

**ANALYSIS OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNICATION PRACTICE
LEVELS AND PERFORMANCE OF SUPPLY CHAIN FUNCTIONS AMONG
SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

The term "Supply Chain Management" (SCM) denotes the creation, integration, planning and control of all elements of universal added-value chains, from the procurement of raw materials to the final delivery to the customer. IT offers huge potentials for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to activate effective SCM mechanisms. However, despite the increased attention paid to SCM, the literature has not been able to offer much by way of guidance to help the communication practice levels of SCM. This has been attributed to the interdisciplinary origin of SCM, the conceptual confusion, and the evolutionary nature of SCM concept. The purpose of this study was to analyze the relationship between communication practices levels and the performance of SCM in schools in Homa Bay County. The specific objectives of the study were to: Identify the levels of communication practices in supply chain Management in organizations; Establish the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance of organizations; Determine the relationship between levels of communication practices and competitive advantage in supply chain management and Establish the relationship between the levels of competitive advantage and supply chain Management performance of organizations. Descriptive research design was used. The target population of this study was 257 schools having a staff of 1061 where 82 were sampled having 302 staff. Stratified sampling was used; in this case the stratum was the Sub Counties which were 6. The research instruments included questionnaire which were filled by the respondents of different roles. Analysis of data was through the summary of the essential features and relationships of data in order to generalize from the analysis and determine patterns of behavior and particular outcomes. The researcher put every effort to ensure that the respondents' rights to privacy were respected. From the information gathered, it was found that there is high levels of communication practices in SCM in organizations in Homa Bay County, there was an insignificant positive relationship between level of communication practice and supply chain management performance of the SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.146, p>0.01$), there is a significant positive but weak relationship between level of communication practice and competitive advantage of SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.620, p>0.01$) and There was an insignificant positive relationship between competitive advantage and supply chain management performance of secondary schools ($r=.570, p>0.01$). From the findings, the concept of levels of communication practices has become more and more common in business practices and customers today almost expect companies to be socially responsible. Communication is very important for organizations. This study recommends that communication deserves greater attention and more commitment from corporate organizations in that it guarantees other benefits other than just profits. For academic and industry discussions the study recommends that further study be conducted to establish the real value in monetary terms how much levels of communication contribute to the organizations profitability.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose for the study, specific objectives of the study, significance of the study, assumptions of the study and scope of the study.

1.2 Background of the study

The term "Supply Chain Management" (SCM) denotes the creation, integration, planning and control of all elements of universal added-value chains, from the procurement of raw materials to the final delivery to the customer. IT offers huge potentials for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises to activate effective SCM mechanisms. Even though experts estimate the potential saving that can be achieved through the implementation of effective SCM strategies at 3-5 per cent of turnover, Small and Medium Enterprises (Organizations) are experiencing a great deal of difficulty in coping with these strategies. Reasons for this, especially among small enterprises, are to be found in the specific enterprise culture, (Chapman, and Kihn, Lili-Anne; (2013) in their study found that communication is an obstacle to the implementation of effective SCM strategies in Organizations.

According to Ellram, and Cooper, (2014), collaboration among the subjects along the whole chain is the first step toward the Supply chain management to have success. Managing the chain by effective strategies means, guaranteeing a continuous connection between every link of the chain through information exchange like on the stock level, on the sale trend, on the demand trend that allows the level of Cooperation, of Communication and of Coordination (the so called "3 Cs") to increase in a meaningful way; the effect of this is to decrease the dead times and the stocks. In order to make effective communication mechanisms along the chain, effective communication is considered to be the ideal solution for solving the problems related to the application of SCM strategies: communication can improve contacts all along the chain from suppliers of raw materials, other suppliers, manufactures, logistics, wholesalers, retailers to the end customers; by accelerating the communication processes, should produce competitive advantages, such as

improving the capability of the company to satisfy the variations in commercial demand, increasing its innovation capabilities, boosting its competitiveness as a whole and, finally, giving a better customer service and, consequently, increasing the number of satisfied customers.

Effective two-way communication is demonstrated throughout the literature as essential to successful supplier relationship, Leuschner; Dale Rogers and Francois Charvet. (2013). Effective inter-organizational communication could be characterized as frequent, genuine, and involving personal contacts between buying and selling personnel, Lai; Min Zhang; Denis Lee and Xiande Zhao; (2012). In order to jointly find solutions to material problems and design issues, buyers and suppliers must commit a greater amount of information and be willing to share sensitive design information Lin; (2013). This is often achieved through engineer-to-engineer communication on design issues, in order to improve process capability, manufacturability, and performance without affecting profit margins Cheng.; Law; Bjornsson; Jones and Sriram; (2010). When communication occurs among design, engineering, quality control and other functions between the buyer and supplier firms, in addition to the purchasing–sales interface, the supplier’s quality performance is superior to that experienced when only the buying firm’s purchasing department and supplier’s sales department act as the inter-firm information conduit. Furthermore, many supplier product problems were due to poor communication. Poor communication was often a fundamental weakness in the interface between a buying firm and its supplier, which undermined the buying firm’s efforts to achieve increased levels of supplier performance (De Groote and Marx; 2013). In their 10 case studies of buying firms in the UK, (Kotler; Arch; Woodside and Peter LaPlaca. 2014) revealed the importance of two-way communication with suppliers and its potential positive effect on the buying firm’s competitiveness.

Increasing global cooperation, vertical disintegration and a focus on core activities have led to the notion that firms are links in a networked supply chain. According to Gligor and Mary Holcomb. (2012), this strategic view point has created the challenge of coordinating effectively the entire supply chain, from upstream to downstream activities. While supply chains have existed ever since businesses have been organized to bring products and services to customers, the notion of their competitive advantage, and consequently supply chain management (SCM), is a relatively recent thinking in management literature. Although research interests in and the importance of SCM are growing, scholarly materials remain scattered and disjointed, and no research has been

directed towards a systematic identification of the core initiatives and constructs involved in SCM, Marin-Garcia; Rafaela Alfalla-Luque and Carmen Medina-Lopez. (2014). This instigated the need to have this study, to analyze the communication and supply management performance.

As competition in the 1990s intensified and markets became global, so did the challenges associated with getting a product and service to the right place at the right time at the lowest cost (Nemati and Dinesh Mangala Durai 2013). Organizations began to realize that it is not enough to improve efficiencies within an organization, but their whole supply chain has to be made competitive. The understanding and practicing of supply chain management (SCM) has become an essential prerequisite for staying competitive in the global race and for enhancing profitably. In the 1950s to 1960s, most producers return to the strategies of mass production in order to reduce production costs. In this environment, the development of products was only limited to the ability of domestic producers. This period has a little emphasis on the strategic partnership between the buyers and the suppliers. In the 1970s, the concepts of planning production, leading to the creation of new materials and concepts and improved performance within the company, were raised. To improve performance and reduce production cycle, the producers had used JIT (Just In Time) as a strategy of existing business. In such an environment, the advantages and importance of strategic relationships and working are gradually revealed between buyers and suppliers. The term supply chain management was created in the late 1980s and was used extensively in the 1990s. Supply chain management, the process of planning, implementing and controlling the operations associated with the supply chain are in the best possible form and represent the optimal mode for all shifts, storing of raw materials, inventory of products and finished product from beginning to end (Lin, 2013),(Vanpoucke , Ann Vereecke and Kenneth Boyer, 2014).

