

MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

**THE ROLE OF HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE STUDY OF
MAASAI MARA UNIVERSITY.**

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A research Project submitted to the department of Media, film and communication in the school of Arts and Social Sciences, in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the award of the Degree of Communication and Journalism.

DECLARATION

I declare that this proposal is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any university

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Signature

Date

I declare that this proposal has not been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor

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Signature

Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the roles horizontal communication in enhancing customer satisfaction in organizations in the context of Maasai Mara university. Literature regarding organizational communication and job satisfaction was reviewed and the theory of customer service applied as the main guidance of the research.

The study utilized the statistical method to analyze the data collected from questionnaires. A total of 26 employees working in Maasai Mara university participated in the research. Horizontal communication was examined by four indicators: employee's perceived quantity of social interaction with peers (superiors and fellow employees at similar levels) within the department, quantity of social interaction with peers (customers) seeking services from the department, quality of these interactions, and feedback obtained from the perceived clients on their rating of the services offered to them through the department

The findings from analyses revealed that most workers translate the moods they have at work to their clients whom they interact with. This consequently affects the way different customers are satisfied with your product or service.

1.0 CHAPTER 1

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In this study, we focus on the and test how its use in organizations can lead to improved service delivery to the organization's clients

Horizontal communication plays a great role in organizations since it involves the relationship among equal employees in terms of powers, who majorly interact with one another on a daily basis. It could be communication between heads of departments or even between juniors in one department, or communication between people of equal status in different departments within the same organization.

This kind of relationship rarely exists between people of different ranks within an organization since communication that would bring two unequal ranks in an organization is in most cases aimed at giving or taking orders, forwarding reports and evaluation of performance and organizational progress.

It is for this reason that we have therefore to have deep look into the relationships between people working in equal ranks within an organization and evaluate how such relationships affect the organization's performance in the market and in the eyes of its publics.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

For any organizations to achieve its goals (both short term and long term), there needs to exist an environment that is free for all employees to make them perform their best in those organizations.

They need to relate and interact freely with one another in their various ranks, especially for those in equal ranks. Coordination among partners in carrying out the daily assignments remains very crucial for organizations to prosper and attract many more clients to obtain their products and or services.

In the absence of proper coordination among these workers/ employees, then carrying out of the organization's daily practices becomes difficult, leading to low outputs and high customer fall out.

In a similar manner, being that people at similar levels do cover – ups for one another, making them good look clean in their superiors' eyes, horizontal communication can as well lead to some problems within an organization, including stagnated growth and development of the organization.

Need therefore arises to examine customer- employee relationships and communication among people in similar positions hence this proposed study.

This should cover all the types of employees in that organization, be they contracted or permanent. It is through evaluating employee – client relationships that an organization finds out the areas of improvement.

This is because, in many organizations, much communication is not so much of downward or upward, but sideways, to peers and others.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out how employee relationship affect customer relations in an organization
2. To find out how horizontal communication in organizations help in propagating improved service delivery to the organization's clients.
3. To ascertain how horizontal communication in organizations hinder customer satisfaction.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Horizontal communication flows among the employees at the same level in the organization. In today's organization, horizontal communication is becoming increasingly common with the flattening of organizational hierarchy and the advent of team work (Greenberg and Baron 2008, 353).

Horizontal communication in an organization can serve for an efficient and accurate transfer of information and facilitate coordination, hence no accidents will happen because of lack of necessary communication and the organization functions more effectively (Robbins et al. 2010, 292; Tubbs and Moss 2008, 490). Gold Haber (1993) concluded that there are four important functions of horizontal communication.

Since in horizontal communication people are horizontally equivalent, the communication is usually friendlier in nature than the vertical communication. It is often also more casual and easier since the social barriers are fewer between people, and they are often more satisfied with it (Greenberg and Baron 2008, 353).

However, according to Tubbs and Moss 2008, 490; Greenberg and Baron 2008, 353, there are some problems that may cause bad horizontal communication, especially between different groups or departments. Members in a group or department are usually required to demonstrate loyalty, especially when there is competition between groups or departments. As a result, they

tend to avoid communication with those outside and also not trust and help others. Moreover, when there is a conflict between co-workers, they may behave antagonistically and show their resentment more openly, since they do not need to bow to hierarchy (Greenberg and Baron 2008, 353).

