

Assessing Internal Communication and Teacher Burnout: An Empirical Study of School Administrators in Select Public High Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya

Killian Kinyungu Luhombo, Dr. Daniel Onyango Omondi, Dr. Daniel Robert Aswani

Department of Strategic and Organizational Communication, Daystar University, Kenya

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Abstract

Extant literature suggests that burnout is one of the major factors contributing to declining teacher productivity. Studies have exposed a prevalence of burnout among the teaching fraternity, with administrators recording higher levels of burnout. This research study investigated the association that exists between internal communication and teacher burnout, among public high school administrators employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in Kakamega County as the target population. The research questions were: a) What is the perceived effectiveness of the internal communication in place based on official channels used by TSC to communicate with the administrators? b) What are the administrator burnout levels in select public high schools in the county? and, c) What is the association between internal communication and teacher burnout among the select public high school administrators? The study which utilized a correlation research design, revealed that all the respondents experienced burnout. The findings further established that there was a weak negative correlation of -0.231 between internal communication and corporate burnout, with a statistical significance level of 0.016 . This suggests a statistically significant relationship between internal communication and burnout characterized by a weak negative correlation. The study recommends that institutions endeavour to ascertain their employees' communication interests in order to establish their internal communication system. Similar studies should be conducted in the different Kenyan counties so as to make comparisons as well as among administrators in private and international schools in Kenya, to provide more insight into the association between internal communication and teacher burnout.

Keywords— Internal Communication, Teacher burnout, School administrators, Public high schools

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching happens to be one of the professions in which burnout is highly prevalent (Scott, 2019; Akdemir, 2019). To illustrate its prevalence, Bermejo-Toro et al. (2016), as cited in Simões and Calheiros (2019), assert that globally, 10-20% of teachers could be experiencing high burnout levels. Research conducted in different contexts such as the U.S, China, Europe and South Korea draw similar conclusions which reliably report that the teaching profession is laden with high pressure work conditions (Yorulmaz, Colak, & Altinkurt, 2017).

Developing countries as well have not been exempted from having a fair share of burnout occurrences. Burnout has been argued to be one of the major factors that contribute to declining teacher productivity in developing countries (Asimeng-boahene, 2003 as cited in O'Hern & Nozaki, 2014). This phenomenon has been argued to be

among the chief reasons behind de-motivation among educators, low education outcomes and high turnover rates despite the urgent need to retain effective educators (Rajendran, Watt & Richardson, 2020).

While teachers at all levels may experience burnout, studies show that administrators register higher burnout than the general population (Riley, 2018; Ray, 2020). Taking into account that administrators are to provide leadership in schools, their being burned out may deal a heavy blow to the system. In the face of unstable leadership, even high-quality classroom teachers will have a hard time delivering their duties which will peak their burnout levels and as a result both their productivity and school performance will be negatively affected. This makes administrators a very crucial group among teachers; groups that if effectively managed by their employers, will in turn provide support to the rest of the teaching workforce which will assist in countering burnout.

The Kenyan public education sector, especially teachers is riddled with cases of high teacher absenteeism, job dissatisfaction, desertion of duty and high teacher turnover which are textbook markers of burnout (Kim, Jörg & Klassen, 2019). This claim is further substantiated by studies that show the existence and prevalence of burnout among the teaching fraternity, with administrators recording higher levels of burnout (Kilonzo, Were & Odhiambo, 2018; Baraza, Simatwa & Gogo, 2016; Ngari et al., 2013). Considering administrators' crucial role in providing leadership, support and setting the tempo of the school, it is imperative that a solution to pacify burnout be sought. Even though few studies (Ter Hoeven, de Jong & Peper, 2006; Brown & Roloff, 2015) conducted abroad have found a link between certain organizational communication variables and burnout, the menace that is burnout has grown into a burning topic in communication circles. Various communication experts have asserted that poor internal communication in organizations fuels burnout (BLND PR, 2019; Bogue, 2019).

These views can be argued as subjective views of communication experts and that their assertions are circumstantial rather than empirical. In line with this argument, we have not come across an empirical work in peer-reviewed journals that precisely assesses the relationship between Internal Communication (IC) and teacher burnout in the Kenyan context. Due to this scarcity of substantive evidence, we surmise that there exists an empirical as well as a geographical gap that this study stands to fill. This study investigated the association that exists between IC and burnout, focusing on Kenyan public high school administrators employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) as the target population.

Teachers Service Commission (TSC) is the professional body in Kenya charged with the mandate to maintain and improve the quality of education through effective management of the teaching workforce (TSC, 2017a; TSC, 2015). As the teachers' employer, the body is tasked with registering, recruiting, employing, promoting and taking disciplinary action against teachers (TSC, 2017b). TSC was initially launched as a Semi-Autonomous Government Agency (SAGA) under the Ministry of Education (MoE). However, following the repealing of TSC Cap 212, the Commission was established as an independent body under Article 237 of the Constitution of Kenya (2010).

The following research questions informed the study:

- 1) What is the perceived effectiveness of the internal communication in place based on official channels used by TSC to communicate amongst administrators in Kakamega County?
- 2) What are the administrator burnout levels in select public high schools in Kakamega County?
- and, 3)

What is the association between IC and employee burnout corporate among select public high school administrators in Kakamega County?

As seen, most of the existing literature on burnout is found in other fields such as Human Resource Management (HRM) and psychology, this study therefore intends contribute to knowledge on burnout in the discipline of communication and pave way for further inquiries into the relationship between these variables. This research as well stands to shed light on the nature of the relationship between internal communication and teacher burnout focusing on the employees' (teacher's) vantage point. In so doing, the study hopes to find a probable solution to countering burnout from a communication angle at the same time make a significant contribution to burnout literature in the education field.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

This study employed Edward Freeman's Stakeholder Theory and the Social Exchange Theory by George Homans. The stakeholder theory fronts that the purpose of a business is not to create value just for the shareholders but for the stakeholders as well. The stakeholders cannot be looked at in isolation as their interests have to dovetail. The theory has three fundamental tenets. These tenets are summed up as: jointness of interests, cooperative strategic posture, and rejection of a narrowly economic view of the firm. Based on the premises of the Stakeholder Theory, and precisely the first tenet: jointness of interest, if employees' interests are observed the organization will generate value for employees which lead to the success of the corporate. Since internal communication is one of the most powerful tools for engaging employees and establishing relationships with them, we apply this theory in this study as a guide to assess if employees' communication needs/interests are being met.

The concept behind the Social Exchange Theory (SET) is that relationships between two or more parties are created through processes of cost-benefit analysis. Karanges et al. (2014) argue that SET can facilitate understanding of workplace relationships as well as employee attitudes, a statement that is reiterated by Atouba (2018) who posits that SET has proven quite convenient in studying and understanding organization-employee interactions. Given this study's objectives, SET is an ideal theory for exploring organizational relationships. This theory complements the Stakeholder Theory which does not cover reciprocity in depth. Here, we seek to examine the organization-employee relationship between TSC and a

section of its employees, focusing on IC and burnout in the context of social exchange.

This study sought to explore the relationship between Internal Communication (IC) and Employee burnout. IC refers to the communication flow among individuals within the same internal boundaries of an organization (Vokić, Bilušić & Najjar, 2020). Internal Communication also referred to as employee communication, (Cornelissen, 2011; Vercic, Vercic & Srirameshc, 2012; Kang & Sung 2017) has been argued to be a great resource for managing employees and enhancing an environment that promotes healthy relations among employees themselves as well as employees and the management. When handled right, employee communication holds a range of benefits for a corporate. These benefits include: high employee engagement, motivation, loyalty and innovation levels, better crisis management practices and satisfactory customer/client experience which generates higher revenue (Clampitt & Downs, 2012; Atouba, 2018).

Burnout, also known as corporate burnout refers to an individual's continued response to workplace stressors or a toxic work environment and is characterized by feelings of exhaustion, mental detachment from one's job and reduced professional efficacy (Chatterjee & Wroth, 2019).

Burnout has been identified as one of the prime factors affecting employee well-being and performance at work (Stevenson, 2020). There has been a steady increase in cases of employee burnout which has led to its recognition by the World Health Organization, WHO and termed an "occupational phenomenon" (Stevenson, 2020). This makes burnout a concern deserving attention if it is to be managed.

According to Packirisamy, Meenakshy and Jagannathan (2017) burnout is characterized by a general sense of helplessness which may ultimately hamper meaningful contribution at work. The scholars argue that the impact of burnout on the individual is so severe that it affects their overall productivity and performance. Several factors have been linked to burnout occurrence some of which include: career uncertainties, long working hours, erratic schedules, lack of clarity in the future of the career, remuneration and job dissatisfaction. PR and communication experts have raised the idea that IC also plays factor in influencing burnout (Burkhart, 2018; Schindler, 2018; BLND PR, 2019).

Antecedents of Teacher Burnout

Research has identified demographic and contextual variables, which serve as antecedents of teacher burnout (Beausaert, Froehlich, Devos & Riley, 2016). The demographic variables include age, gender, marital status

and years of experience. For instance, Klassen and Chiu (2010), as cited in Pyhältö et al. (2020), found that female educators experienced higher levels of exhaustion compared to their male counterparts. Male professionals on the other hand registered higher levels of depersonalization compared to females (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Years of experience have also been found to influence burnout levels. According to a study by Zhang, Zhang and Hua (2019), teachers with less than 10 years of experience were found to exhibit the highest emotional exhaustion and low teaching efficacy, compared to their longer-serving counterparts. Findings on the link between marital status and burnout are however inconsistent with some scholars arguing that burnout is higher among single teachers (Caglar, 2011 & Luk et al., 2010, both cited in El Helou, Nabhani & Bahous, 2016), others among married teachers (El Helou, Nabhani & Bahous, 2016; Li et al. 2020) some point out no significant relationship between marital status and burnout (Murali, 2016; Atmaca, 2017).

Contextual factors such as administrative support, class size, time pressure, role stressors, student discipline and availability of resources have been linked to burnout (Beausaert et al., 2016; Ballantyne & Retell, 2020). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017) identified student discipline as a strong predictor of burnout. Discipline problems overtime affect the teacher-student relationship as the teacher develops a cynical attitude towards the learners which triggers depersonalization. Class size has also been found to contribute to burnout as teachers who attend to large classes tend to display more indicators of burnout than those with small classes (Bumen, 2010 as cited in El Helou et al., 2016; Zhang et al., 2019).