Nowadays in the world due to apparent changes in global markets and technological development, globalization of the economy and new political situation has been drastically changed. Nearly two decades ago, main actions have been carried out for internal integration of companies. This date was a landmark in the development of integrated information systems. The use of databases, advanced information and communication technology systems, to make the internal and external processes of organization simultaneous, has been started in the last years

and the functional and operational activities are continued in this area (Wen and QianlingGu., 2014).

The measurement of supply chain performance is essential for continuous improvement of supply chain management. The measuring of effective performance of supply chain is an important aspect of supply chain management. To determine the operation, the best method so far was to build a relational structure using measurements of performance (Senvar, UmutRifatTuzkaya and CengizKahraman, 2014).

In the discussion of supply chain, the relation of internal processes to external suppliers and customers as a prerequisite has been proposed by the researchers (Van der Vaart and Dirk Pieter van Donk, 2014). An important issue in supply chain integration is that what level of integration is achieved. Identifying different sources is introduced as one of the key issues in integrating different sources (Van Donk and Taco van der Vaart, 2015). Supply chain integration is combined with the concept of participation. The concept of participation in the supply chain means that organizations can work together to improve the quality and to identify their shared goals to elevate and maintain their profits in market (Ellram and Cooper, 2014). Supply chain integration is still a major challenge for companies. However, it is expected that by progressing in the field of networks and Information Communication Technology, the problems of this area is removed in coming years. This is the reason why the current study seeks to analyze the relationships between communication and performance of supply chain in organization in Homa Bay. Kenya.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Supply Chain Management function has been one of the vital departments in any organization. It contributes tremendously to the organizational efficiency and effectiveness. The government of Kenya continues to lose millions of shillings through fraud in supplies activities in the government mainstream and even private organizations. Any head of department is expected to supply goods/services or works at the right time, price, place quantity and quality for the use of all the departments in the organization so that the organization would derive great benefits from this and would thus be able to serve their customers (both internal and external) in a better way. When a supply department is inefficient in its procurement activities it affects all the other

departments and thus has an impact on the organization's Supply Chain as a whole. Good communication has simplified the purchasing, sourcing and disposal of items in an organization. However, most of the government parastatals/agents are reluctant in embracing the good communication concept. Studies have been conducted on levels of communication both locally and internationally. A study on Achieving Competitive Advantage through Supply Chain Integration in the Cocoa Industry concluded that there exists country differences in adoption and that firms from those countries with low uncertainty avoidance, such as Germany and UK are early adopters of high communication levels, while countries that are less reluctant to change such as Spain and France have lower adoption rates. Another study on the adoption of regulation based communication in Eastern Cape provincial administration found that measurable benefits of Supply Chain Management concept with high level communication work within government environment. It for this reason that the current study seeks to analyze the relationships between communication practice and performance of supply chain in organization in Homa Bay. Kenya

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study was to analyze the relationship between communication practices level and performance of SCM in Homa Bay County.

The specific objectives of the study were to:

- i. Establish the levels of communication practices in supply chain Management in secondary schools in Homa Bay County.
- ii. Establish the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance of secondary schools in Homa Bay County.
- iii. Determine the relationship between levels of communication practices and competitive advantage in supply chain management in secondary schools in Homa Bay County.
- iv. Establish the relationship between the levels of competitive advantage and supply chain Management performance of secondary schools in Homa Bay County.

1.5 Research Question

- i. What is the level of communication practices on supply chain management performance of secondary schools in Homa Bay County?

1.6 Hypothesis

Hypothesis 2.

H₀ 2: there is no significant effect of communication levels on performance of supply chain management in Homa Bay County.

H₀ 3: There is no significant relationship between the levels of communication practices and the levels of competitive advantage of organizations in Homa Bay County.

H₀ 4: There is no significant relationship between the levels of competitive advantage and the level of supply chain performance in Homa Bay County.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study was not only contribute to the organizations interested in the performance of supply chain management but also draw attention to the in depth knowledge or the issue affecting the organizations in general. The outcome will then be useful to the government for making some critical decision regarding the importance of the research, policy makers will also benefit from the research as they was able to make and implement the right policy based on the outcome. The public will also benefit from the study since they will come to understand the impact and benefit of the research while other researchers will use the study as a reference to guide them to carry out future related studies and other stakeholder to adjust positively towards making supply chain management more effective, which will then translate to improved productivity.

1.8 Scope of the study

The study based its focus only in Homa Bay County. It's located in the former Nyanza province of Kenya along the shore of lake Victoria. The county has an area of 3,154.7 km². Homa Bay County is bordered by Kisii to the East, Migori County to the south. Homa Bay County is located 130km south of the city of Kisumu and about 400km from the city of Nairobi. It took a maximum of four months from February 2017 to May 2017 and it dueled on analyzing the relationship between levels communication practices will have high levels of supply chain performance, relationship between the high levels of communication practices and the high levels

of competitive advantage, relationship between the levels of competitive advantage, the level of supply chain performance within Homa bay County.

1.9 Conceptual framework

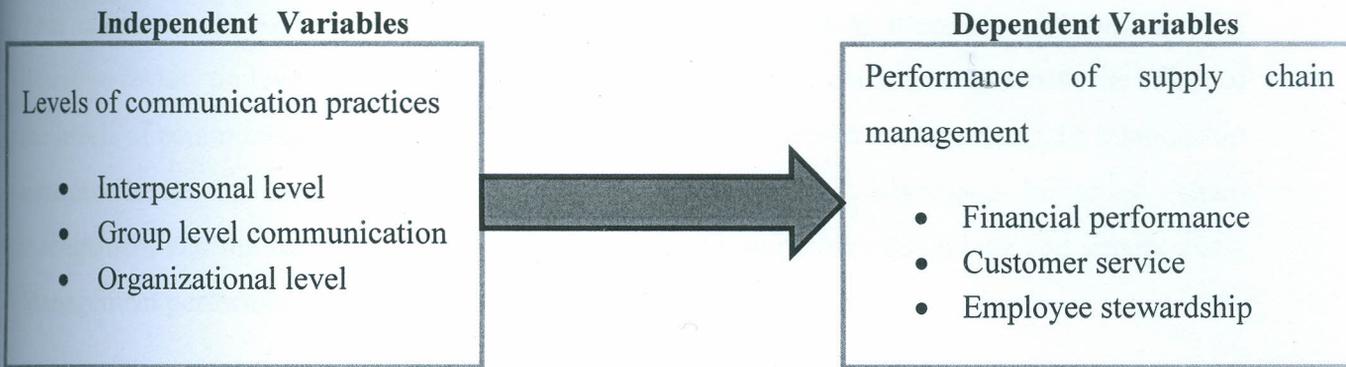


Figure 1. Levels of communication and performance of supply chain management in communication (Source: Self conceptualized 2017)

The conceptual framework of this study examined how different levels of communication in supply chain management in organizations can affect its performance. Here the Interpersonal communication level (independent variable) positively influences employee's stewardship (dependent variable) through training. Group-level communications (independent variable) occurred in teams, units and employee resource. This focused on information sharing, issue discussion, task coordination, problem solving and consensus building and eventually led to improved customer service (dependent variable). Organizational-level communications (independent variable) considered matters as vision and mission, policies, new initiatives and organizational knowledge thus improve the performance of an organization.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction

This chapter includes the related theoretical literature, empirical literature and summary of literature review on levels of communication practices in supply chain Management; the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance; the relationship between levels of communication practices and competitive advantage in supply chain management and the relationship between the levels of competitive advantage and supply chain Management performance of organizations.