All these problems may impact on the overall organizational benefits of horizontal communication.

Schein (1997) summarized a guideline to reduce the barriers to horizontal communication put more emphasis on the overall organizational effectiveness and the importance of different departments' role in contributing to this overall effectiveness; facilitate the high interaction and frequent communication between groups to work on the intergroup coordination and help each other; employ frequent rotation of members among different groups or departments to stimulate mutual understanding and empathy for others' difficulties and problems; avoid any win-lose situation to reduce competition for reward so that the resources and information are shared equally and fairly (Tubbs and Moss 2008, 491). Additionally, empirical studies found that games and team challenges outside of the office can open up the lines of communication and reduce the barriers to effective communication across equivalent personnel in the organization (Mowlem 2004, 1; Tubbs and Moss 2008, 48)9.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.21 Introduction

As people who work in an organization, there are factors that motivate employees to communicate to one another. Among them is motivation.

When a workforce is motivated, the kind of communication will be positive, opposed to when a workforce is poorly motivating. The kind of communication that is likely to take place among such employees is mostly negative.

In this study, it is important to note that a motivated workforce translates that motivation and joy to the organization's clients and so does a non- motivated workforce transmit similar discomfort to its customers and clients leading to poor sales and or customer relations.

2.22 Herzberg's two-factor theory.

This theory states that certain factors cause job satisfaction and other factors cause dissatisfaction. It states that there exist intrinsic and extrinsic sources of motivation that drive employees to work and influence their customers and clients in different ways. this theory is important in that the varying motivations employees receive affect them differently in the ways they operate with their customers, leading satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

It is important to note that while this theory talks majorly on employee motivation, it is the presence of or lack of motivation that will get employees talking; especially those in similar ranks. People in similar ranks tend to influence one another through their communications.

It is therefore important to consider Herzberg's theory of motivation as that which plays a great role in making employees engage one another, and as a result influencing the way in which the employees relate to their customers.

According to Herzberg, intrinsic motivators and extrinsic motivators have an inverse relationship.

This is to say that intrinsic motivators tend to inspire motivation when they are present, while extrinsic motivators tend to reduce motivation when they are absent. This is because of expectation.

Extrinsic motivators tend to represent more tangible, basic needs (e.g., status, job security, salary, and fringe benefits salary) are expected and so will not increase motivation when they are in place, but they will cause dissatisfaction when they are missing.

Intrinsic motivators represent less tangible, more emotional needs (e.g., challenging work), and can be a source of additional motivation.

If management wants to increase employees' job satisfaction, they should be concerned with the nature of the work itself i.e. the opportunities it presents employees for gaining status, assuming responsibility, and achieving self-realization.

If, on the other hand, management wishes to reduce dissatisfaction, then it must focus on the job environment—policies, procedures, supervision, and working conditions. To ensure a satisfied and productive workforce, managers must pay attention to both sets of job factors.

2.23 The Customer Service Theory by Susan Dorling

The theory of customer service is based on identifying and satisfying your customers' needs and exceeding their expectations.

An organization must be totally committed to delivering consistently high standards of service to gain and retain customer loyalty. Everyone from top management on down must be tuned into what the customer wants. It is through the knowledge of how to handle customer needs that the workforce can help an organization in achieving these customer expectations leading to customer satisfaction.

Creating a customer service culture within a company can help build success. Customer satisfaction and loyalty are intimately linked to the quality of customer service and, ultimately, to the company's profitability.

It should be remembered that organizations work in departments and each department has its own targets to achieve at the end of the week, month, or year. Therefore, despite the overall goals the company has, each department within the institution must work towards ensuring it builds the best image of the company.

In so doing, the employees in these departments engage in horizontal communication as they share the targets among themselves. Sometimes, different departments have to consult on the various ways each department is handling specific issues.

This is still horizontal communication, as the different people consulting are most likely to be in the same level, with similar but different tasks.

That is to say that a customer's loyalty to a brand or product depends on the kind of service he or she is offered by the organization's representative attending them.

This theory informs that there are several factors that influence good service delivery and help in customer retention, which is the basis of this proposed study.

(i) Build a Customer Service Culture

Indoctrinate new employees into the customer service culture immediately. Provide comprehensive training programs that make them experts in their field.