Teacher burnout has been linked to increased absenteeism, negative work attitudes and high turnover intentions, all of which negatively affect both educators and their students (Zhang, Zhang & Hua, 2019). As it is, teacher burnout impedes achievement of a high-quality education system and this makes it necessary to channel scientific and political efforts towards addressing this problem.

Burnout and School Administrators

Scholars have argued that burnout among administrators in public secondary schools has been a major concern to key players in the education sector both in developed and developing countries (Ogalo, Odera & Ogogo, 2020).

Burnout is a major source of career dissatisfaction and job turnover among institutional leaders, which leads to low morale and job interest (Yildrin & Dinc, 2019; Kiongo & Thinguri, 2014). Taking into account the importance of the administrative function in the school, having motivated educators holding these positions is key. Having burned

out administrators on the other hand may drive the entire school community into a pool of burnout as pointed out it can be contagious (Meredith et al., 2019).

Burned out administrators also resort to spending their time looking for opportunities away from teaching and eventually quit the profession. Goldring and Taie (2018) state that generally, 1 in 5 schools loses a principal every year to burnout, a trend that stands to adversely affect several aspects in the education sector stretching from those that directly concern teachers to those that affect students. According to Henry and Harbatkin (2019), teacher, student and general school outcomes can be affected by principal turnover in two major ways. The first is principal turnover disrupts relationships as well as the ongoing organizational operations within the school which has both short term and long-term implications. The second aspect involves differences in effectiveness between the principal exiting and the one taking over. Given that administrators differ in leadership styles, prowess and expertise which reflect in their effectiveness, the wider the gap between the outgoing and incoming administrators' effectiveness the greater the impact on the outcomes. By analyzing administrative data from North Carolina schools gathered from 2009-2018, Henry and Harbatkin (2019) were able to ascertain the relationship between principal turnover, CT turnover and student achievement. Henry and Harbatkin (2019) noted that higher CT turnover rates were recorded when principal transitions occurred especially within or in between academic years. The study also established that, when principal turnover occurred, students' test scores and proficiency rates were negatively affected. This accentuates the extent of the effects that stem from administrator turnover. Therefore, to curb these effects it is of the essence that burnout among administrators is studied and long-term solutions proposed.

Burnout in the Teaching Fraternity: The Kenyan Context

According to a 2016/17 report on customer and employee satisfaction presented by Trendy Consulting International Limited, majority of secondary school principals and classroom teachers reported being dissatisfied in their jobs (Ogalo, Odera & Ogogo, 2020). According the report issues such as low pay; lack of motivation; lack of professionalism and transparency especially in recruitment and promotion schemes and limited support from the government prompted educators to develop negative attitudes towards their jobs. It is not coincidental that teacher attrition rates are high at a time when statistics indicate burnout is rife among educators.

According to Wanzala (2019 b) despite the startling teacher shortage in state schools in the country the education sector is still characterized by massive exodus of teachers (Waihenya & Nyamai, 2019; Wanzala, 2019a; Nyaundi, 2019). A study conducted in Suba Sub-County (Mabeya, Gikuhi & Anyona, 2019) with 273 respondents, cumulatively 63.4%, reported that teacher attrition rates in their respective schools were somehow high, high and extremely high.

The teacher shortage coupled with high teacher turnover not only threatens to compromise the quality of education but also dilute the confidence in the public education sector. This alarming teacher turnover rates in Kenya have been largely attributed to burnout (Sichambo, Maragia & Simiyu, 2012; Wanzala, 2019b). This argument is in line with empirical literature from other countries, which further underlines that, high rates of attrition among teachers can be traced to burnout associated with the profession (Skaalvic & Skaalvic, 2017; Troesch & Bauer 2020; Ballantyne & Retell, 2020).

In a study conducted among secondary school teachers in Machakos County, out of 359 respondents, 36.8% and 13.8% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that they experienced physical exhaustion; these figures combined show that slightly over half the respondents were physically exhausted (Kilonzo, Were & Odhiambo, 2018). Furthermore, of all the respondents involved, 47.4% agreed that they were emotionally exhausted while 29.1% strongly agreed to the same. Regarding high teacher turnover rates in the schools, a majority 52.6% agreed that this was witnessed while 27.4% strongly agreed. It is interesting that on this question, none of the respondents strongly disagreed but only 5.1% disagreed while the remaining 14.9% were neutral which builds a case for teacher burnout being on the high side.

Work-related or occupational stress which engenders burnout happens to be a global problem as it is linked to adverse conditions that affect employees and in extension the organization (Onyango, Adoyo & Odera, 2014; Pijpker et al., 2020). According to a study done by Baraza, Simatwa and Gogo (2016) among secondary school teachers in Kakamega North Sub-County, out of the 99 teachers sampled 56.57% recorded high levels of work stress. 37.37% recorded moderate levels of work stress while only 6.06% were noted to experience low levels. Even though the researchers concluded that on average secondary school teachers are operating at moderate stress levels, figures of those operating at high work stress levels cannot be ignored since they stand to be burned-out in the long term. These findings suggest that if the prevailing occupational conditions remain as they are, teachers in

Kakamega North Sub-County are very likely to experience full-blown burnout.

In a study conducted among high school classroom teachers in Borabu District, Matiang'i, Makewa and Role (2016) found that there is a relationship between administrative support and burnout. The study involved 168 teachers from 21 schools, revealed that lack of support from administrators triggers burnout in CTs which in turn affects their productivity. These findings support those of Sichambo, Maragia and Simiyu (2012) who conducted a study among high school CTs in Bungoma North District. Out of the 180 respondents sampled from 18 different schools 64.4% reported lack of support from the administration to be a major source of burnout. In yet another study conducted in Bungoma South Sub-County, Wanyonyi and Ouda (2019) established that administrative climate highly influences burnout and productivity among CTs. Furthermore, in a statement by TSC (Wanzala, 2019b) regarding high teacher turnover rates, especially among newly recruited teachers, administrators were advised to render necessary support to their colleagues especially the new entrants so as to improve teacher retention rates.

According to a 2015 report issued by TSC, close to 64% of principals in the country had quit the profession between the years 2010-2015, citing work stress as a prime factor (Aomo & Ogolla, 2018). These findings were in line with Koome (2007), as cited in Yambo, Odhiambo and Odera (2014), who noted that most of the high school principals nationwide who had opted out of the profession did so due to burnout and preferred to look for opportunities in other government ministries and departments.

Deputy principals being part of the leadership, also bear the brunt of administrator burnout by both association with principals when carrying out administrative roles and standing in as acting principals. In a study conducted in Olkalou Division which involved 144 principals, their deputies and head of departments presented high burn out levels. Ngari et al. (2013) reported that 54.5% of the administrators registered high levels of work stress compared to 27.6% and 17.9% who recorded low and moderate levels of work stress respectively. The existing literature clearly points out the apparent attention that ought to be given to administrator burnout.

Internal Communication and Burnout

The association between internal communication and burnout prompts a debate that has not been given much attention especially in studies rooted in the teaching field. Despite this, there are some scholars who have determined the existence of a relationship between organizational communication variables and corporate

burnout. One such study, conducted by Ter Hoeven, de Jong and Peper (2006) among 954 employees of a Dutch subsidiary firm, found some organizational communication variables to be linked to burnout. The researchers tested 6 communication variables namely: communication overload, under load, satisfaction, climate, coworker social support, and supervisor social support, against burnout. Out of the 6 variables, supervisor social support and information overload were not found to have any relation with burnout. The remaining four variables on the other hand, each recorded a significant relationship, with communication climate and satisfaction recording the strongest negative correlations with burnout. These findings therefore not only imply that organizational communication is an antecedent of job burnout but also suggests that when employees perceive communication climate as positive and generally find communication satisfactory, there will be fewer cases of burnout.

In another study conducted in the U.S among private and public high school teachers who engaged in extra role time organizational citizenship behaviors (ERT-OCB), Brown and Roloff (2015), tested perceived organizational support (POS) and psychological contracts, as organizational communication variables against burnout. The study engaged 461 respondents 89% taught in public schools while 11% worked in private urban schools, revealed that both POS and psychological contract fulfillment were strongly related to burnout. From their research, Brown and Roloff established that hardworking employees especially those engaged in ERT-OCB were highly likely to experience burnout irrespective of the monetary compensation. Brown and Roloff (2015) further deduced that creating a work environment that communicates the employees' value, significance and appreciates the extra time effort they put in, plays a significant role in buffering burnout in organizations. Following the findings of this study it can be said that burnout can be influenced by communication engendered by the organization (Brown & Roloff, 2015).

Burnout and Engagement

There are scholars who suggest that the concept of burnout is tied to engagement in that the two are polar opposites (Krug, 1999 as cited in Packirisamy et al., 2017; Kim et al., 2016). Krug (1999) as cited in Packirisamy et al. (2017) posit that burnout can simply be said to be "...erosion of engagement..." (p 98). This view implies that those employees who record high burnout levels are not engaged and vice versa. While the view may seem to hold logical truth, there exists literature that suggests that it is possible to have employees who are highly engaged yet are burned-out and are actually considering quitting their jobs (Moeller, Ivcevic, White, Menges & Brackett, 2018).

According to a study carried out by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence (Moeller et al., 2018), there is a negative correlation between burnout and engagement. Moeller et al. (2018) established that when engagement is high, burnout levels tend to be lower as compared to when engagement was low. Of the 1085 participants involved in the study, 41% were found to be highly engaged with low burnout levels in contrast to the 1.8% who recorded low engagement and high burnout levels. However, the study also found out that there were cases of aligned engagement-burnout profiles which recorded high (18.8%), moderate (35.5%) and low (2.4%) on both variables in more than half of the sample population. Worth noting is the group that recorded both high engagement and burnout who Moeller et al. (2018) refer to as engaged-exhausted workers.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the correlation research design. According to Apuke (2017), this design is optimal for establishing whether and to what degree two variables relate. Since the researcher was interested in determining the association between internal communication and teacher burnout among select high school administrators, this design was appropriate for analysing the relationship between the two variables and ultimately surmise causation.