2.2 Theoretical literature

The theory underpinning the study was performance theory, some literature definition of performance was as under. According to (Ayrancı 2011) "It is a general term applied to a part or to all of the conduct of activities of an organization over a period of time; often with reference to past or projected costs efficiency management responsibility or accountability or the like."

Leiter and Maslach (1988) noted that "Performance is used to mean the efforts extended to achieve the targets efficiently and effectively the achievement of targets involves the integrated use of human, financial and natural resources." So performance is refers to presentation with quality and result achieved by the management of organization. Those assisted are the management in the formation of sound operating and financial policies. This theory was applied in the current study to relate motivation which was an independent variable with the performance of Supply chain management in organizations which was the dependent variables.

It's widely accepted that small firms have different optional capital structure and are financed by various sources at different stages of their organizational lives Berger and Udell (1998) researchers have found that certain attributes of organizations influence the type of funds available to finance the organization's operations, Okutoyi (2013). This theory is relevant to the present study since as cited in the previous studies Ndunge & Mutinda (2012) inadequate motivation may hinder growth on businesses thus affecting their overall performance and sustainability.

2.3 Empirical Literature

2.3.1 Levels of Communication Practices in Supply Chain Management in Organizations

The success of any business lies in its ability to manage its supply chain effectively. In today's global business context, firms that can streamline their supply chain and churn out finished products faster will undoubtedly benefit the most, (Otchere, Jonathan Annan and Emanuel KwabenaAnin. 2013). Unfortunately in India, most manufacturers are faced by hurdles of inefficiencies. While some of them are external, most of them are internal and can be addressed with the help of effective communication. In Indian Organizations, experience in supply chain management is generally lacking. This phenomenon has particular relevance in the SME sector, which is being forced to perform or perish in the face of global competition. Organizations need to develop the tools, techniques and training products that help companies to adapt and achieve viability. They need to focus on linkages by which Organizations can integrate themselves in the supply chains of large enterprises.

According to Palomero, and Ricardo Chalmeta. (2012), organizations must use technology-based tools in such a manner that they become the technology sources for larger companies. It is not about using the highest technology or the most sophisticated techniques alone. Organizations need to concentrate on the fundamental principles of being a good supplier or distributor. To incorporate supply chain management, Organizations need to concentrate on assessing the communication methods for improvement in processes and management practices. The objective of every supply chain is to maximize the overall value generated by an enterprise. It consists of all stages involved directly or indirectly in fulfilling a customer's request, (Ross; Ebook; 2011). The management of an enterprise often finds itself caught between customers' mounting demands and the company's need for growth and profitability. Organizations have been rather slow, and at times reluctant, to resort the offerings of Supply Chain Management (SCM) for their businesses. The prime focus of most of the solutions and services available in the market is on the big players rather than SMCs. The latter are also at a disadvantage due to their inherent resource constraints. However, various factors related to globalization have now rendered implementation of SCM an imperative even for Organizations. Experts believe that effective and efficient communication in SCM can help Organizations to reduce their cost and compete aggressively in the international markets. With the advent of globalization, it becomes imperative that the supply chains of

Organizations are linked with their global suppliers as well as vendors through high level communication. The growth of Supply Chain Management in the market is still maturing globally. The process seems to have started, but there is a long way to go to a great extent, due to the huge resources at their disposal, large enterprises have learnt to leverage SCM to their advantage. Modern SCM has effectively addressed the needs of Organizations. SCM has allowed businesses to enjoy productivity and value. Nearly 70 percent of India's gross domestic product directly or indirectly comes from Organizations, (Senvar; UmutRifatTuzkaya and CengizKahraman. 2014). It is therefore evident that the potential of the SME sector in India is huge. The advent of globalization has increased business opportunities for companies by many folds, making timely and safe delivery of express shipments critical. The market worldwide has become competitive and these pressures have made several organizations realize that individual companies cannot deal with the competition single-handedly. In such cases, the requirement of supply chain management is of utmost importance for running an organization successfully. To realize the importance of Supply Chain Management and to develop solutions best suited for an effective supply chain management (SCM) has become a potentially valuable way of securing competitive advantage and improving organizational performance since competition is no longer between organizations, but among supply chains, (Silvestro and Paola Lustrato, 2014)

Global competition is forcing enterprises to become agile. Agility in business performance is the ability of a company to prosper in rapidly changing, continually fragmented global markets for high-quality, high-performance, customer configured products and services. In this endeavor, information and communication technology (ICT) plays an increasingly important role in facilitating the introduction of new products or services, in improving operational processes, and in guiding managerial decision making. The impact of globalization has compelled SMEs to adopt ICTs, to enable SMEs to survive and compete with large companies. SMEs would greatly benefit by ICTs adoption in their business processes (Swink; Ram Narasimhan and Cynthia Wang 2007). However, as SMEs continue contributing to the economy, they are faced with many challenges which inhibit them not to compete with large enterprises. One of the major constraints is lack of ICTs adoption in their business processes. It is commonly accepted that ICTs provides many potential benefits to organizations so as to make them more efficient, effective and competitive (Fink and Disterer, 2006). There is evidence that ICTs will increasingly empower

SMEs to participate in knowledge management by facilitating connectivity, helping them to create and deliver products and services on global scale.

Orori (2011) studied on factors that influence the introduction of high level communication on retail industry a survey of retail chain supermarkets in Kenya and found out there is a lot of resistance to change. Mburu (2011) carried out a study on the role of communication in enhancing efficiency in telecommunication industry (A case study of Safaricom Limited Company – Kenya) and found out that information technology plays a big role in adoption of e-Procurement.

Awino (2011) conducted an investigation of selected strategy variables on firm's performances. The study focused on Supply Chain Management in large private manufacturing firms in Kenya. It was established that most of the Supply Chain Management strategies of large manufacturing firms in Kenyan are not owned by individual but also other organizations within the Supply Chain that provide the required linkages towards the overall corporate performance of the manufacturing industry. Omai (2013) carried out a research in seven tea factories in Kisii on the determinants of communication on Supply Chain Management among the Kisii tea factories. He found out that information sharing, partners relationship and supported Supply Chain integration contributed to management on supply chain. His analysis showed that good communication could promote information sharing and Supply Chain integration. These affected the price and quality of the product at the factories. He recommended for improvement of communication systems that would enhance trust between tea factories and its suppliers. It is however not clear that the past studies on communication have focused on the effects of communication on Supply Chain Management particularly in a service rendering government organization and private organizations. To address this gap, the current study seeks to identify the levels of communication practices in supply chain Management in organizations in Homa Bay County.

2.3.2 Levels of Communication Practices and Performance of Supply Chain Management

It is indisputable that communication has an enormous effect on contemporary business. However, the relationship between communication and the performance of supply chains (SC) is less straight forward. Some studies show that there is a positive relationship between them Youn; Ma Ga (Mark) Yang; Jin Hwan Kim and Paul Hong. (2014), but other studies present less

evidence Yee and Seog-Chan Oh. Ebook. (2013). or do not even find a relationship (Jeffers et al., 2016). In an attempt to better understand the relationship Communication-SC performance and the underlying mechanisms, researchers have investigated the indirect effect of communication on SC performance through supply chain management (SCM). Again the results are mixed. A number of studies (Singh and Sharma. 2014) show that communication positively affects SCM and improves SC performance. For example, communication can strengthen buyer-supplier relationship through more efficient processes and can reduce lead time (Senvar; UmutRifatTuzkaya and CengizKahraman. 2014). However, others (Nemati, and Dinesh MangalaDurai. 2013) found no obvious relationship between communication and SC performance.