The theory emphasizes that providing excellent customer service is the cornerstone of your business. Ensure the front-line customer service team is personable, friendly and knowledgeable. Empower employees to make decisions that lead to customer satisfaction. Reward outstanding employee performance with recognition in the company newsletter, celebratory dinners, prizes and other perks.

(ii) Know Your Customer

Get to know your customers by profiling them. You can ask them directly, through customer comment cards and surveys at your place of business and on your website.

In addition to demographic details, learn what they like and dislike, and how your product or service directly benefits them.

This helps in improving the quality of service or product you provide while at the same time increasing your client base as an organization. This is especially so because properly served customers are likely to refer their friends and relatives to the same services.

Note their buying preferences and interests. Consider how your customer perceives quality.

Gain perspective by reversing roles. Think about what you would expect of a transaction if you were the customer, and what you would think of the product or service you are offering.

(iii) Set Customer Expectations

Set realistic expectations for your customers about your products and services. Savvy marketing and exaggerated claims might attract customers, but the product or service must always accurately meet customer expectations. Deliver on every promise to win customer loyalty.

When customers are happy, they recommend your business to their friends and family.

Increased levels of customer satisfaction also mean increased expectations. Look for ways you can improve your products, services and the overall customer experience.

(iv) Communication

Establish a continuing dialog with your customers. Keep them informed of special promotions that appeal to their interests. Tell your customers how much you appreciate their business by letter, email or a telephone call. Company newsletters can also be shared with customers, engaging them in your company culture. Put a dedicated customer section on your website with tips, recipes or handy how-to's for your products and services. Ask for your customers' opinions on a regular basis to ensure you are consistently delivering good customer service.

(v) Customer Service Tips

Build relationships with your customers and listen carefully to what they tell you. Pay attention to their changing needs, and introduce new products and services based on customer feedback gathered from surveys. Continually explore new ways to keep your customers engaged. Focus on caring for your existing customers and new ones will naturally follow.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section illustrates how data will be collected. the study population, study design and method of data analysis as well as to how data will be interpreted and how conclusions will be arrived at. Issues of methodological approach will be summarized in the study under separate subheading; research design, population, sample size and sampling procedures, the instrument of study, data collection, data analysis and interpretations.

3.2 Research Design

A descriptive survey design will be used to achieve the research objectives. the descriptive study design is suitable where a researcher needs to draw conclusions from a bigger population. The data from respondents will be extracted using questionnaire guide.

3.3 Population

The population is the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences Schindler, &Cooper (2003). Maasai Mara university consists of about 12,000 students in total as at March 2017and about 400 teaching and non-teaching staff. This study will target the catering and accommodation department. I chose this because of the ease of accessibility and to reduce the operations costs. It is again this department that deals directly with many diverse clients on a daily basis.

3.4 Sampling Frame

Kothari (2007) defines sampling frame as a list containing all sampling units. Thus, sampling frame consists of a list of items from which the sample is to be drawn. If the population is fixed and the time frame is in the present or past, then it is possible for the frame to be identical with the population. In most cases, they are not identical because it is often impossible to draw a sample directly from the population. As such this frame is either constructed by a researcher for the purpose of his study or may consist of some existing list of the population.

In this study, sampling frame will be composed of lists of the members of the different members of the different departments of Maasai Mara university (10 departments)

3.5 Sample and sampling technique

Sampling technique refers to the procedure adopted in selecting some units from which extrapolations about the population is drawn (Kothari, 2007.) purposive sampling technique will be used to select a sample from the population this is because of such factors as cost reduction and time factor. The sampling frame will consist of thirty (30) respondents which is the total number of employees in the department of catering and accommodation.

3.6 Instruments

A semi-structured questionnaire will be used for data collection. Questionnaires will consist of close-ended questionnaires. This will be so because the study focuses on variables that cannot be directly observed.

3.7 Data collection procedure

It is obvious that various methods of data collection will be employed depending on how much time, manpower and money available. It is realized that to meet the objectives of this study

primary data will be suitable. The data will be collected in two weeks' time, where questionnaires will be administered to the low level employees in the department of catering and accommodation and may include cooks, waiters and waitresses as well as high level personnel in the department.