The population of the study comprised public secondary school administrators in Kakamega County. The target population encompassed 182 administrators from all the 91 public secondary schools in Lurambi, Butere and Shinyalu Sub-Counties of Kakamega County in Kenya. These sub counties were settled on because of the diverse categories of schools they exhibit; these comprise national, extra-county, county and sub-county schools.

Sample size calculation was done by utilizing the Qualtrics online sample calculator, with the confidence level set at 95% and margin error at 5%; which is conventionally considered acceptable by scholars especially in social science research (Rich, Brians, Manheim & Willnat, 2018; Imai, 2017). With the sample calculator, having a target population 182 gave a sample size of 124 which is equivalent to 62 school taking each school has a head and deputy. The single-stage simple random sampling method was then employed to select the 62 schools from the 91-school-sampling frame through the lottery method, which gave the 124 respondents needed.

This study employed questionnaires that were structured with close ended questions to collect primary data. The items relating to employee communication was measured using a 4-point interval Likert-scale.

The second part entailed 16 items from the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI) which was to ascertain administrator burnout. The OLBI is an internationally acknowledged questionnaire developed by Demerouti, Bakker, Vaardakou and Kantas (2003) to measure burnout.

A pre-test study was carried out among 12 administrators in Matungu sub-county who were randomly sampled as a representative of the whole. This number equated was equated to 10% which offered a descriptive results Mugenda and Mugenda (2012). The questionnaires were printed out and organized for distributed with the aid of research assistants. The respondents were carefully explained to what the study entailed and their informed consent sought before being handed the questionnaires for filling.

The primary data collected was analysed with regard to the objectives of the study. The data was then processed by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS.v.25.0) and using the Pearson's correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) to determine the relationship between the two variables under study. The findings were then presented in forms of tables and figures.

The researchers obtained research permits from the Daystar University Ethics Review Board (ERB) and from the government through National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before venturing into the field.

To uphold candour when carrying out this research, a brief dialogue was held with the respondents and the details of the study explained. After the dialogue, oral informed consent was sought from each respondent to ensure that they knew their rights and therefore decide whether they would participate.

The researchers assured the respondents of privacy and confidentiality by first emphasizing the independence of this research effort from that of the TSC.

The researcher's choice of settling on secondary school teachers was informed by a study carried out by Sezer (2012) that suggests, more burnout occurrences are recorded among secondary teachers compared to primary school teachers.

IV. FINDINGS

For this study, 124 questionnaires were distributed and 108 were returned duly filled. This represents a response rate of 87.1% which according to Edmond and Kennedy (2017) is feasible for analysis and generalizing the findings.

The respondents of this study were asked to provide their age, gender and their working durations as administrators in select public high schools.

In terms of age, the findings revealed that most administrators 59 (54.63%) fell between the ages 51-60. This comprised 25 female administrators while the males were represented by 34 administrators. This group was followed by those aged 41-50, who were 40 (37.04%). This second group constituted 20 female administrators while their male counterparts were represented by 17 administrators. The least age band was that of administrators aged between 30-40 years who were 9 (8.33%). This constituted of 5 female deputies and 4 male deputy principals. From the above findings it is evident

there were more male than female administrators between the ages of 51-60. However, in the other two age brackets 41-50 and 30-40, there were more female than male administrators.

In as far as gender is concerned, 56 (51.9%) of the respondents were male while 52 (48.1%) were female. There were slightly more males than females however the two groups were both adequately presented.

Working duration

The respondents of the study were also asked to provide their years of work as administrators. Table 4.1 shows the findings.

Years in administrator positions	Age Group			Total	Percentage (%)
	30-40	41-50	51-60		
1-5	7	29	5	41	38.0
6-10	5	10	11	26	24.1
11-15	1	6	11	18	16.7
16 & above	0	5	18	23	21.3
Total	13	50	45	108	100

Table 4.1 illustrates that most respondents 41 (38%) had a working duration of 1-5 years in administrative positions. This comprised 7 respondents aged between 30-40 years, 29 aged between 41-50 years and 5 aged between 51-60 years. This was followed by those with a working duration of 6-10 years who were 26 (24.1%) of the respondents. This group constituted 5 administrators aged between 30-40 years, 10 between the ages of 41-50 years and 11 who were aged between 51-60 years.

Twenty-three (21.3%) were found to have served in administrative positions for a duration of 16 and above years; this included 1 respondent aged between 30 and 40 years, 6 respondents aged between 41 and 50 and 18 between the ages of 51-60 years. The least number of respondents was that with a working duration of 11-15 years as they were only 18 (16.7%) which constituted 5 respondents between the ages of 41-50 and 18 aged between 51 and 60. It was therefore certain that most of the respondents had been in administrator positions for a significant period of time thus were well versed in matters pertaining employer-employee (TSC-administrator) communication.

Official communication channels used by TSC

This study sought to establish the official communication channels used by TSC to convey information to public high school administrators. Fig 4.1 presents the findings

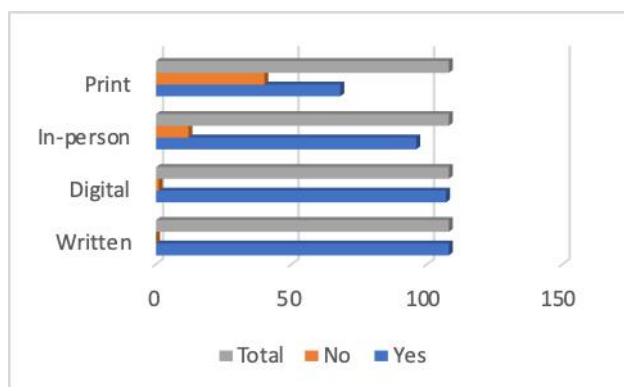


Fig.4.1 Distribution of respondents by communication channels used by TSC

The findings obtained revealed that for most administrators, TSC used all the available communication channels to convey information. The percentages per channel category were as follows: 100% of the respondents identified written channels, 99.1% identified digital channels, 88.9% identified in-person channels while 68% checked print channels.

Channels used most frequently by TSC to communicate to respondents.

The respondents were further asked to point out which communication channels were used by their employer most frequently. The findings are presented in Fig. 4.2

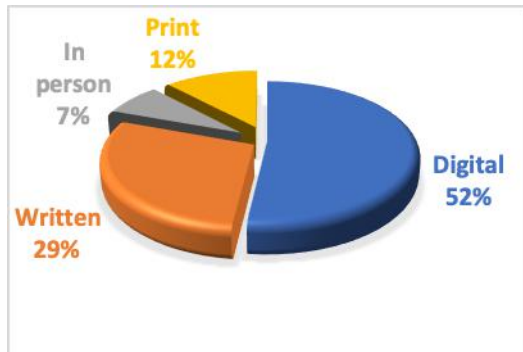


Fig.4.2: Channels frequently used by TSC

Findings revealed that a high number of administrators 56 (51.9%), frequently received communication from TSC through the digital channels. 31 respondents who made up 28.7% recorded frequently

receiving communication through the written channels. The in-person channels category was picked on by 8 (7.4%) while 13 (12.0%) of the respondents selected the print channels as the most frequently used by TSC. The respondents were then asked to provide responses on a variety of statements. These statements were provided on a Likert scale with different degrees from strongly agree to strongly disagree on their perception about communication between public school administrators and TSC. Table 4.2 shows the results.

Table 4.2: Internal communication between TSC and public high school administrators

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean
6. I find this category of communication channels appropriate for fast delivery of important information.	10 (9.3%)	11 (10.2%)	52 (48.1%)	35 (32.4%)	3.04
7. I am comfortable using this set of channels to communicate with my employer.	11 (10.2%)	18 (16.7%)	46 (42.6%)	17 (15.7%)	2.34
8. This set of channels avails room for me to give feedback to my employer	17 (15.7%)	22 (20.4%)	43 (39.8%)	26 (24.4%)	2.72
9. This set of channels allows me to get instant feedback on any submissions I make	18 (16.7%)	30 (27.8%)	35 (32.4%)	25 (23.1%)	2.62
10. My employer values my feedback and acts on it promptly.	12 (11.1%)	37 (34.3%)	48 (44.4%)	11 (10.2%)	2.54
11. I feel empowered and have a voice in the organization’s decision-making processes	18 (16.7%)	30 (27.8%)	43 (39.8%)	17 (15.7%)	2.55

12. Most of TSC's recommendations and policies are reached through consensus.	40 (36.1%)	39 (37.1%)	16 (14.8%)	13 (12.0%)	2.02
13. TSC keeps me well informed about the organization's strategic goals and plans.	13 (12.0%)	17 (15.7%)	43 (39.8%)	35 (32.4%)	2.93
14. I always know what is expected of me in terms of contributing to the organization's goals and objectives.	16 (14.8%)	22 (20.4%)	45 (41.7%)	25 (23.1%)	2.73
15. I often get the information I need in time to act on it.	20 (18.5%)	26 (24.1%)	44 (40.7%)	18 (16.7%)	2.56
16. The information I receive is clear and not open to interpretation	1 (0.9%)	23 (21.3%)	54 (50.0%)	30 (27.8%)	3.05
17. I trust the information I receive from my employer.	11 (10.2%)	17 (15.7%)	41 (38.0%)	39 (36.1%)	3
18. I always find the information that I receive useful in helping me perform my tasks better	11 (10.2%)	12 (11.1%)	48 (44.4%)	37 (34.3%)	3.03
19. Most of the information I receive is positively stated and generates interest in me	23 (21.3%)	37 (34.3%)	27 (25.0%)	21 (19.4%)	2.43
20. Using more than 1 channel to communicate TSC information enhances the credibility of the message	12 (11.1%)	11 (10.2%)	51 (47.2%)	34 (31.5%)	2.99
21. The way my employer usually communicates with me leaves me motivated to give my best at work.	19 (17.6%)	25 (23.1%)	39 (36.1%)	25 (23.1%)	2.65
N=108					

Results in table 4.2 indicate that majority of public high school administrators find the TSC channels appropriate for fast communication with 52 (48.1%) and 35 (32%) of respondents having agreed and strongly agreed respectively to this statement. When asked if they were comfortable using the set of communication channels to communicate with TSC, 46 (42.6%) agreed while 17 (15.7%) strongly agreed. These findings thus show that there was agreement that the communication channels not only facilitated timely conveyance of important information but also employees found favourable and were comfortable using them.