The communications in empirical findings and the differences in measurements motivated the current study. The main question addressed was if communication has a positive effect on SC performance, either directly or indirectly through improved SCM. First, the study identified the level of communication, then addressed the question "which of the possible relationships have actually been taken into account in earlier research". This helped to find which aspects of communication had been investigated and which ones seem to be effective. Additionally, it shed light on the actual mechanisms that help to use communication in an effective way. It might be that differences in measurement and concept can account for different findings. It might as well be that findings, that seem to be similar, actually deal with different aspects of the relationship between communication, SCM, and SC performance.

Lin, H.; (2013), had defined Supply Chain performance as an evaluation of Supply Chain Management that includes both tangible and intangible factors. (Fink and Disterer, G., 2006). suggests that good communication system is more pivotal than other business applications when studying Supply Chain performance since in the current economic environment, a value creation perspective is important for improving Supply Chain performance. A procurement system is a vital component of an organization's Supply Chain system. Typically, an organization's procurement function is subdivided into strategic and operational processes since activities and priorities in these two areas are entirely different (Greunen 2010). Supplier management, the pooling of purchase requisitions and procurement oriented product development are tasks that are typically assigned to strategic procurement. Good communication enables organizations to

enhance their operational procurement processes and centralize strategic procurement processes. This results to higher Supply Chain transparency provided by good communication systems. Strategically, communication will help to consolidate purchasing practices that will lead to greater discounts and better service from suppliers. It also accelerates the flow of important information between the buyer and supplier, reduces administrative hours thus freeing the workers to do other work. This allows the organization to respond quickly to highly competitive new market entrants and improve the chances of winning new business (Eng, 2004). This study therefore found it necessary to try and establish the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance of organizations in Homa Bay County.

2.3.3 Levels of Communication Practices and Competitive Advantage in Supply Chain Management.

Communication practice is one of the most important aspects of supply chain management to achieve competitive advantage because information is needed for various purposes and serves as invaluable assets (Vlachos and Ilias 2014). Information is very important aspect of decision making in all levels of management in enterprises especially in competitive business environment and managers utilize information as a resource to plan, organize, staff administer and control activities in ways that achieve the enterprises objectives. Communication plays an increasingly important role in facilitating the introduction of new products or services, in improving operational processes, and in guiding managerial decision making. SMEs would greatly benefit by the adoption of high level communication practices in their business processes. Communication will increasingly empower Organizations to participate in knowledge management by facilitating connectivity, helping them to create and deliver products and services on global scale. High level communication adoption by Organization would transform the business operations by enabling rapid, reliable and efficient exchange of large amount of information. In this information era Organizations need effective communication systems to support and to deliver information to the different users.

According to Yee, and Seog-Chan Oh. Ebook (2013) Effective communication management is critical for all Organizations especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) because they operate different from large companies. First, SMEs tend to have centralized structures and to employ generalists rather than specialists, and this results in a lack of communication knowledge

and technical skills. Second, SMEs lack the financial resources to invest in communication infrastructure and to train their ICT users. Organizations are faced with competition from multinational corporations in the domestic market. These competitions are in form of reduced costs, improved quality products with high performance, wide range of products and better services, all delivered simultaneously to enhance the value of their customer Somuyiwa and Oyesiku; (2010). Organizations should use high level communication practices to enable their supply chain management efficiently and responsively to achieve competitive advantage. Communication affects the way businesses operate. It changes the business structures and altered the degree of competition and creates a competitive advantage for the businesses which have adopted ICTs. Communication affects the new businesses operations. There is need to embrace the state-of-art technologies especially in SMEs in order to penetrate international markets and remain competitive despite the challenges posed by globalization, liberalization and technological changes. Since the global economy becomes increasingly reliant on information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to receive, process, and send out information, organizations in developing countries are expected to go for ICTs. It is said that many Organizations face competition from global giants due to which they ask for protection, and technological and financial support from the State. In the course of time, however, their reliance on the informal sector of the economy for fetching raw material and informal goods should not become exploitative in nature. The key for Organizations is that the communication provides so many options and avenues to take advantage of in a way that big business just can't or doesn't see value in (Youn; Ma Ga (Mark) Yang; Jin Hwan Kim and Paul Hong, 2014).

2.3.4 Relationship between the Levels of Competitive Advantage and Supply Chain Management Performance of Organizations

Without operational support from the perspective of supply chain management, an organization may not be able to achieve their business goals. The key to successful supply chain management is to plan and execute workflows among the members of supply chain in order to create harmony between them (Wen and QianlingGu. 2014). The supply chain members are typically divided into two groups, the upstream and downstream. The producers are in the mid-level of supply chain. The upstream region is from the side of the producer to the suppliers of raw materials. A consistent connection between producers and suppliers is essential. The downstream members of

the supply chain are customers. For customers, a compatible connection between distributors and retailers is also required. For useful integration, it is very important for all members to be in accordance with each other. Supply chain integration means that competitive advantage and supply chain performance should be placed side by side and should help the supply chain members to make decisions and thus to provide competitive strategies (Yee and Seog-Chan Oh, 2013). The basis of supply chain integration was determined with collaboration of chain members, sharing communicated information, trusts, partnership and a shared technology (Otchere Jonathan Annan and Emanuel KwabenaAnin, 2013). Concentration on supply chain integration includes the simultaneous operational activities (Ellram and Cooper, 2014). Competitive advantage is to distinguish the characteristics or dimensions provided for each organization that creates presenting values for the customers so that these values can be higher than the costs of the customer. Rising of competitive advantage will be achieved if all members of the supply chain are coordinated with each other (Youn, Ma Ga (Mark) Yang, Jin Hwan Kim and Paul Hong, 2014).

Supply chain management is an integrated approach for planning, controlling material and information which flows from suppliers to customers. The task of supply chain is to manage and make harmony among different processes within the supply chain (Lin, 2013). The objective of supply chain management is to maximize the total value of production (Otchere Jonathan Annan and Emanuel KwabenaAnin, 2013). In general, supply chain management involves the integration of all operating key processes at each level of the chain among end-users and suppliers of major products, services and information that provide added value to customers and other stakeholders (Senvar, UmutRifatTuzkaya and CengizKahraman, 2014).

Supply chain integration includes strategic initiatives in the supply chain that tries to create an efficient and integrated system. In other words, it refers to the integration of communications, activities, tasks, processes and locations for continuous communication among customers, suppliers, producers and other members of the supply chain. There are three basic types of Supply Chain Integration (SCI), which include internal integration, customer integration and supplier integration (Lai, Min Zhang, Denis Lee and Xiande Zhao, 2012). Supply chain integration helps to reduce costs, improve reaction to change, enhance customer service levels and facilitate decision making by suppliers and customers (Cheng, Lawk, Bjornsson, Jones A.

and Sriram, (2010) show various levels of communication and supply chain integration. They refer to the process of integration and internal parts of organization, so that it can show extent the different internal departments within a company are able to cooperate with each other (Lai, Min Zhang, Denis Lee and Xiande Zhao, 2012) (Swink, Ram Narasimhan and Cynthia Wang, 2007), (Zhao X., BaofengHuo, Barbara Flynn and Jeff Hoi Yan Yeung, 2008). With internal integration, the companies will experience to identify, combine and coordinate appropriate internal resources to improve the capabilities in several areas including quality, performance, cost and delivery (Otchere Jonathan Annan and Emanuel KwabenaAnin, 2013).

