indicators, how would you rate government communication?

(1 means very good , 2 = good, 3 = somewhat good, 4 = bad, 5 = very bad)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clear and structured reporting lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involved in the decision/policy making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research informs the strategic and policy planning/making</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often Conducts environmental scanning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback channels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication channels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves the publics/citizens in their communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. Based on the below practices, rate government communication performance

(1 = extremely important, 2 = very important, 3 = somewhat important, 4 = little importance, 5 = unimportant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practices</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facilitations of communication activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action oriented and minimized barriers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fostered diversity and build strong mechanisms for communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies policies and strategic needs for public interest</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of effective communication strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of resources and commitment to communication activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formalised and hierarchical reporting lines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Where is communication situated in government organisation chart?

[ ] Position not defined

[ ] Position is defined but its status changes

[ ] Position is defined and fixed

8. a. Are there legislation, policies and conventions that influence your operations and functions as a government communicator?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

b. If yes, list them

------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
c. Are there any legislations, policies and conventions that specifically address non-partisanship in government communication?

- [ ] No legislation, policies and conventions
- [ ] Yes, but limited to specific issues eg Use of public resources for electoral campaign activities
- [ ] Yes, wide ranging legislation, policies and conventions

9. Which of the following is True/False about communication management in government?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>True</th>
<th>False</th>
<th>Partly</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tactical tasks, mainly focuses on media relations and/or crisis communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited strategic planning at the departmental level including media relations, public relations and campaigns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managerial tasks are developed at the highest government level including strategic planning, research and assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research and assessment is a key components of communication management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION B: Finance and budgeting

10. a. How much budget is allocated to communication functions and activities

b. Who sponsors your budget?

c. Do you know how much budget is allocated to government communication?

d. Do you receive and give financial reports of resources dedicated to communication activities?

- [ ] No or very limited information
- [ ] Some systemic information
- [ ] Extensive systemic information
SECTION C: Training

11. Which of the following categories best describes your current position?

- Senior Communication Adviser
- Director or Head of Department/Unit
- Deputy Director or Deputy Head of Department/Unit
- Senior Communication Officer
- Communication Officer
- Information/Press Officer
- Other, please specify

12. How long have you held the position?

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16-20 years
- 21 years and above

13. How long have you worked in government communication?

14. As a government communicator, how would you describe you role?

- Ceremonial
- Administrative
- Cabinet
- Advisory
- Executive
15. Which of the following categories best describes your current employment?

- [ ] Full-time employment
- [ ] Part-time employment with a permanent position
- [ ] Temporary Contract
- [ ] Consultant

Other, please specify-----------------------------------------------

16. a. What is your professional background?

- [ ] Journalism
- [ ] Public relations
- [ ] Mass communication
- [ ] Information Technology

Others (Specify)--------------------------------------------------------

b. If communication, what is your area of specialization?

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

16. b. If communication, what is your area of specialization?

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

16. c. If not, have you been offered any specialized training or short courses in communication?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

16. d. If yes, which ones?

----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

17. What is the highest level of educational you have completed?

- [ ] Doctorate
- [ ] Master’s degree
- [ ] Bachelor’s degree
- [ ] Diploma

Others (Specify)--------------------------------------------------------

18. In which of the following categories, does your salary fall, after taxes?

- [ ] Ksh. 49,000 and below
- [ ] Ksh. 50,000 -90,000
- [ ] Ksh. 91,000 -140,000
- [ ] Ksh. 141,000 -190,000
- [ ] Kshs.191,000 – 240,000
- [ ] Kshs. 241,000 -290,000
- [ ] Kshs. 291,000 and above

19. a. Do you belong to any Professional associations/club?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
b. If Yes, Name them

20. In training and advancement of knowledge skills, how would you rate government communication:

- [ ] No development of specific/specialized training
- [ ] Some developments of specific/specialized training
- [ ] More development of specific/specialized training

21. Which of these description brings out the recruitment process into government communication position?

- [ ] Recruitment profiles mainly journalism backgrounds
- [ ] Broader range of recruitment profiles including those with other communication backgrounds (Social science)
- [ ] Specialized recruitment profiles from broad range communication backgrounds (PR, Marketing, Digital, IT, Journalism)
- [ ] Presidential/Ministerial appointees
- [ ] Others

Thank you for your participation
Appendix E: Ethics Clearance Report

Daystar University Ethics Review Board

Our Ref. DU-ERB/10/01/ 2019/00220

Date: 10-01-2019

Ruth Owino

Dear Ruth,

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC, POLITICAL AND RELATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF CENTRAL NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN KENYA

Reference is made to your request dated 05-12-2018 for ethical approval of your proposal by Daystar University Ethics Review Board.