From the findings, 43 (39.8%) agreed that the communication channels embraced allowed room for administrators to give feedback to TSC as 26 (24.1%) were

noted to strongly agree to the same. Still on feedback, it was widely held that the channels allow administrators to get instant feedback on any submissions they make, with 35 (32.4%) agreeing and 25 (23.1%) strongly agreeing to this. The majority of the respondents also opined that TSC valued their feedback and acted on it promptly; this was represented by 48 (44.4%) and 11 (10.2%) who agreed and strongly agreed respectively.

The above findings on feedback reflect positively on TSC in line with Soares and Del Gáudio (2019) who argue that an organization that gives room for exchanges and interactions with its employees increases its chances of achieving its objectives through them. Furthermore, Gerardi (2019) posits that when channels allow for or promote dialogue, the employees' sense of belonging is

enhanced and they feel that they are part of the organization.

When asked as to whether they felt empowered and have a voice in the decision-making process, 43 (39.8%) agreed while 17 (15.7%) strongly agreed. Surprisingly however, most of the respondents disagreed 40 (37.1%) or strongly disagreed 39 (36.1%) with the statement that most of TSC’s recommendations and policies are reached through consensus. This is indicative that as much as majority of the administrators feel that they have a voice, most of the decisions around policies and recommendations are solely made by the employer. This poses an area of concern since the primary role of having dialogue and exchanges is to come to consensual decisions. Policies fronted by the management devoid of consensus stand to face opposition; this assertion is buttressed by Waters, Bortree and Tindall (2013) who aver that employees can turn to be an organization’s most vocal critics especially when it comes to internal policies.

The majority of respondents also agreed that TSC keeps them well informed about the organization’s strategic goals and plans with 43 (39.8%) agreeing and 35 (32.4%) strongly agreeing. In terms of whether they always know what is expected of them regarding contributing to the organization’s goals and objectives, 45 (41.7%) agreed that this was so while 25 (23.1%) strongly agreed.

Most public high school administrators approved that they get the information they need in time; this was represented by 44 (40.7%) who agreed and 18 (16.7%) who strongly agreed. From the data, it was found that a significant portion of the respondents trust the information they receive from their employer with 41 (38.0%) checking

agree and 39 (36.1%) strongly agree. 54 (50%) and 30 (27.8%) also agreed and strongly agreed respectively that the information they receive is quite clear and unambiguous; not open to interpretation.

When asked if they find the information, they receive helpful in performing their tasks better, most of the respondents concurred with this statement, 48 (44.4%) agreeing and 37 (34.3%) strongly agreeing. However, it was ascertained that a combined 55.6% of the respondents disputed that most of the information they received from the employer was positively stated and generated interest in them with 23 (21.3%) strongly disagreeing and 37 (34.3%) disagreeing. As to whether the use of more than 1 channel to convey information enhanced the credibility of messages from TSC, 51 (47.2%) agreed that this held true and a further 34 (31.5%) strongly agreed to this statement.

Majority of the respondents also concurred with the statement that suggested the way TSC communicates often leaves them motivated to give their best at work with 39 (36.1%) checking agree and 25 (23.1%) strongly agree. These results are an indicator of how effective TSC’s IC is since effectual IC motivates employees. This is in line with Kang and Sung (2017) who posit that for IC to be effective it has to, among other things, spark motivation among employees. Finally, on ascertaining the scores recorded regarding the effectiveness of IC, 3 strata were developed using score ranges and respondents grouped according to the range under which their scores fell. The strata were as follows: Ineffective (1-20), Effective (21-40) and Highly Effective (41-64); the results were as presented in Table 4.3 below

Table 4.3: Perceived effectiveness of TSC’s internal communication

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Effective (21-40)	42	38.9	38.9	38.9
Highly Effective (41-64)	66	61.1	61.1	100
Total	108	100	100	

Table 4.4 illustrates that majority of the respondents 50 (46.3%) were satisfied with the quality of communication. This was followed by those who were dissatisfied and had a neutral perspective of the quality with both of them recording 16 (14.8%). 14 (13.0%) reported being extremely satisfied and the least number of respondents were those who were extremely dissatisfied with the current quality of communication represented by 12 (11.1%). Consequently, the above findings implied that the quality of existing communication between TSC and administrators is quite satisfactory. It is however important

to also consider the 11.1% who reported being extremely dissatisfied with the communication.

When asked what official communication channels they would recommend TSC to use more often to communicate with them, the results were as presented in table 4.5

Table 4.5: Distribution of respondents by recommended channel of communication.

Recommended channels	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Digital	55	50.9
Written	20	18.5
Print	10	9.3
In-person	23	21.3
Total	108	100.0

The majority of the respondents 55 (50.9%) recommended the digital channels. This was followed by those who recommended in-person channel who represented 23 (21.3%) while the written channels option was settled for by 20 (18.5%). The least recommended was the print channels represented by 10 (9.3%). It can also be deduced that the most popular recommended combination was digital and in-person channels at a combined 72.2% while the least popular was written and print channels at a combined 27.8%. Figure 4.5 below gives a summary of the recommended channels based on the preferences of the various age groups represented in this study

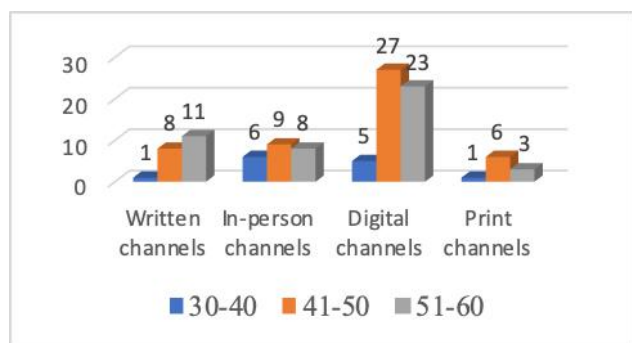


Fig.4.3: Channels recommended per age group

As illustrated in figure 4.3, the most recommended channels for both the 30-40 and 41-50 age

groups were digital and in-person channels while those within the age range of 51-60 were inclined towards digital and written channels. The findings captured in Table 4.7 and figure 4.5 are insightful as they reveal the employees’ desired channels that TSC should earnestly consider, which according to Gerardi (2019) is quite important for any organization. Figure 4.5 precisely reveals how TSC could further tailor their means of communication to better address its employees based on the preferences of varied age groups thus bring out the best in them.

Gerardi (2019) opines that considering how significant the role played by IC channels is, the channels ought to be adapted or chosen with the employees in mind rather than just the management. Moreover, failure to adapt the appropriate communication channels stands to cripple corporate relationships. As Carramenha (2019) asserts, utilizing inappropriate channels can fuel communication breakdowns, miscommunication and mistrust between the organization and its stakeholders.

Burnout assessment among school administrators

The researchers sought to ascertain the burnout ratings among the respondents. Table 4.6 below shows how they scored in each of the 16 items

Table 4.6: Burnout assessment among administrators

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I always find new and interesting aspects in my work	27 (25.0%)	78 (72.2%)	3 (2.8%)	0 (0%)	3.22
There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work	29 (26.9%)	49 (45.4%)	19 (17.6%)	11 (10.2%)	2.11
It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way	7 (6.5%)	27 (25.0%)	43 (39.8%)	31 (28.7%)	2.91

After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better	27 (25.0%)	50 (46.3%)	26 (24.1%)	5 (4.6%)	2.08
I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well	12 (11.1%)	70 (64.8%)	21 (19.4%)	5 (4.6%)	2.82
Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically	8 (7.4%)	35 (32.4%)	42 (38.9%)	23 (21.3%)	2.74
I find my work to be a positive challenge	29 (26.9%)	60 (55.6%)	15 (13.9%)	4 (3.7%)	1.94
During my work, I often feel emotionally drained	15 (13.9%)	44 (40.7%)	31 (28.7%)	18 (16.7%)	2.52
Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work	23 (21.3%)	28 (25.9%)	40 (37.0%)	17 (15.7%)	2.47
After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities	13 (12.0%)	39 (36.1%)	33 (30.6%)	23 (21.3%)	2.39
Sometimes I feel sickened by my work tasks	18 (16.7%)	39 (36.1%)	31 (28.7%)	20 (18.5%)	2.49
After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary	31 (28.7%)	43 (39.8%)	29 (26.9%)	5 (4.6%)	2.07
This is the only type of work that I can imagine myself doing	18 (16.7%)	24 (22.2%)	39 (36.1%)	27 (25.0%)	2.31
Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well	25 (23.1%)	69 (63.9%)	10 (9.3%)	4 (3.7%)	3.07
I feel more and more engaged in my work	29 (26.9%)	59 (54.6%)	18 (16.7%)	2 (1.9%)	3.07
When I work, I usually feel energized	24 (22.2%)	51 (47.2%)	25 (23.1%)	8 (7.4%)	2.84

From the results in Table 4.6 above, 27 (25.0%) and 78 (72.2%) strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they always found new and interesting aspects in their work; while 3 (2.8%) disagreed with this statement. None of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Regarding whether there were days that they felt tired even before arriving at work, 29 (26.9%) strongly agreed to this as 49 (45.4%) agreed to the same. On the other hand, 19 (17.6%) disagreed and 11 (10.2%) strongly disagreed with the statement. The findings of this it implied that there were more administrators experiencing exhaustion even before making it to work as compared to those who were unexhausted.

When asked if they happened to find themselves talking negatively about their work quite often, 7 (6.5%) strongly agreed while 27 (25.0%) agreed to this. Alternatively, 43 (39.8%) disagreed with the statement as 31 (28.7%) strongly disagreed. Majority of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that they needed more time in order to relax and feel better after work compared to

past times as 27 (25.0%) strongly agreed and 50 (46.3%) agreed with the statement. 26 (24.1%) and 5 (4.6%) however disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The findings on this item further underscore the high number of respondents reporting experiencing exhaustion.

The results also showed that 12 (11.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they can tolerate the pressure of their work very well. It was also observed that 70 (64.8%) agreed with the statement, 21 (19.4%) disagreed while 5 (4.6%) strongly disagreed. When questioned if they tended to think less at work and rather carried out their jobs mechanically, 8 (7.4%) strongly agreed as 35 (32.4%) agreed with the statement. The majority however exhibited a contrary opinion with 42 (38.9%) disagreeing with the statement and 23 (21.3%) strongly disagreeing.