Measuring supply chain performance is vital for continuous improvement of supply chain management. Measuring effective supply chain performance is an important aspect in supply chain management in which the decision makers can analyze the past and current state of the supply chain and gain the future goals based on past and current behavior and opportunity of the supply chain. Measuring supply chain performance is essential to survive in today's competitive business environment (Senvar, UmutRifatTuzkaya and CengizKahraman, 2014). Quality, agility, reliability, flexibility and cost are the five main objectives of the supply chain. Improving supply chain performance is one of the important problems in maintaining a competitive advantage for the companies in the realm of supply chain (Vlachos Ilias, 2014). Supply chain integration is directly related to business performance. The higher level of supply chain integration in the supply chain will lead to better performance (Otchere. Jonathan Annan and Emanuel KwabenaAnin, 2013).

Flexibility will show the ability of a system to perform proactive and reactive adaptation of settings to deal with internal and external uncertainty. Increasing the complexity of value-added processes and shortening the time to respond to the demand are the main reasons of the flexibility in the supply chain. Because the complexity of business processes is increasing, the company must progressively be oriented towards customers' needs. With these conditions, the products offered by the company will be increasingly complex. Companies can outsource some of their products to other companies to improve their products and increase their flexibility (Singh and Sharma, 2014). Flexibility denotes the capacity of a system to respond quickly to changes inside and outside the system. The ultimate goal of this performance is to gain competitive advantage as well as success in creating satisfaction for customers.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review and gaps

The review of literature had shown that there were factors that deter the performance organization's supply chain department; all over the world. Various sources were reviewed in relation to organizations narrowing down to Kenya.

Extent of relationship between communication practice levels and supply chain function performance in Kenya was however not well established. It was revealed that in order for secondary schools to improve the performance of supply chain management department, communication levels must be emphasized. In the review literature the following gaps are evident;

Not much has been done on the analysis of communication practice levels in the supply chain function and performance in Secondary Schools in Kenya. Most research studies are based on making business organization and companies.

The few research studies carried out in Secondary schools in Kenya focuses on income generation projects, with little or no attention on supply chain management department in an attempt to fill these gaps, the current study seeks to analyze the relationships between communication practice and performance of supply chain in organization in Homa Bay. Kenya

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1: Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in the study. It outlined the research design, research site, target population, sample design, sample size determination, sample procedures, data collection, research instruments, validity and reliability of research instruments, administration of research instruments, scoring of research instruments, data analysis and ethical issues that was included in the study.

3.2 The Study Area

Homa Bay County was the area of the study. It's located in the former Nyanza province of Kenya along the shore of lake Victoria. The county has a population of 963,794 (census 2009) and has an area of 3,154.7 km². Homa Bay County is bordered by Kisii to the East, Migori County to the south. Homa Bay County is located 130km south of the city of Kisumu and about 400km from the city of Nairobi. There are different types of organizations in Homa Bay.

3.3 Research design

Descriptive and correlations research designs were used. This was where the researcher expects to have target group explain or describe certain issues about important variables of the study. This study adopted a descriptive research design, the population of interest in the organizations that was visited. The design deemed appropriate because the main interest was to explore the viable relationship and describe how some factors support matters under investigation. Descriptive design method provided quantitative data from cross section of the chosen population. The researcher used correlation analysis and a multiple regression analysis so as to determine the relationships between the variables.

3.4 Target population

The target population of this study was the persons in charge of the organizations and 30% of the staff working in supply management department in selected secondary schools in Homa bay County. A selection of 30% is considered representative of each stratum, cheaper and cost

effective (Orodho 2009). The population aspect referred to the individual participant or object on which the measurement was taken. It was the unit of study (Cooper and Schindler, 2011). The population characteristic was summarized in the table 3.1 below

Table 3.1 Target population and sample size

SUB COUNTY	NUMBER OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS	Number of supply chain dep. Staff	SAMPLED SCHOOLS	Total Sample size
Suba north	26	91	8	28
Suba south	34	125	10	36
Ndhiwa	43	159	13	48
Homabay	62	238	21	78
Rachuonyo North	43	159	13	48
Rachuonyo South	55	207	17	64
TOTAL	257	979	82	302

3.5 Sample Size determination and sampling Procedure

From the above population of 257 schools, the study identified 82 schools, stratified random sampling was used, in this case the stratum was the Sub Counties which made 6 strata; this gave each item in the population an equal probability of being selected. For this study, 302 respondents were selected to representing a population of 1061 possible respondents using stratified sampling by taking 30% of the target population in each stratum. Random selection was determined objectively by means of random number tables. This was because most of the staff members were aware of the information required by the study. A selection of 30% was considered representative of each stratum, cheaper and cost effective (Fink, A. 2009).

3.6 Data collection

3.6.1 Research Instruments

The research instruments included a questionnaire filled by the respondents in supply chain department of the selected schools (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003) states that interview as a method provides information in greater depth, has flexibility and the language of the interview can be adjusted to the ability and education level of the person interviewed. The questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument. Primary data was collected using questionnaires, observation and interview schedule. The questionnaire contained open-ended and closed ended questions; the Likert scale for measuring attitude was included in the questionnaire. The study used secondary data which was collected through literature review; the selection of these tools was guided by the nature of the study, the time available as well as the objective of the study.

3.6.2 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

According to Trochim (2005) Reliability has to do with the quality of measurement. In its everyday sense, reliability is the “consistency” or “repeatability of your measures Cooper, D. R. & Schindler, P. S. (2011) defines validity in one or three ways, agreement between theoretical definition and operational indicators, absence of systematic mistakes and that we measure that we say we measure. The questionnaires were pre tested by conducting a pilot survey. The study used the internal consistency technique by employing Cronbach Coefficient Alpha test for testing the research tools. Internal consistency of data was determined by correlating the scores obtained from one time with scores obtained from other times in the research instrument. The result of correlation was Cronbach Alpha value between -1 and 1. The coefficient implies high correlation between these items means there was high consistency among the items and such the items should be retained in the tools. The study used correlated items in the instrument to determine how best they related. Where the coefficient was low, then the item was reviewed by either removing it from the tool or correcting it. This ensured that similar results could be achieved again in a similar population size. Conclusions and findings were shared with stakeholders for purposes of validating them.

3.6.3 Administration of Research Instruments

The 302 supply management staffs in the selected schools were interviewed to attain information about their own level of involvement. The questionnaire was administered through drop and pick method to the officers of the selected schools. The questions were designed to collect qualitative and quantitative data. This method was used to collect information from the staff using a structured and open ended questionnaire which allowed extra information provided outside the structured responses during the interview as a result of what the interviewee said.