We are pleased to inform you that ethical review has been done and approval granted. In line with the research projects policy, you will be required to submit a copy of the final research findings to the Board for records.

This approval is valid for a year from 10-01-2019

This approval does not exempt you from obtaining a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

Mrs. Purity Kiambi,
Secretary, Daystar University Ethics Review Board

[Quote]

“...until the day down and the daystar arise in your hearts”
2 Peter 1.19 KJV
December 4, 2018

National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
P. O. Box 30623 -00100
Nairobi -Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Ruth Aoko Owino (09-0578)

The above mentioned individual is a student in the School of Communication, Language and Performing Arts at Daystar University. She has completed her coursework towards attaining PhD in Communication. She is now in the process of working on her thesis titled “A critical analysis of the Strategic, political and relational dimension of government communication in Kenya”.

The purpose of this letter is to request that you accord Ms. Owino every assistance to enable her to complete this academic exercise. The information collected will strictly be used for academic purposes, and will remain confidential. Upon completion of the research, Ms. Owino’s will be available at our library, but also will submit copies of the completed work to your office.

We appreciate your support for our student towards the successful completion of her research study. Should you require further information please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully,

Kinyanjui Mwitaia, PhD
I/O/D, Strategic and Organizational Communication
jkinya@daystar.ac.ke
Appendix G: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MISS. RUTH AOKO OWINO
of DAYSTAR UNIVERSITY, 444000-100
NAIROBI, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nairobi County

on the topic: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
THE STRATEGIC, POLITICAL AND
RELATIONAL DIMENSION OF
GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN
KENYA

for the period ending:
24th January, 2020

Applicant’s
Signature

Permit No: NACOSTI/P/19/81096/27888
Date Of Issue: 24th January, 2019
Fee Recieved: Ksh 2000

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation
Ref No: NACOSTI/P/19/81096/27888

Date 24th January, 2019

Ruth Aoko Owino
Daystar University
P.O Box 44400-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “A critical analysis of the strategic, political and relational dimension of government communication in Kenya” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nairobi County for the period ending 24th January, 2020.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a copy of the final research report to the Commission within one year of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.
Appendix H: Approval Letter from the Ministry of ICT

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 020-8210000 Ext 100
Website: www.mict.go.ke

MURUKA CHAMISA, CS

Teapoint Towers
P.O Box 30023-00100
Nairobi
KENYA

Ref: MICT/G/3/55

Date: 8 June 2019

The Dean
School of Communication, Languages and Performing Arts
Daystar University
P. O. Box 44100-00100
NAIROBI

RESEARCH AUTHORISATION

Reference is made to the letter from Daystar University to the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology dated 6/2/2019 in regard to Ruth Aoko Owino (09-0578), a Ph.D student in your university and the subsequent request by the student to the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology for permission in accessing the study site and respondents for the research of her thesis; "A critical analysis of strategic, political and relational dimension of government communication in Kenya"

This is to confirm that Ms. Ruth Aoko Owino, undertook research and interviews in the Department of Public Communications including an interview with the undersigned, who is the head of the Department between February and May, 2019.

[Signature]
Ag. Director
Department of Public Communication

Copy to: Ruth Aoko Owino
Daystar University
P.O. Box 44100-00100
NAIROBI
### Appendix H: Anti-2Plagiarism Report

#### GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIMILARITY INDEX</th>
<th>INTERNET SOURCES</th>
<th>PUBLICATIONS</th>
<th>STUDENT PAPERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### PRIMARY SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source Number</th>
<th>Source URL</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Similarity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>journals.sagepub.com</td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ict.go.ke">www.ict.go.ke</a></td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><a href="http://www.dpm.go.ke">www.dpm.go.ke</a></td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><a href="http://www.qualitative-research.net">www.qualitative-research.net</a></td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Submitted to University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>Student Paper</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td><a href="http://www.information.go.ke">www.information.go.ke</a></td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kenyalaw.org">www.kenyalaw.org</a></td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>uir.unisa.ac.za</td>
<td>Internet Source</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Submitted to Kenyatta University</td>
<td>Student Paper</td>
<td>&lt;1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>