3.8 Data processing and analysis

Bless, and Achola (1988) state that analyzing every data collected is a sure way of arriving at conclusions. In this respect for one to make conclusions of the study, the analysis must be done. Data analysis involves reducing accumulated data to a manageable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns and statistical techniques. I will employ the use of pie charts, line graphs and bar graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANNALYSIS AND FINDINGS

INTRODUCTION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of data as presented in the questionnaires.

It gives the background analysis of data. The results are then presented in line with the research objectives and questions in the sequence they appear in chapter one.

4.2 BACKGROUND DATA ANNALYSIS

A total of 30 respondents participated in the study with an equal number of questionnaires sent out and responded to by the staff in the accommodation and catering department of Maasai Mara university. After the field study, 26 questionnaires were returned out of which 20 were well answered, accounting to 76%. this is a good percentage for data analysis according to Sekaran (2003) who stated that a 30% response in any research work should be considered acceptable.

The remaining 10 questionnaires could not be used as the respondents did not answer all the questions, some were left blank with several inconsistencies.

4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE RESPONDENTS.

4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

The results from the survey as presented in summary from table 4.1 shows that a majority of the workers are females. This was so because of the perceived notion that hospitality matters are related to women. However, the results from this study reveal that the rate of employment in is almost the same with a small margin between the higher percentage female employees (60%) compared to the lower male (40%).

TABLE 4.3.1 Gender of The Respondents

GENDER		
MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
8	12	20
40%	60%	100%

Source: field survey April 2017

4.3.2 Age of the Respondents

The data collected from the field show that majority of those who participated in the survey are of the range of years 31-40 with a 45% response level, followed closely by respondents over 40 years of age at 30% and finally respondents between 21-30 years recording the lowest response level of 25%. This information is available in table 4.2 below

Table 4.1.2 Age of Respondents

AGE (YEARS)			
21-30	31-40	41 AND ABOVE	TOTAL
5	9	6	20
25%	45%	30%	100%

SOURCE: fieldwork April 2017

4.3.3 Educational Background of the Respondents

The research established that 55% of the respondents had attained university education from degree level in their areas of specialization while 30% of them had being holders of diploma certificates and only 15 % being holders of certificate qualifications. The researcher’s observation in this sector established that the employer has a preference on bachelor degree holders compared to others. I could attribute this to the practical skills and time spent at that level hence more specialization in one area of interest. This has had a high level of performance on the part of the employees.