3.7 Data analysis and presentation

This included analysis of data through the summary of the essential features and relationships of data in order to generalize from the analysis and determine patterns of behaviour and particular outcomes. Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. A content analysis and descriptive analysis were employed. The content analysis was used to analyze the respondents' views about the effect of performance in supply management. Data was grouped into frequency distribution to indicate variable values and number of occurrences in terms of frequency. Frequency distribution table was an informative to summarize the data from respondents. The organized data was interpreted on account of concurrence and standard deviation to objectives using a computer package SPSS. In addition, the researcher used correlation analysis and a multiple regression analysis so as to determine the relationships between the variables.

Regression model:

The regression model:

$$Y = b_0 + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where b_0 is constant, it gives the dependent variable a value when all independent variables are zero, and it determine where regression line meets the Y-axis; $b_1...b_3$ are coefficients that represent the estimated change in dependent variable. We use a regression analysis to gain a deeper understanding about relationship between interpersonal level, group level communication and organizational level. Independent variables (X) the proposed three dimensions are treated as independent variables in the regression model: interpersonal level (X_1), group level

communication (X_2), and organizational level (X_3) Dependent Variable (Y) performance of the supply chain management is treated as dependent variable.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the results of the findings of the data analyzed from the questionnaires. The data was analyzed based on the research objectives and questionnaire items using a statistical tool, to generate frequency distribution tables, means, charts, graphs and the results of analysis presented.

4.2 Response Rate

Koltler (1997) defines the response rate as the extent to which the final set of data includes all sample members and it is calculated as from the number of people with whom interviews are completed divided by the total number of people in the entire sample, including those who refused to participate and those who were unavailable. From a sample size of 302 respondents issued with questionnaires, 286 of them were returned dully filled giving a proportion of 94.7 percent. This was as a good percentage that can represent the sample size.

4.3 General Information

In section I of the questionnaire, the researcher asked the respondents some of the basic information in order to establish the grounds for the study. The following are some the results that were obtained with regard to the general information.

The Table 4.1 below shows the results when the respondents were classified by their gender. The results showed that 71.7 % (205) were male and 28.3 % (81) were female

Table 4.1 Gender of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
male	205	71.7	71.7
female	81	28.3	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

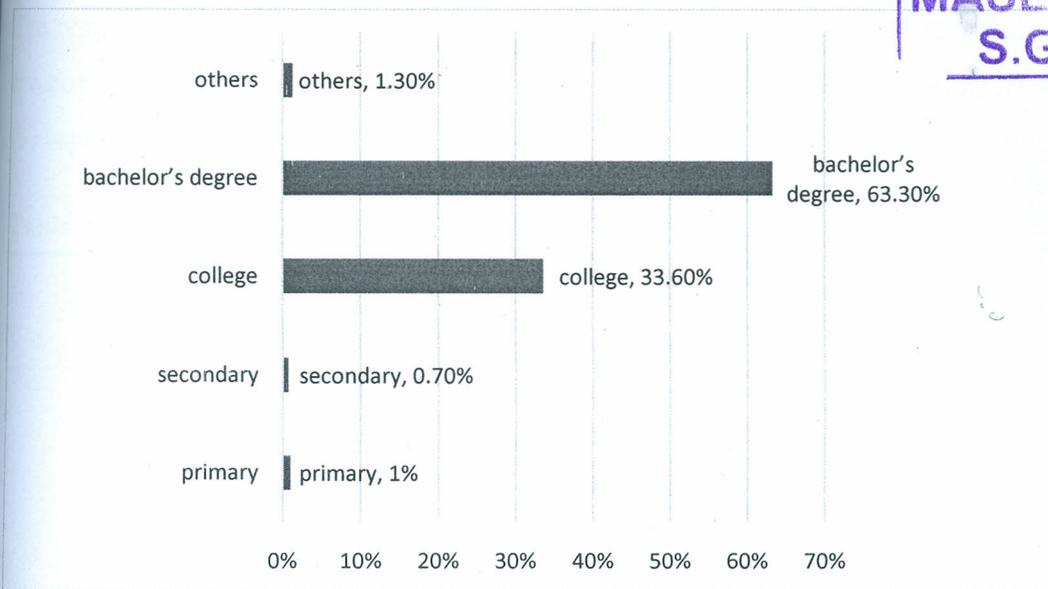
The Table 4.2 below shows the results when the respondents were classified by their ages .The results showed that the respondents aged 18-24 years were 13.6% (39), those aged 25-30 years were 9.8% (28), those aged 31-34 years were 15.4% (44), those aged 35-40 years were 27.3% (78), those aged 41-44 years were 11.5%(33), those aged 45-50 years were 19.2% and those aged over 50 years were 3.1% (9).

Table 4.2 Age of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-24yrs	39	13.6	13.6
25-30yrs	28	9.8	23.4
31-34yrs	44	15.4	38.8
35-40yrs	78	27.3	66.1
41-44yrs	33	11.5	77.6
45-50yrs	55	19.2	96.9
over 51yrs	9	3.1	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

The figure 4.1 below shows the results when the respondents were classified by their education level. The results showed that 1.0% (3) attained primary level of education, 0.7% (2) attained secondary level, 33.6% (96) attained college level,63.3% (181) attained bachelor's degree level and the respondents who attained other education levels were 0.3% (1).



Source: Research data, 2017

Figure 4.1 Education Level of the respondent

The Table 4.3 below shows the results when the respondents were classified by their years of service where those with under 1 year service were 13.3% (38), those with 1-5 years of service were 22% (63), those with 6-10 years of service were 30.1% (86), those with less than 10 years of service were 34.3% (98), and those with more than 10 years of service 0.3% (1).

Table 4.3 Years of Service of the respondent

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
<1yr	38	13.3	13.3
1-5yrs	63	22.0	35.3
6-10yrs	86	30.1	65.4
>10yrs	99	34.6	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

4.4 The Levels of Communication Practices in Supply Chain Management

The results shown in the Table 4.4 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if the communication practices in their organization were good 88.1 % (252) said yes and 11.5 % (33) said no.

Table 4.4 Good Communication Practice

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes	252	88.1	88.1
No	34	11.8	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

The results shown in Table 4.5 below shows the results when the respondents were asked on the level of communication practices in their organization.1% (3) commented very high, 56.6% (162) commented high,39.9% (114) commented moderated,0.3% (1)commented low and 2.1% (6) commented very low.

Table 4.5 Level of communication practices

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
very high	3	1.0	1.0
High	162	56.6	57.7
moderate	114	39.9	97.6
Low	1	.3	97.9
very low	6	2.1	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

4.5 The Levels of Communication Practices on Supply Chain Management Performance

The Table 4.6 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if high communication practices improves performance of supply chain management. 64.7% (185) commented to a very great extent, 23.1% (66) commented to a great extent, 4.9% (14) commented not sure, 2.1% (6) commented no and 5.2% (15) commented not at all.

Table 4.6 High Communication Improves Performance

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
to a very great extent	185	64.7	64.7
to a great extent	66	23.1	87.8
not sure	14	4.9	92.7
No	6	2.1	94.8
not at all	15	5.2	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

The Table 4.7 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if communication is vital in any company's key business process in supply chain management. 61.2% (175) commented to a very great extent, 25.9% (74) commented to a great extent, 7.7% (22) commented not sure, 2.4% (7) commented no and 2.8% (8) commented not at all.