The results further showed that majority of the respondents found their work a positive challenge with 29 (26.9%) strongly agreeing and 60 (55.6%) agreeing with the same. On the other hand, 15 (13.9%) disagreed with the statement as 4 (3.7%) strongly disagreed. On being asked

if they often felt emotionally drained during their work, 15 (13.9%) strongly agreed with this as 44 (40.7%) agreed. Alternatively, 31 (28.7%) of the respondents disagreed and 18 (16.7%) strongly disagreed. These findings revealed that slightly more than half of the respondents 59 (54.6%) often felt emotionally drained at work.

It was noted that of the 108 respondents, 23 (21.3%) strongly agreed that it was possible over time for one get disconnected from their kind of work while 28 (25.9%) agreed. However, 40 (37.0%) disagreed with this statement while 17 (15.7%) strongly disagreed. The findings of this item tally with those of the item inquiring whether the respondents found themselves thinking less working mechanically; in both cases majority of the respondents disagree with the notion that they tend to be detached from their work.

On whether they usually had enough energy for their leisure activities after working, 13 (12.0%) strongly agreed as 39 (36.1%) agreed with this statement while 33 (30.6%) and 23 (21.3%) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Further results showed that majority of the respondents sometimes felt sickened by their work tasks with 18 (16.7%) strongly agreeing and 39 (36.1%) agree with the statement. A combined 51 respondents were of contrary opinion as 31 (28.7%) disagreed with statement as 20 (18.5%) strongly disagreed.

It was observed that 31 (28.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they usually felt worn out and weary after work; 43 (39.8%) agreed to the same whilst 29 (26.9%) disagreed and 5 (4.6%) strongly disagreed. When questioned on whether their current work was the only type of work that they could imagine themselves doing, 18 (16.7%) strongly agreed with the statement; 24 (22.2%) agreed; 39 (36.1%) disagreed while 27 (25.0%) strongly disagreed. The findings of this item could thus imply that most of the respondents may have turnover intentions since they imagine themselves working in other fields.

In regard to whether they usually can manage the amount of their work well 25 (23.1%) strongly agreed; 69 (63.9%) agreed; 10 (9.3%) disagreed while 4 (3.7%) strongly disagreed. With most of the respondents 94 (87%) positively responding to the statement, this may suggest that exhaustion among administrators may be catalyzed more by the nature of the work rather than workload.

The results also revealed that most of the respondents felt more and more engaged at their work with 29 (26.9%) strongly agreeing and 59 (54.6%) agreeing. 18 (16.7%) and 2 (1.9%) on the other hand disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the statement. Finally, 24 (22.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they usually felt energized when working as 51(47.2%) agreed

with the statement. It was noted that 25 (23.1%) disagreed as 8 (7.4%) strongly disagreed with the statement.

Burnout Levels among School Administrators

The study sought to establish the burnout levels of the public high school administrators under study. With regard to the OLBI, burnout comprises two dimensions; exhaustion and disengagement both of which are measured by the OLBI scale and burnout levels assessed from the resultant total score. There are three levels of burnout classification, these are low, moderate and high burnout. Figure 4.4 presents the findings on administrator burnout levels

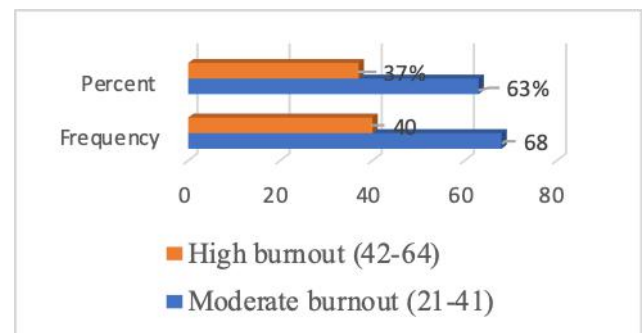


Fig.4.4: Administrators' burnout levels

Data in the above figure shows that indeed administrators are experiencing burnout, with 68 (63%) of the respondents having recorded moderate burnout levels while 40 (37%) recorded high burnout levels. It is worth noting that none of the respondents fell in the low burnout category. These findings are similar those of Ngari et al. (2013) which revealed that administrators in public high schools were experiencing burnout with 54.4% registering high levels while 17.9% registered moderate levels and 27.6% low levels. These findings further give credence to 2015 TSC report cited in Aomo and Ogolla, (2018) as well as the findings of Yambo, Odhiambo and Odera (2014) which underscore burnout prevalence as a major challenge among administrators.

Dimensions of Burnout

The study also looked at the two dimensions of burnout separately to ascertain how the respondents scored in each dimension. Fig. 4.7 illustrates the findings on exhaustion levels

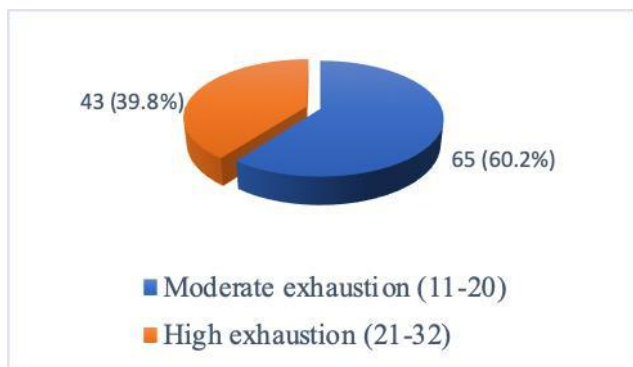


Fig.4.5: Administrators' exhaustion levels

Fig. 4.5 shows that of the 108 respondents 65 (60.2%) experienced high exhaustion, 43 (39.8%) experienced moderate exhaustion levels while none recorded low exhaustion.

On the second dimension, disengagement, the findings were as illustrated in figure 4.6

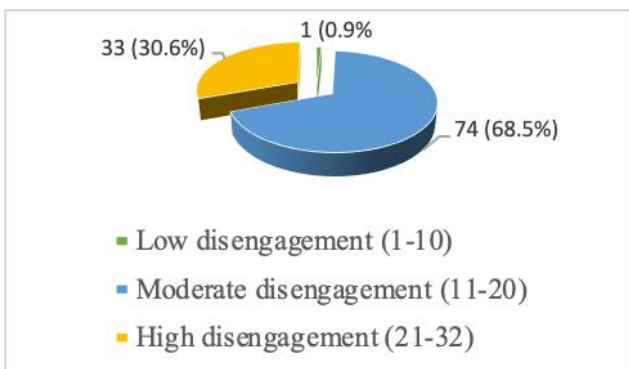


Table 4.7: Burnout levels in relation to gender

	Moderate burnout (21-41)	High burnout (42-64)	Total
Male	36	20	56
Female	32	20	52
Total	68	40	108

The results in Table 4.9 indicate that of the 68 respondents that recorded moderate burnout, 36 were male and 32 were female. For high burnout levels, the numbers per gender were equally split at 20 (50%). Considering that in total there were slightly more male than female respondents by 4, the findings above imply that both genders are equally burned-out at both levels. These findings are similar to those of Yorulmaz and Altinkurt (2018) which revealed that effect of gender on teacher burnout is negligible.

Fig.4.6: Administrators' disengagement levels

Seventy-four (68.5%) of the respondents recorded being moderately disengaged, 33 (30.6%) were highly disengaged and 1 respondent (0.9%) recorded low disengagement. With majority of the respondents 68.5% experiencing moderate disengagement and 1 experiencing low disengagement (high engagement), while lower numbers of the respondents, 40 (37%), having recorded high burnout, it is feasible that the higher the engagement the lower the instances of burnout. These results buttress those of Moller et al. (2018) which established that there is a negative correlation between burnout and engagement.

Burnout and its Dimensions in relation to Demographics

The study also looked at burnout in relation to the demographic information of the respondents. Table 4.7 denotes burnout in relation to the respondents' gender

However, gender had a significant effect on specific dimensions of burnout. When the two burnout dimensions, exhaustion and disengagement, were assessed in relation to gender, the results were as detailed in Table 4.8 below:

Table 4.8: Exhaustion levels in relation to gender

	Moderate exhaustion (11-20)	High exhaustion (21-32)	Total
Male	35	21	56
Female	30	22	52
	65	43	108

The results as shown in Table 4.10 reveal that slightly more males than females experience moderate exhaustion levels. The opposite is seen in the high exhaustion levels, where the number of females exceeded males by 1. These results weakly correspond to the findings of Purvanova and Muros (2010), as cited in Pyhältö et al. (2020), as well as those of Yorulmaz and Altinkurt (2018) which

suggest that female educators are more disposed to experiencing high levels of exhaustion compared to their male counterparts.

The results on disengagement levels vis-à-vis gender are detailed in Table 4.9 that follows:

Table 4.9: Disengagement levels in relation to gender

	Low disengagement (1-10)	Moderate disengagement (11-20)	High disengagement (21-32)	Total
Male	1	38	17	56
Female	0	36	16	52
Total	1	74	33	108

While the figures under moderate disengagement in the two genders are relatively even, only 1 male recorded low disengagement while there was a slight difference of 1 between the genders experiencing high disengagement. These results imply that gender is a weak predictor of disengagement and that male educators to

some extent exhibit stronger tendencies towards disengagement, which is in line with the findings of Skaalvic and Skaalvic (2017).

Burnout and its dimensions were also determined in relation to the age groups of the respondents. Starting with burnout, the results were as presented in Table 4.10 below

Table 4.10: Burnout in relation to age

Age	Moderate burnout (21-41)	High burnout (42-64)	Total
30-40	9	4	13
41-50	33	17	50
51-60	26	19	45
Total	68	40	108

From Table 4.12 above, 4 (30.8%) of the respondents aged between 30 and 40 reported high burnout levels against 9 (69.2%) who reported moderate burnout. 17 (34%) of those aged 41-50 were found to be highly burned-out, while 33 (66%) were moderately burned-out. Finally, of those aged between 51 and 60, 19 (42.2%) recorded high burnout levels while 26 (57.8%) recorded moderate levels.