Table 4.3.3 Education background of the respondents

EDUCATION		
Degree	11	55%
Diploma	6	30%
Certificate	3	15%
KCSE	-	-

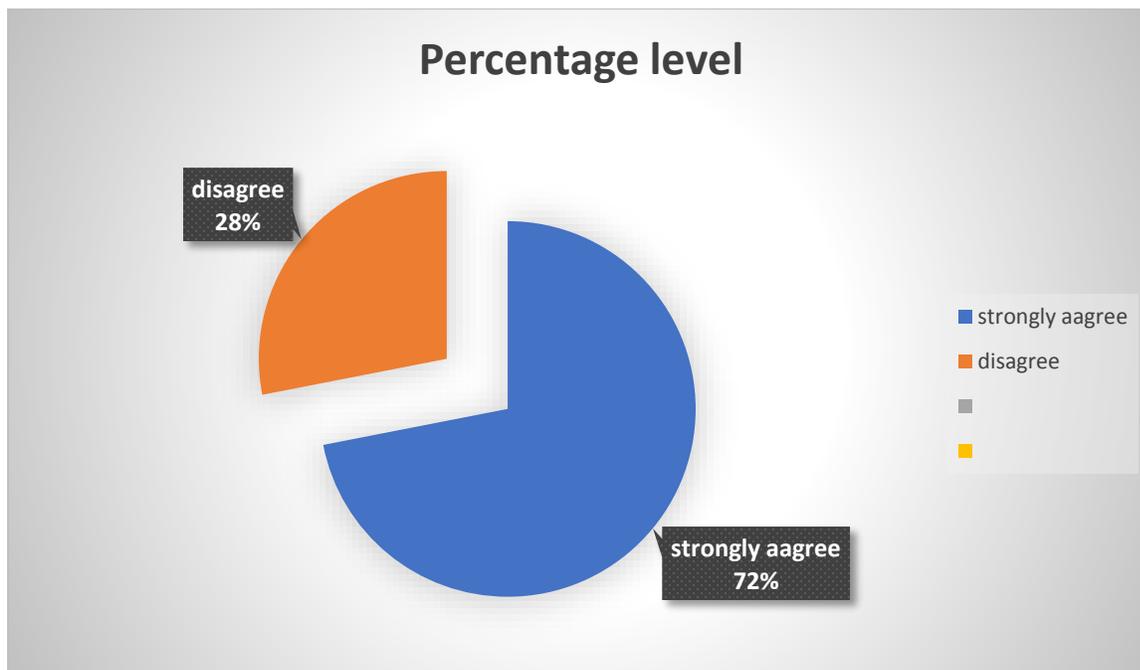
Source: field survey April 2017

4.4 Relationship with colleagues on duty

Section B of the questionnaire quizzed the respondents on how they rate their relationship with other employees they work with in the same department. Using a Likert scale, they were asked to tick whether they strongly agree, Agree, Uncertain, disagree or strongly disagree to the issues raised. Knowing the relationship among employees is important as it is what measures the output levels of every employee an employee who is not in good relations with their colleagues cannot give an output that is desired by the organization or department.

The study established that 72% of the respondents agree that a good relationship with fellow employees plays a great role in determining the levels of service delivery.

Figure 4.1 good employee relationship important in customer satisfaction.



Source: field survey April 2017.

4.5 Working hours versus employee satisfaction and workplace mood.

The study established that those employees who work for many hours have a low delivery level as compared to those who work for few hours. The study relates long working hours to fatigue and burn out which reduce the level of concentration of the workers.

At the same time, the study established that employees always translate the mood at workplace to the customer and this has varying impact on service delivery and consequently on employee satisfaction based on the services offered.

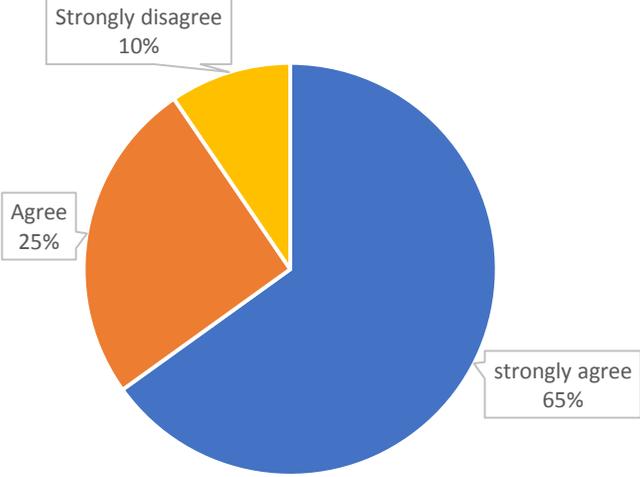
4.6. Relationship between departmental superiors and the employees

The analysis of the data collected revealed that there are frequent departmental meetings, with 56% of the respondents agreeing to this. 30% of the respondents agree that their problems are taken up by their superiors whenever they forward them for considerations. This is key as it is the employees who work directly with the clients. It was also established that only 14% of the respondents forward the problems they encounter within the job environment to their superiors.

4.7 Employee- Employee influence

This study has established that most employees actually influence one another in their daily operations at the work place. The researcher attributes this to the fact that these are the immediate people who any employee can interact with. When employees influence one another, they are very likely to determine and influence the quality and quantity of services they give to their clients. This could be positive or negative.

Employees influence one another



■ strongly agree ■ Agree ■ Strongly disagree

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.0 introduction

This section summarizes the findings of the study, drawing recommendations and conclusions from the study.

5.1 Summary of key findings.

This study was carried out with the aim of establishing the role of horizontal communication in enhancing customer satisfaction in organizations.

It was conducted in Maasai Mara university with the population of non-teaching staff and a sample of 30 drawn from the department of catering and accommodation.

Purposive sampling was used as the population is quite large, and it is only the catering department that engages the customers on a daily basis from morning to evening.

Time factor financial; ability as well contributed to the use of purposive sampling.

Data collection was done using a questionnaire as the research instrument.

Respondents who participated in the survey were asked varied questions in relation to customer satisfaction, service delivery and horizontal communication. Data collected and analyzed indicated that employee's relationships and communication with one another directly influences the rate of and quality of service delivery and in turn affects customer satisfaction directly.