Table 4.7 Communication Vital in any Company

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
to a very great extent	175	61.2	61.2
to a great extent	74	25.9	87.1
not sure	22	7.7	94.8
No	7	2.4	97.2
not at all	8	2.8	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

The Figure 4.2 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if well designed communication practices in supply chain management system helps the organization by ensuring the right quantity of parts for production or products for sale arrive at the right time. 54.2% (155) commented to a very great extent, 33.6% (96) commented to a great extent, 8.7% (25) commented not sure, 2.8% (8) commented no, 0.7% (2) commented not at all.

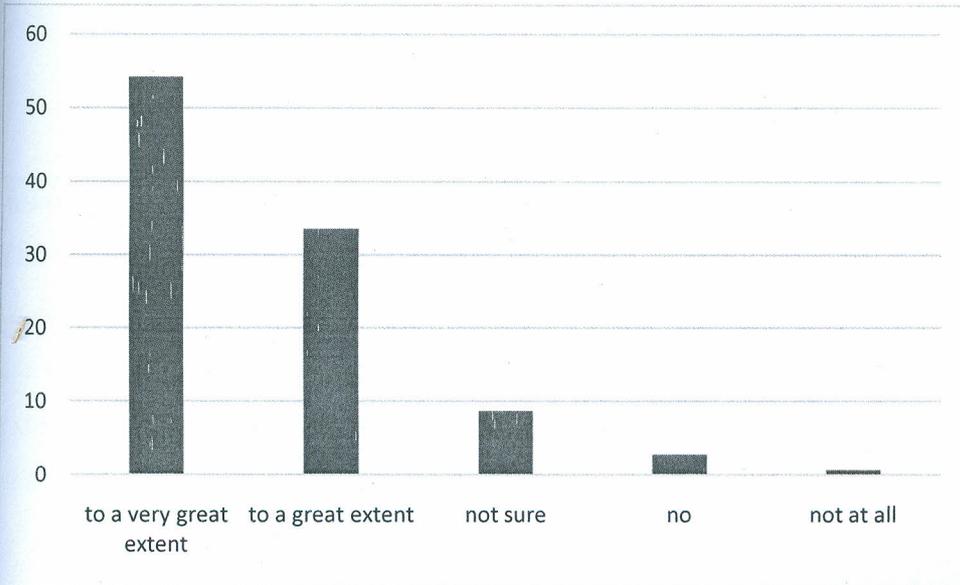


Figure 4.2 Well Designed Communication Practice Helps Quality of Production

Source: Research data, 2017

The Table 4.8 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if well designed supply chain management systems helps the organization by keeping the cost of transporting raw materials as low as possible consistent with safe and reliable delivery. 37.4% (107) commented to a very great extent, 46.2% (132) commented to a great extent, 10.5% (30) commented not sure, 3.5% (10) commented no and 2.4% (7) commented not at all.

Table 4.8 Communication Practice Helps Keep Cost of Transport

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
to a very great extent	107	37.4	37.4	37.4
to a great extent	132	46.2	46.2	83.6
not sure	30	10.5	10.5	94.1
No	10	3.5	3.5	97.6
not at all	7	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	286	100.0	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

The Figure 4.3 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if well designed supply chain management systems helps the organization by ensuring no sales are lost because shelves are empty. 46.7% (133) commented to a very great extent, 30.5% (87) commented to a great extent, 14.7% (42) commented not sure, 3.2% (9) commented no and 4.9% (14) commented not at all.



Figure 4.3 Communication Practice Helps Organisation avoid Loss

Source: Research data, 2017

The Table 4.9 below shows the results when the respondents were asked if well designed supply chain management systems helps the organization by keeping the cost of purchased parts and prices of products at acceptable levels. 46.2% (132) commented to a very great extent 29.7% (85) commented to a great extent, 12.9% (37) commented not sure, 9.1% (26) commented no and 2.1% (6) commented not at all.

Table 4.9 Communication Practice Helps Organisation Keep Cost of Purchase

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
to a very great extent	132	46.2	46.2
to a great extent	85	29.7	75.9
not sure	37	12.9	88.8
no	26	9.1	97.9
not at all	6	2.1	100.0
Total	286	100.0	

Source: Research data, 2017

4.5.1 Discussions on the Levels of Communication Practices in Supply Chain Management.

This objective sought to find out the level of communication practices in supply chain management in secondary schools in Homa Bay county. The results reveals that communication practices improves performance of supply chain management. As 64.7% comments that it is to a very great extent. This is the same as what the study done by (Swink.; Ram Narasimhan and Cynthia Wang 2007) found. This shows that the level of communication practice has great effect on supply chain management.

Table 4.10 Establish the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance of secondary schools in Homa Bay County.

		Level of communication practice	Supply chain management performance
Level of communication practice	Pearson Correlation	1	.146
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	286	286
Supply chain management performance	Pearson Correlation	.146	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	286	286

There was an insignificant positive relationship between level of communication practice and supply chain management performance of the SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.146^{**}$, $p>0.010$) as shown in the Table 4.10. This means that increase in level of communication practice will result to increase in SCM performance of the schools.

Source: Research data, 2017

4.6 The Relationship between Levels of Communication Practices and Competitive Advantage in Supply Chain Management

Table 4.11 Correlation between Level of Communication practice and Competitive advantage

		Level of communication practice	Competitive advantage
Level of communication practice	Pearson Correlation	1	.620**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	286	286
Competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	.620**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	286	286

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There was a significant positive but weak relationship between level of communication practice and competitive advantage of SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.620^{**}$, $p>0.010$) as shown in the table 4.10. This means that a secondary school which is been involved in high level of communication practice will increase its competitive advantage in business.

Source: Research data, 2017

4.6.1 Discussions on the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance.

This objective sought to determine the effect of the levels of communication practices on supply chain management performance in secondary schools in Homa Bay county. The result shows that there is insignificant positive relationship between level of communication practice and supply chain management performance of the SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.146^{**}$,

$p > 0.010$). This means that increase in level of communication practice will result to increase in SCM performance of the schools. Studies by Youn; Ma Ga (Mark) Yang; Jin Hwan Kim and Paul Hong. (2014) also show that there is a positive relationship between levels of communication practices and performance of SCM in organization,

4.7 The Relationship between the Levels of Competitive Advantage and Supply Chain Management Performance

Table 4.12 Correlation between the Levels of Competitive Advantage and Supply Chain Management Performance

		Competitive advantage	Supply chain management performance
Competitive advantage	Pearson Correlation	1	.570**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	286	286
Supply chain management performance	Pearson Correlation	.570**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	
	N	286	286
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

There was an insignificant positive relationship between competitive advantage and supply chain management performance of secondary schools ($r = .570^{**}$, $p > 0.010$) as shown in the table 4.11. This means that increase in competitive advantage activities in the secondary school's SCM department result to increase in employee stewardship because many employees will be proud to associated themselves with school.

Source: Research data, 2017

4.7.1 Discussions on the Relationship between the Levels of Competitive Advantage and Supply Chain Management Performance.

This objective sought to determine the relationship between the Levels of Competitive Advantage and Supply Chain Management Performance in secondary schools in Homa Bay County. The result shows that there is an insignificant positive relationship between competitive advantage and supply chain management performance of secondary schools ($r=.570^{**}$, $p>0.010$). According to (Cheng, Lawk, Bjornsson, Jones and Sriram, (2010) as in the current study they show various levels of competitive advantage and supply chain integration and refer to the process of integration and internal parts of organization

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter tends to briefly revisit what was set out to achieve as previously stated in chapter one of this study. It also introduces in few paragraphs what has been done in the previous chapters. It will provide a smooth ground into the finding and recommendation.