Comparing the figures of those highly burned-out across the age groups, the highest number was 42.2% from the

51-60 age bracket, followed by 34% from the 41-50 bracket and lastly 30.8% from the 30-40 age bracket. This implies that of the three age groups, the 51-60 bracket has more administrators experiencing high burnout than any of the other two. The 30-40 bracket, on the other hand has the fewest experiencing high burnout. These findings differ with those of Zhang, Zhang and Hua (2019) as well as Li et al. (2020) which indicate that more of younger educators

exhibit higher levels of burnout compared to their older counterparts.

When exhaustion was assessed in relation to age, the results were as shown in Table 4.11 below

Table 4.11: Exhaustion levels in relation to age

Age	Moderate exhaustion (11-20)	High exhaustion (21-32)	Total
30-40	8	5	13
41-50	31	19	50
51-60	26	19	45
Total	65	43	108

The age bracket 30-40 had 13 respondents of whom 5 (38.5%) were highly exhausted and 8 (61.5%) moderately exhausted. Of the 50 respondents in the 41-50 bracket, 19 (38%) recorded high exhaustion levels while 31 (62%) recorded moderate exhaustion levels. The 51-60 age bracket which comprised 45 respondents was characterized by 19 (42.2%) who were highly exhausted and 26 (57.8%) moderately exhausted. From the results above, it is evident that more of those within the 51-60 age bracket

experienced high exhaustion compared to the other two age brackets that register almost similar results. This appears to be inconsistent with the findings of Zhang, Zhang and Hua (2019) and Wang, Quan, Wang & Jin (2015) which revealed that younger teachers register the highest scores of exhaustions.

The second dimension of burnout, disengagement was evaluated in relation to age and the results depicted in Table 4.12

Table 4.12: Disengagement levels in relation to age

Age	Low disengagement (1-10)	Moderate disengagement (11-20)	High disengagement (21-32)	Total
30-40	0	9	4	13
41-50	1	38	11	50
51-60	0	27	18	45
Total	1	74	33	108

As per the findings in Table 4.14, the 30-40 age bracket had more respondents moderately disengaged 9 (69.2%) than those highly disengaged 4 (30.8%); the 41-50 bracket had 1 (2%) record low disengagement, 38 (76%) record moderate levels and 11 (22%) record high levels. In the 51-60 bracket 27 (60%) were found to be moderately disengaged while 18 (40%) were highly disengaged. Similar to the results the first dimension, exhaustion, the 51-60 age bracket has more of its respondents registering high disengagement levels than any of the other two brackets at 18 (40%); this is followed by those in the 30-40 age bracket 4 (30.8%).

The 41-50 bracket has the least number of high disengagement cases 11 (22%) and interestingly even has a case of low disengagement 1 (2%). The above findings contradict those of El Helou et al. (2016) which established that teachers below the age of 50 experienced higher levels of disengagement when contrasted with older teachers.

Duration in Administrative Positions

The study also looked at burnout and its dimensions in relation to the duration the respondents had served in administrator positions. Fig. 4.7 summarizes the findings on burnout and duration in administrator positions.

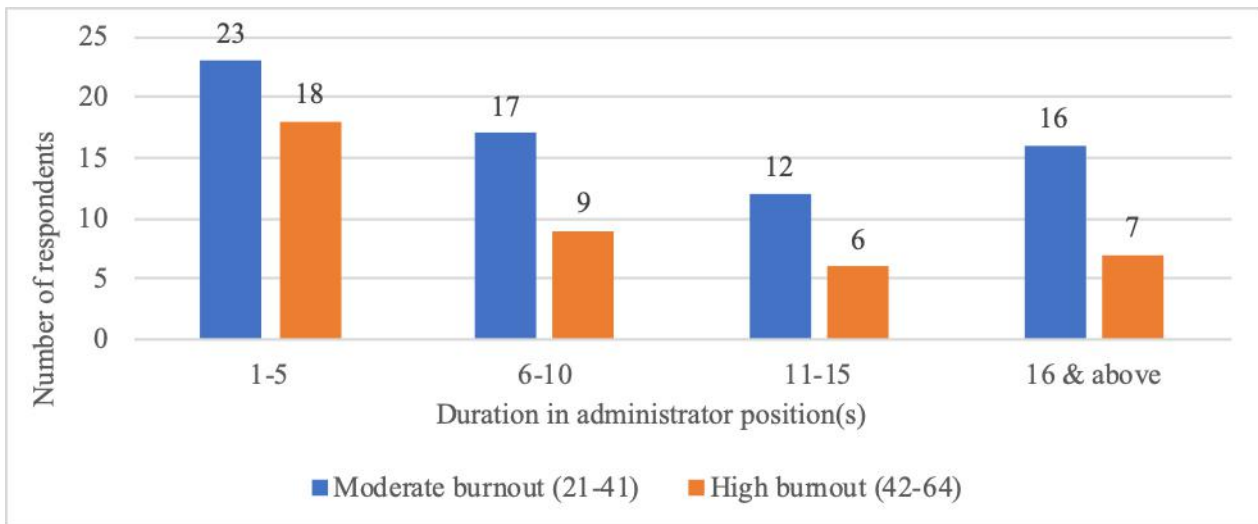


Fig.4.7: Burnout and duration in administrator position(s)

From the findings in figure 4.9 it can be deduced that moderate burnout was registered in 23 (56.1%) of the respondents within the 1-5 years bracket; 17 (65.4%) within the 6-10 years bracket; 12 (66.7%) within the 11-15 bracket and 16 (69.6%) within the 16 and above category. High burnout on the other hand was registered in 18 (43.9%) of the respondents in the 1-5 years bracket; 9 (34.6%) of those in the 6-10 years bracket; 6 (33.3%) of those in the 11-15 bracket and 7 (30.4%) in the 16 and above category. These results indicate that the longer the duration served in the position, the fewer the high burnout cases; those with fewer the number of years served in the positions are more prone to experiencing high burnout.

The results are consistent with the assertions of Shao and Gao (2005), as cited in Zhang, Zhang and Hua (2019), who aver that, years of experience are a determiner in the teaching profession. Shao and Gao further argue that teachers with few years of experience in particular positions or roles are more likely to exhibit high burnout compared to the seasoned teachers.

The researcher additionally assessed exhaustion in relation to duration in administrator position(s) and the results were as presented in Fig. 4.8.

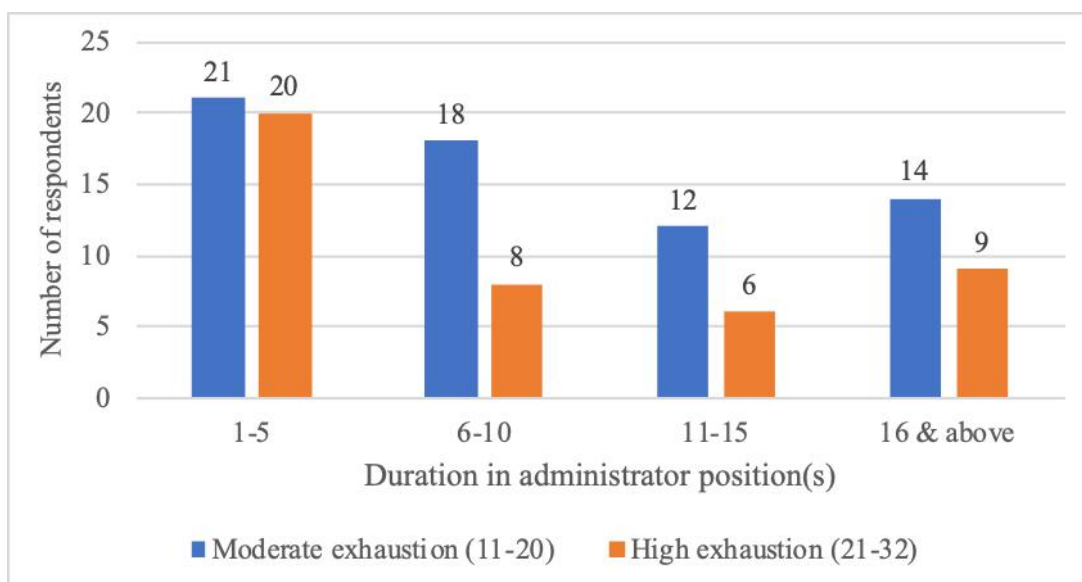


Fig.4.8: Exhaustion and duration in administrator position(s)

As illustrated in figure 4.10, those who recorded being moderately exhausted comprised 21 (51.2%) of those in

the 1-5 years bracket; 18 (69.2%) of those in the 6-10 years bracket; 12 (66.7%) of those in the 11-15 bracket and

14 (60.9%) of the 16 and above category. High exhaustion was noted among 20 (48.8%) of the respondents in the 1-5 years bracket; 8 (30.8%) of those in the 6-10 years bracket; 6 (33.3%) in the 11-15 bracket and lastly 9 (39.1%) in the 16 and above category. It can be surmised that the 1-5 years bracket was characterized by highest number of high burnout occurrences at 48.8% of the total 41 respondents. This is followed by the 16 and above category at 39.1% of the 23; the 6-10 years bracket at 33.3% of the 26 and with the least cases was the 11-15 bracket at 30.8% of the 18.

These results partly contradict the study observations made by Zhang, Zhang and Hua (2019) who found that teachers

with less than 10 years of experience in their roles exhibited the highest exhaustion compared to seasoned educators. In this study the assertions of these scholars hold true only when contrasting the respondents in 1-5 years bracket with those in the 16 and above category; and the 6-10 years bracket with the 11-15 years bracket. However, those in the 6-10 years bracket exhibit relatively fewer cases of high exhaustion compared to the 16 and above category.

Finally, the researcher assessed disengagement and duration in administrator position(s) and presented the results in figure 4.9.