The results of the study revealed that;

The rate of employment in is almost the same with a small margin between the higher percentage female employees (60%) compared to the lower male (40%). This implied that the employment rate is almost equal for both male and female within the university.

The majority of the university's workforce are young. This can be attributed to the fact that 25% of the respondents were between 21- 30 years, 45% between 31-40 years and only 30% was above the age of 40 years

The university's management embraces the customer relations theory, which states that organizations should tailor their services towards meeting the needs of the clientele rather than their own needs. This was due to the fact that most of the respondents stated that they strongly agree that their recommendations are taken up by their superiors for considerations and implemented.

The workforce is constituted an educated employee base. This means that the quality of services offered here are of high standards and meet the basic formal employment requirements. This is because 55% of the respondents had attained university education from degree level in their areas of specialization while 30% of them had being holders of diploma certificates and only 15 % being holders of certificate qualifications

The study established that 72% of the respondents agree that a good relationship with fellow employees plays a great role in determining the levels of service delivery.

The also brought out clearly that those employees who work for many hours have a low delivery level as compared to those wo work for few hours. The study relates long working hours to fatigue and burn out which reduce the level of concentration of the workers.

At the same time, it was established that employees always translate the mood at workplace to the customer and this has varying impact on service delivery and consequently on employee satisfaction based on the services offered.

The analysis of the data collected revealed that there are frequent departmental meetings, with 56% of the respondents agreeing to this. 30% of the respondents agree that their problems are taken up by their superiors whenever they forward them for considerations. This is key as it is the employees who work directly with the clients. It was also established that only 14% of the respondents forward the problems they encounter within the job environment to their superiors. This study has established that most employees actually influence one another in their daily operations at the work place. The researcher attributes this to the fact that these are the immediate people who any employee can interact with. When employees influence one another, they are very likely to determine and influence the quality and quantity of services they give to their clients. This could be positive or negative.

5.2 RECCOMENDATIONS

In view of the findings earlier stated, the following recommendations are made with a firm belief that if implemented and monitored would result in overall improvement in customer satisfaction through the products and services offered.

1. Management create a feedback system where all people receiving any service are able to give out their feedback on the services they have received.
2. The management of the various departments should create an environment that allows all members to freely interact with one another improving the quality of service delivery.

3. Every departmental head should regularly conduct departmental meetings with their colleague to follow-up on any challenges they might be facing, the progress of the daily operations and achievements the departments have made. this will highly assist in not repeating past mistakes once taken.

It is my hope as a researcher that if the management of Maasai Mara university makes efforts and commitments to implement the aforementioned recommendations, the university will surpass the quality test in all major universities and public institutions. This will in turn enhance the corporate image of the institution boosting the esteem of its employees and clients.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

MASAI MARA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, FILM AND COMMUNICATION

THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS AIMED AT COLLECTING DATA ON THE ROLE OF HORIZONTAL COMMUNICATION IN ENHANCING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN ORGANIZATIONS

I am Everest Wangoya, a fourth-year student pursuing a bachelor's degree in communication and journalism. I would like to invite you to take part in this study which aims to find out the relationship between horizontal communication and customer satisfaction.

The information you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Please tick [v] where appropriate.

SECTION A

NAME	AGE (YEARS)	GENDER	EDUCATION		RANK
			Degree		
			Diploma		
			Certificate		
			KCSE		

SECTION B

Please tick [v] appropriately. (A) SA-strongly Agree (b)A – Agree (c) U- Uncertain (d) D- Disagree (e) SD- Strongly Disagree

	statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
1	Good employee relationship enhances better service delivery and customer satisfaction as a result.					
2	Interact with customers for many hours reduces my level of concentration at work.					
3	I often translate my mood at work to my clients as I interact with them.					
3	We often have a departmental meeting with my superiors to discuss how to improve service delivery to our clients					
4	The suggestions I put forward for consideration by the management are never taken for consideration.					
5	The suggestions that are taken up leads to improved service delivery					
6	The clients I interact with are happy when their areas of concern raised are corrected.					
7	When we communicate among one another in the department, we greatly influence one another's performance in place of work.					
8	In case of a problem, I forward all to my superiors for problem solving					