5.2 Summary

5.2.1 Levels of Communication Practices in Supply Chain Management in Organizations.

In chapter one and two level of communication practices has been defined by many writers who looked at it from numerous perspectives. The research work was basically conducted to analyze the relationships between communication and the performance of SCM in Homa Bay County. In carrying out the study, primary and secondary sources of data were made used of in gathering relevant information. From the information gathered, it was found that there is high levels of communication practices in SCM in organizations in Homa Bay County this was evident by the results when the respondents were asked on the level of communication practices in their organization. 1% (3) commented very high, 56.6% (162) commented high, 39.9% (114) commented moderated, 0.3% (1) commented low and 2.1% (6) commented very low. This is the same as what the study done by (Swink; Ram Narasimhan and Cynthia Wang 2007) found. In their study, they found that global competition is forcing enterprises to become agile. Agility in business performance is the ability of a company to prosper in rapidly changing, continually fragmented global markets for high-quality, high-performance, customer configured products and services. In this endeavor, information and communication technology (ICT) plays an increasingly important role in facilitating the introduction of new products or services, in improving operational processes, and in guiding managerial decision making. The impact of globalization has compelled SMEs to adopt ICTs, to enable SMEs to survive and compete with large companies and therefore there was a high level of communication practices in SCM in organizations.

5.2.2 Levels of Communication Practices and Performance of Supply Chain Management

High levels of communication practices is an accepted practice by all members of the surveyed schools. This was supported by the positive responds obtained from the questionnaire. The results shows that there was an insignificant positive relationship between level of communication practice and supply chain management performance of the SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.146^{**}$, $p>0.010$) as shown in the Table 4.10. This means that increase in level of communication practice will result to increase in SCM performance of the schools

Studies by Youn; Ma Ga (Mark) Yang; Jin Hwan Kim and Paul Hong. (2014) also show that there is a positive relationship between levels of communication practices and performance of SCM in organization, but other studies present less evidence. Yee and Seog-Chan Oh. Ebook. (2013), did not find any relationship (Jeffers et al., 2016). In an attempt to better understand the relationship Communication-SC performance and the underlying mechanisms, researchers have investigated the indirect effect of communication on SC performance through supply chain management (SCM). Again the results are mixed.

5.2.3 Relationship between the Levels of Communication Practices and Competitive Advantage in Supply Chain Management.

From the research it came out clear that indeed levels of communication practices embarked by SCM department in secondary schools has created value for the departments as stakeholders and customers are comfortable transacting business with schools. Again stakeholder businesses also grow and therefore improve customer loyalty. This was one major breakthrough in SCM departments in secondary schools has achieved to stay competitive. This was evidence by the results as a significant positive but weak relationship between level of communication practice and competitive advantage of SCM departments in secondary schools ($r=.620^{**}$, $p>0.010$) as shown in the table 4.10. This means that a secondary school which is been involved in high level of communication practice will increase its competitive advantage in business.

Yee, J.T. and Seog-Chan Oh. Ebook (2013) in their research also concur with the current study that effective communication management is critical for all Organizations especially the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) because they operate different from large companies. First, SMEs tend to have centralized structures and to employ generalists rather than specialists, and

this results in a lack of communication knowledge and technical skills. Second, SMEs lack the financial resources to invest in communication infrastructure and to train their ICT users. Organizations are faced with competition from multinational corporations in the domestic market.

Oyesiku, (2010) in his study also found that organizations should use high level communication practices to enable their supply chain management efficiently and responsively to achieve competitive advantage. This was the case in the current study. Oyesike continue to say that communication affects the way businesses operate. It changes the business structures and altered the degree of competition and creates a competitive advantage for the businesses which have adopted ICTs. Communication affects the new businesses operations. There is need to embrace the state-of-art technologies especially in SMEs in order to penetrate international markets and remain competitive despite the challenges posed by globalization, liberalization and technological changes.

5.2.4 Relationship between the Levels of Competitive Advantage and Supply Chain Management Performance of Organizations

It also came out clearly from the research that the relationship between the levels of competitive advantage and supply chain management performance in organizations is positively strong. As shown in the results there was an insignificant positive relationship between competitive advantage and supply chain management performance of secondary schools ($r=.570^{**}$, $p>0.010$) as shown in the table 4.11 This means that increase in competitive advantage activities in the secondary school's SCM department result to increase in employee stewardship because many employees will be proud to associated themselves with school.

Supply chain integration helps to reduce costs, improve reaction to change, enhance customer service levels and facilitate decision making by suppliers and customers, this is according to (Cheng, Lawk., Bjornsson, Jones and Sriram (2010) as in the current study they show various levels of competitive advantage and supply chain integration. They refer to the process of integration and internal parts of organization, so that it can shows extent the different internal departments within a company are able to cooperate with each other (Lai, Min Zhang, Denis Lee and Xiande Zhao, 2012) (Swink, Ram Narasimhan and Cynthia Wang, 2007), (Zhao,

BaofengHuo, Barbara Flynn and Jeff Hoi Yan Yeung, 2008). With internal integration, the companies will experience to identify, combine and coordinate appropriate internal resources to improve the capabilities in several areas, including quality, performance, cost and delivery (Otchere Jonathan Annan and Emanuel KwabenaAnin, 2013).

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion the concept of levels of communication practices has become more and more common in business practices and customers today almost expect companies to be socially responsible. Even though communication is very important for organizations, it has historically not been a very lucrative used for it to be involved many activities. The business organizations of the 21-st century will have no choice but to implement high levels of communication practices for them to enhance their performance in SCM departments. Like any successful management strategy, a communication process needs both high level management vision and support, and buy-in at all levels of the organization.

The same communication practices initiative will also not work for all types of organizations. Designing communication initiative requires careful planning and implementation mechanism. Corporate organizations should integrate the innovative communication strategies into different marketing communication strategies to build and sustain a competitive advantage. In today's competitive market, communication offer an opportunity for organizations to explore other areas of improving profitability. Customers have become very sophisticated and very much aware of their environment against the perception that corporate organizations make a lot of profits, it becomes imperative for these companies to put back into the society through corporate social responsibility programmes. Even though the benefits from communication are over a long time of time, it is such that it gives a lot more intangible benefits to the organizations. Such benefits include customer loyalty, brand image, improved corporate image, and market share and community presence.

5.3 Recommendation

This section recommends measures to be considered by academia, corporate organization and stakeholders as well as customers so long as SCM is concerned.

Communication deserves greater attention and more commitment from corporate organizations in that it guarantees other benefits other than just profits. This offers an opportunity to the corporate world to think out of the box and explore other potentially viable areas to improve the company profits portfolio. Corporate organizations stand to gain over a period of time some leverages other than just products and services they render to the society.

Corporate organizations should intensify efforts to members on their primary responsibilities, various commitments to other stakeholders and operational/financial limitations. By doing so, they will begin to show understanding and appreciation of the efforts and contributions of such organizations

For academic and industry discussions the study recommends that further study be conducted to establish the real value in monetary terms how much levels of communication contribute to the organizations profitability. Also further research should be conducted to quantify how much or to what degree these communication practices have impacted on the society and its corresponding value generation for organizations.

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