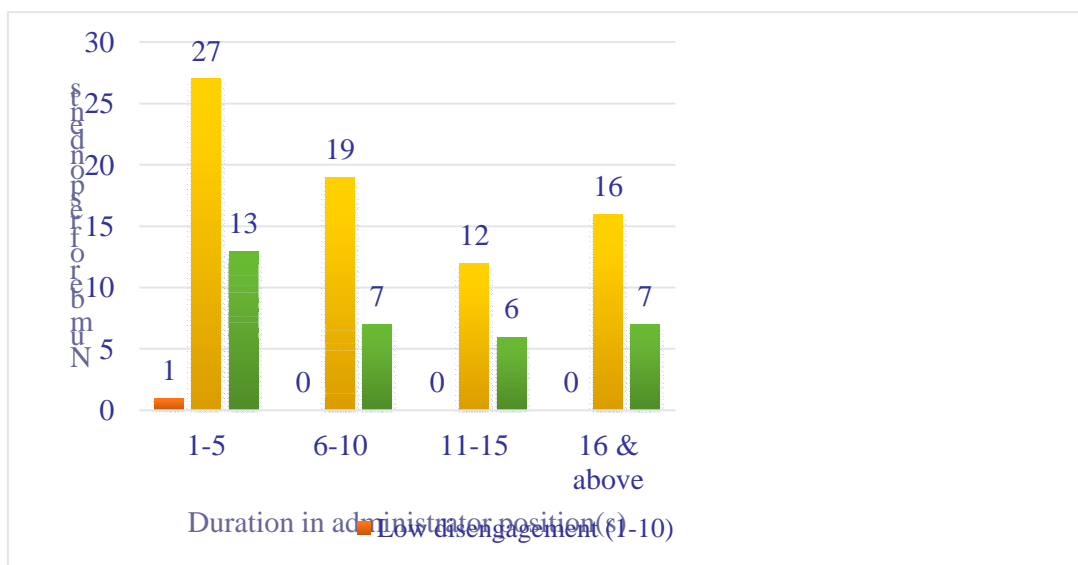


Fig.4.9: Disengagement and duration in administrator position(s)

As revealed in figure 4.8, there was only 1 (2.4%) case of low disengagement from the sample, which was from the 1-5 years bracket. Moderate disengagement was registered by 27 (65.9%) of the respondents in the 1-5 years bracket; 19 (73.1%) of those in the 6-10 years bracket; 12 (66.7%) of those in the 11-15 years bracket and 16 (69.6%) in the 16 and above category. High disengagement on the other hand was recorded by 13 (31.7%) of those in the 1-5 years bracket; 7 (26.9%) of those in the 6-10 years bracket; 6 (33.3%) in the 11-15 years bracket and 7 (30.4%) in the 16 and above category. The most cases of high disengagement levels were registered among those in the 11-15 years bracket at 33.3% while the least was among those that had served for 6-10 years.

Relationship between perceived effectiveness of internal communication and teacher burnout

To establish the relationship between perceived effectiveness of TSC’s IC and corporate burnout among public high school administrators, the researchers run a Pearson’s correlation. This study employed Table 4.13 adapted from Schober, Boer and Schwarte (2018) as a yardstick for interpreting the correlation coefficient value thus assessing the strength of the relationship between IC and burnout.

Table 4.13: Interpretation of coefficient values

Observed correlation coefficient	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.10	Negligible correlation
0.10 – 0.39	Weak correlation

0.40 – 0.69	Moderate correlation
0.70 – 0.89	Strong correlation
0.90 – 1.00	Very strong correlation

The results obtained on running the correlation were as presented in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Correlation for internal communication and corporate burnout

		Internal Communication	Corporate Burnout
Internal Communication	Pearson Correlation	1	-.231*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016
	N	108	108
Corporate Burnout	Pearson Correlation	-.231*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	
	N	108	108

* $p \leq 0.05$

From the results in Table 4.16 above it was realized that, there was a statistically significant, weak negative correlation between IC and corporate burnout, $r(106) = -.231$, $p = 0.016$. With the correlation coefficient standing at $-.231$, it tallies with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.05. These findings therefore suggest that IC accounts for 5% of the variation in corporate burnout.

V. FINDINGS

The analysis of the data presented in this chapter highlighted a number of key findings which are as follows:

The first objective of the study was to find out the perceived effectiveness of the TSC's internal communication (IC), based on official channels in place, amongst administrators in select public high schools in Kakamega County. In line with this objective the study established that TSC made use of all the given options of official channels which included digital, written, print and in-person channels; with digital and written channels being the most popular. From the findings, it was evident that the communication channels in place not only gave room for administrators to give feedback to TSC but also allowed for them to receive instant feedback on any submissions they make. To compound on this, over half of the respondents (54.6%) approved that TSC valued their feedback and acted on it promptly.

The results also revealed that TSC usually kept the employees in question well informed about the organization's strategic goals and plans and that these employees always know what is expected of them

regarding contributing to the organization's goals and objectives. On matters decision-making, 55.5% of the respondents acknowledged that they felt empowered and that they had a voice in the decision-making process.

Despite the findings above, majority of the respondents (73.2%) disagreed that most of TSC's recommendations and policies were reached through consensus. This denotes that even though majority of the administrators concur to having a voice for the most part the decisions around policies and recommendations are solely made by the employer.

Two areas touching on TSC's IC notably recorded significantly negative scores; a majority (73.2%) disagreed that most of TSC's recommendations and policies were reached through consensus whilst 55.6% refuted that most of the information they received was often positively stated and interesting. Despite these two areas of weakness, score ratings showed that a large section of the respondents (61.1%) opined that TSC's IC was highly effective while the remainder (38.9%) found it to be effective. Along with these results, 13% of the respondents recorded being extremely satisfied and (46.3%) satisfied (46.3%) with quality of communication between them and TSC. In conclusion, it was established that the select administrators perceived TSC's IC to be effectual.

The second objective sought to establish administrator burnout levels in select public high schools. As a partial fulfilment of this objective, the findings indicated the existence of burnout cases among administrators and that indeed all the respondents experienced burnout. Pertaining

to specific burnout dimensions, 60.2% of the respondents recorded moderate levels of exhaustion while 39.8% were found to experience high exhaustion levels. On the other hand, 68.5% were found to exhibit moderate levels of disengagement whereas 30.6% recorded high disengagement. Only one respondent representing 0.9% of the respondents was found to exhibit low disengagement levels.

Concerning their work tasks, slightly over half of the respondents (52.8%) admitted to sometimes feeling sickened by them. Moreover, a majority combined force of 63.1%, disputed that their current work was the only work, they could imagine themselves doing, with 27% strongly disagreeing and 36.1% disagreeing. These results give the impression that these respondents may be discontented with their work as well as be thinking of ways out of the profession. Conclusively, the study's findings revealed that more than half of the respondents (63%) recorded moderate burnout levels while the remaining 37% recorded high burnout levels. There were no recorded cases of low burnout; these findings in totality address the second objective fully.

The findings with regard to the third objective on the association between IC and corporate burnout among select public high school administrators in Kakamega County revealed that there was a weak negative degree of correlation of $-.231$ between the two variables and with a statistical significance level of 0.016 . This implies that there is a statistically significant relationship between IC and corporate burnout characterized by a weak negative correlation.

VI. DISCUSSIONS

Perceived Effectiveness of TSC's Internal Communication

The first objective of the study was to find out the perceived effectiveness of the TSC's internal communication (IC), based on official channels in place, amongst administrators in select public high schools in Kakamega County. In line with this objective, the study established that TSC made use of all the given options of official channels which included digital, written, print and in-person channels; with digital and written channels being the most popular. The use of various channels to communicate with employees is a boon for TSC as majority of the respondents (47.2% agreed and 31.5% strongly agreed) acknowledged that the use of more than one channel to convey information enhanced the credibility of messages from TSC. According to Jamal and Bakar (2017), every organization ought to realize that the perceived credibility of its messages plays a vital role since

it can either enhance or destroy an organization's effectiveness and reputation.

These findings are in step with those of Sanina, Balashov, Rubtcova and Satinky (2017) which established that using a combination of different communication channels yields more positive communication results compared to using a single or limited channels. Putting to use several channels to communicate has overtime been recommended by different scholars (Sanina, et al., 2017; White, Vanc & Stafford, 2010). Further underscoring the benefits of making use of an array of channels, White, Vanc and Stafford (2010) posit that employees who receive information from a variety of channels tend to be most satisfied with the internal communication.

It was also established that the communication channels in place not only gave room for administrators to give feedback to TSC but also allowed for them to receive instant feedback on any submissions they make. Furthermore, more than half of the respondents (54.6%) approved that TSC valued their feedback and acted on it promptly. These findings on feedback reflect positively on TSC in line with Gerardi (2019) who posits that when channels allow for or promote dialogue, the employees' sense of belonging is enhanced and they feel that they are part of the organization.

Additionally, Soares and Del Gáudio (2019) argue that an organization that gives room for exchanges and interactions with its employees increases its chances of achieving its objectives through them. According to Burkhart (2018), the workplace worldwide stands to be dominated by the millennial generation by 2030 and this generation has been found to have a solid preference for dialogue (Ewing, Men & O'Neil, 2019). This further underscores the indispensable place of dialogue between the organization and its employees both at the present and in the future.

With the contemporary shifts in IC, employees can no longer be viewed as passive actors but agents of expression who can either build up or facilitate the destruction of a corporate's reputation. Instead, it is advocated that organizations strive to build an interactive environment that facilitates symbolic and material exchanges between employees and the organization (Soares & Del Gáudio, 2019).

The study's findings further revealed that TSC keeps its employees well informed about the organization's strategic goals and plans and that the latter always know what is expected of them regarding contributing to the organization's goals and objectives. This is important for any organization as employees who are well-equipped with knowledge and skills about their jobs and organizations,

are more likely to work better and become good organizational ambassadors and advocates to others (Soares & Del Gáudio, 2019; Walden, Jung & Westerman, 2017).

Even though on one item 55.5% of the respondents acknowledged that they felt empowered and that they had a voice in the decision-making process, on another, most of the respondents (73.2%) disagreed that most of TSC's recommendations and policies were reached through consensus. This is indicative that as much as majority of the administrators feel that they have a voice, most of the decisions around policies and recommendations are solely made by the employer. This poses an area of concern since the primary role of having dialogue and exchanges is to come to consensual decisions. Policies fronted by the management devoid of consensus stand to face opposition; this assertion is buttressed by Waters, Bortree and Tindall (2013) who aver that, employees can turn to be an organization's most vocal critics especially when in conflict with internal policies.

The respondents also reported on the item that questioned if most of the information they received from the employer was positively stated and generated interest in them. More than half of the respondents disputed the statement with 23 (21.3%) strongly disagreeing and 37 (34.3%) disagreeing. These findings expose a flaw in TSC's IC that may pose a great risk to the employer-employee relationship. According to Ruck and Welch (2012), IC has majorly focused on among other things volume of information at the expense of the nature of content of the communication itself and how well it is provided with respect to the recipients.

The scholars argue that with a constantly changing communication field, there is need for new approaches that emphasize on content and employee needs rather than just the volume and channels. Propping this argument, Welch (2012) asserts that the effectiveness of IC is to be pegged on the suitability of the messages, that is to say how suitable they are to employees. Welch goes on to state that IC therefore cannot be regarded as effective if the content does not primarily address the employee's needs. Making reference to the Stakeholder Theory, it is by identifying and addressing among other things, the stakeholders' interests and even potential communication tensions that organizations can establish strong ties with its stakeholders (Ulmer & Sellnow, 2013). In this case, this goes a long way in informing TSC on the instances of tension in its IC that ought to be addressed if it is to nurture stronger relations with its employees.

Despite these two shortcomings in TSC's IC, cumulative scores on perceived IC effectiveness revealed that 61.1%

of the respondents perceived it as highly effective while the remaining 38.9% deemed it effective. Additionally, most of the respondents recorded being extremely satisfied (13%) and satisfied (46.3%) with quality of communication between them and TSC.

As the Stakeholder Theory intimates, the success of PR is hinged on how the organization manages its relationships with the stakeholders. Considering that employees are one of the most powerful stakeholder groups, it is paramount that their needs/interests be covered sufficiently since employees stand to directly influence an organization's performance as well as reputation (Mascena, Fischmann & Boaventura, 2018; Men & Jiang, 2016). Basing on the first tenet of the Stakeholder Theory, jointness of interest, if employees' interests are observed the organization will generate value for employees which will ultimately lead to success of the corporate.

Concisely, in light of the findings above that show majority found the IC in place satisfactory and highly effective, it holds that TSC addresses its employees' communication needs thus generates value for them.

Administrator Burnout Levels

The second objective sort to establish administrator burnout levels in select public high schools. As a partial fulfilment of this objective, the findings indicated the existence of burnout cases among administrators and that indeed all the respondents experienced burnout. With respect to specific burnout dimensions, most of the respondents recorded moderate levels of both exhaustion (60.2%) as well as disengagement (68.5%) against the high levels of 39.8% and 30.6% respectively. Noteworthy is the contrast between the number of highly burned-out respondents and that of the highly exhausted.

While only 40 respondents reported experiencing high burnout, 43 reported experiencing high exhaustion. This implies while some administrators may not be highly-burned out, they experience high exhaustion and therefore moderate to low disengagement levels (moderate to high engagement). These findings are in line with those of Moeller et al (2018) which reveal that there is a group referred to as engaged-exhausted. According to these scholars, those in this group may exhibit high skills acquisition and appear optimally engaged, but are highly exhausted. Such employees tend to report turnover intentions that are even higher than those of the disengaged workers. As Pringle, Stern and Moeller (2019) aver, should the idea that only disengaged workers are burned out be upheld then corporates stand to miss out on identifying highly performing employees who may be experiencing high burnout, thus losing them to other fields.

It was also established that slightly over half of the respondents (52.8%) admitted to sometimes feeling sickened by their work tasks. Furthermore, when asked whether their current work was the only work, they could imagine themselves doing, 27% strongly disagreed as 36.1% disagreed. These results cannot be overlooked since they carry the implication the said respondents exhibit turnover intentions as they imagine themselves venturing to other fields.

Such a claim cannot be deemed farfetched as a 2015 report by TSC captured that close to 64% of principals in the country had quit the profession between the years 2010-2015, citing work stress as a prime factor (Aomo & Ogolla, 2018). This buttresses the findings of Koome (2007), as cited in Yambo, Odhiambo and Odera (2014), who noted that most of the high school principals nationwide who had opted out of the profession did so due to burnout and preferred to look for opportunities in other government ministries and departments.

The results conclusively showed that more than half of the respondents (63%) recorded moderate burnout levels while the remaining 37% recorded high burnout levels. There were no recorded cases of low burnout. This poses a grave hazard more so in the educational field as studies have underscored, burned out administrators stand to experience low morale and dwindling job interest therefore sparking career dissatisfaction (Yildrin & Dinc, 2019; Kiongo & Thinguri, 2014). Ultimately, these administrators may resort to spending their time looking for opportunities away from teaching and eventually quit the profession leading to loss of skilled manpower. Teachers at the heart of education recovery; role of teachers in enhancing quality education at all levels and improve the situations of teachers in the world; aim to establish the steps that need to be taken to ensure teaching personnel develop their full potential. The above findings in totality address the second objective fully.

Association between Internal Communication and Teacher Burnout

With regard to the third objective, the study found that there existed a statistically significant relationship between IC and corporate burnout among select public high school administrators in Kakamega County. The findings revealed that there was a negative correlation, though weak in strength, between IC and burnout. The negative correlation suggests that lower scores in burnout levels can be associated with high scores in perceived effectiveness of IC.

Apropos of the Social Exchange Theory, these research findings attest to the assertions of Lawler and Thye (2015) who aver that in most situations, individuals' assessment

of the benefits and costs of activities determine their response. The scholars go on to further argue that this kind of psychological contract determines individuals' attitudes and even actions. Since burnout is a response to one's working conditions, it follows that the more effective an organization's IC is perceived to be by the employees, the lower the burnout prevalence among the latter.

The above findings go on to validate the claims by communications experts Litzky (2017) and Bogue (2019) who aver that poor IC facilitates burnout among employees. Litzky (2017) acknowledges the important place IC holds in pacifying burnout and argues that a PR manager has a major role to play in tackling burnout in their organization. The PR professional is to do this by monitoring and evaluating how employees interact with their work conditions; this will go a long way in helping the professional detect the onset of burnout among the employees thus be in a position to craft measures that will fix the problem. Bogue (2019) echoes Litzky's argument asserting that communicators can play an active role in preventing and dousing corporate burnout.

Bogue continues that when communication experts understand burnout, they are in a better position to help the organization communicate its goals as well as how the employees' activities meaningfully contribute to corporate success. When this is done, employees will become more aware and feel appreciated which will result to low burnout occurrences, high engagement and high productivity (Bogue, 2019).

Additionally, these findings, which ascertain the existence of a significant relationship between IC and burnout, border on those of Ter Hoeven, De Jong and Peper (2006) who found that communication variables, precisely communication climate and communication satisfaction, exhibit negative correlations with burnout. These scholars' findings suggest that communication within an organization can be an antecedent of burnout and that when employees perceive communication climate as positive and generally find communication satisfactory, there will be lower burnout.

The findings of this research also buttress those of Brown and Roloff (2015) regarding communication and burnout. The scholars established that burnout can be influenced by the nature of communication engendered by the organization. Brown and Roloff while testing perceived organizational support and psychological contracts as organizational communication variables among high school teachers in the U.S found that these communication variables were indeed related to burnout. Following this revelation, the scholars further asserted with reference to their findings that creating a work environment that

communicates the employees' value and significance, keeps them informed and appreciates the extra-time effort they put in, plays a significant role in buffering burnout in organizations (Brown & Roloff, 2015).

While the findings in this study suggest a statistically significant albeit negative correlation between IC and burnout, it is imperative to note that this does not imply a causal relationship in any way. As Creswell and Creswell (2018) state, non-experimental research generally cannot infer causation. However, this study's findings may serve as a cause-effect indicator, this being in agreement with Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) who assert that findings from correlation studies can be "...a compelling indicator of cause and effect" (p 188). In view of this assertion, it is evident that the place of IC in stemming burnout in organizations ought to be given more attention. This study's findings concur with its conceptual framework which shows that indeed TSC's IC (independent variable) can influence teacher burnout (dependent variable) which ultimately affects the educators' performance and productivity causing negative ripple effects the education sector.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study was to establish the relationship between IC and teacher burnout among select public high school administrators in Kakamega County. The results of the study show that there is a negative correlation between the effectiveness of the TSC IC in place and burnout among the administrators. In relation to the theories used, the results show that TSC considers the views of the Stakeholder Theory, in that for the most part, it addresses its stakeholders' communication interests consequently creating value for this critical stakeholder group; the employees. According to Tantalo and Priem (2016) actions that lead to value creation for stakeholders influence the latter's perceptions. This in turn engenders reciprocal action from the stakeholders which is explained by the reciprocity concept of the Social Exchange Theory. In a nutshell, how employees perceive TSC's IC significantly influences prevalence of burnout amongst them.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that institutions endeavour to ascertain their employees' communication interests to establish their internal communication system. This should be done specifically by the communication expert or team and the process be conducted often and consistently to ensure any gaps and loose ends are tied up. This will ensure effective value creation for employees which will

lead to positive reciprocity from the employees that will in the long run be beneficial to the organization.

TSC ought to make effort to further improve their IC putting into consideration this study's findings especially the data that shows a small percentage (11.1%) being extremely dissatisfied as well as the two areas where the IC scored low ratings. These two areas that the employer ought to work on are: first ensuring that most of its recommendations and policies are reached through consensus; second, revamp how to present information to its employees by addressing the above, TSC stands to make leaps in playing an active role in pacifying teacher burnout among its employees.

The study also recommends that communication personnel in organizations take a lead in the fight against corporate burnout. As Litzky (2017) postulates, PR managers who are strong, keen and empathetic can bring about a huge difference when it comes to tackling employee burnout. By monitoring and evaluating how the employees interact with their work conditions, these communication experts can detect the onset of burnout among the employees and swiftly craft measures that will fix the problem. The TSC communication office therefore ought to step up and come up with ways of keeping tabs on the administrators in order to come up with effective remedies for instances of burnout that may sprout up.

Recommendations for further research

This study focussed on the relationship between IC and corporate burnout among select public high school administrators with the scope limited to Kakamega County. These results therefore may or may not be a true reflection as per other counties. Further studies should be conducted in the different counties in Kenya so as to make comparisons.

Future research attempts could employ a different set of internationally accepted research instruments for instance make use of the Maslach Burnout Inventory which has a 5-point Likert scale in place of the 4-point-scale OLBI used in this study to establish burnout levels. This may give new insights on burnout based on the extra neutral point in the MBI scale.

While this study entirely examines administrators in public high schools; further studies could be conducted among administrators in private high schools and even better in international schools based in Kenya. The comparison from such studies would further shed light on the IC-burnout association.

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