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07019C

**A COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO BOOST
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION BETWEEN
FAMILY MEMBERS**

Supervisor

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Bachelor of Arts in Social Communication

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STUDENT DECLARATION


I, the undersigned, declare that this Thesis is my original work achieved through personal reading, scientific research methods and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Social Communication. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: 

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This Thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the College Supervisor.

Signed: 

Supervisor: Mr. Joseph Mwongi

Date: 02/06/10

To

Mum and Dad . . .

*I could never find the words to thank you, for all you've done for me. May
God always bless you and grant you a long happy life. Ich liebe dich!*

“Improving Family Communication takes work, but the effort is worth it. Because hard times and struggles will hit every family; the family that has a strong foundation of communication will be able to weather the storms.”

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May the Almighty God bless you all abundantly!

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ABBREVIATIONS

al.	<i>alii</i> others
e.g.	<i>exempli gratia</i> ; for example
ed.	edited by
i.e.	<i>id est</i> — that is
n.d.	No date
n.p.	No publication
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TV	Television

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Having essential communication is necessary to having a happy family and thus a strong, happy society to live in. This is the main reason for writing this Thesis — to create awareness about the consequences of TV consumption on interpersonal communication between family members. As derived from the research carried out in the Long Essay, it was evident that the TV has become a ‘thief of family time’; it makes family home life almost impossible! If families are constantly made aware of the factors contributing to this social problem, it can help them guide and enhance their family’s well being. It is a very significant concern because, on an individual level, family bonds are incredibly important and are the basis upon which is built a strong society.

“The family is the setting that provides most of the early stimulation that is the basis for competent communication development.”¹

Background of the Thesis

In the previous research carried out in the Long Essay, the researcher set out to find out whether TV consumption destroys family communication. The hypothesis was proved right: TV consumption does destroy family communication.

¹ R. ZEUSCHNER. *Communication Today*, 353.

The TV has become a common substitute to family time i.e. it has replaced the time when families could be socializing and bonding together, with endless lists of programs that engage one or more of the family members thus reducing the social interaction between them. We live in times when everybody is desperately in need of being understood, accepted and listened to, but in the Long Essay research majority of the respondents seemed to bond more with TV family characters than with their own family members. This is mainly because they spent much of their free time watching TV other than interacting with their family members.

“We spend more time watching TV than doing anything else except working at our jobs and sleeping!”²

The reverse of this can therefore be true; that if families spend much of their free time socializing with one another, they would form strong bonds with their families other than with fictitious media characters.

Working within one’s home to have TV viewing enhance rather than detract from family life is a major challenge for families.³ This is why, as a media person, I also have a role to play in this. I intend to come up with a communication strategy to enlighten people about the consequences of TV consumption on family communication. This does not mean that I will demonize the use of the TV; rather, I will use it because I will be guaranteed of an audience from the family members themselves, to help enlighten them on the importance of good family communication and how to go about achieving this goal. As mentioned earlier, once families are aware about the factors contributing to this social problem, it will be a starting point for them to work on dealing with the issue at hand. TV documentaries will be used because through them families can get to see and hear about

² R. HARRIS, *A Cognitive psychology of Mass Communication*, 7.
R. HARRIS, *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*, 325.

the experiences of other family members hence they can relate directly with the circumstances presented, and they can also learn from the facts and recommendations that will be put across.

Statement of the problem

From the Long Essay research, it was evident that majority of the respondents were aware of the consequences of TV consumption on family communication, only when prompted. It is a matter that is sub-conscious in the minds of many, or rather it's not commonly thought of, yet it happens in our daily lives and is of great concern. Majority of the respondents considered watching TV as a cheap, easy and most convenient means of entertainment for family members. Unfortunately, majority of the TV programs do not focus on programs that promote ideal family values except in rare talk shows and religious programs. For this reason, there is need for families to be constantly reminded through the same media which they enjoy using, that there needs to be a balance between TV time and family time and that the TV can still be used positively to enhance interpersonal communication between family members.

The researcher intends to use TV documentaries to highlight all these issues and also get first hand information from different family members on what exactly happens in their families, why things happen the way they do and the consequences they face regarding the cycle revolving around TV consumption in the family setting.

Hypothesis

- Creating awareness about 'TV consumption and its consequences on interpersonal communication between family members' can help guide and enhance a family's well being.

- TV can be used positively to enhance interpersonal communication between family members.

Objectives of the Thesis/ Project

The objectives for carrying out this project are:

- To create awareness about the consequences of TV consumption on interpersonal communication between family members.
- To educate on the importance of good interpersonal communication between family members.
- To enlighten the public on the fact that the TV can be used positively to enhance good family communication.
- To come up with a well compiled and accurate research product based on the project proposed to be of use to other researchers, and the society at large.

Scope and Limitations the Thesis/Project

The project will focus on parents and children who live together in a household setting so as to get accurate results that are not based on memory or mere speculation on past happenings. The decision to interview families in their own homes is also because it would create a better understanding of the ways in which TV is watched in its 'natural' domestic context. This was however a challenge because as the researcher later found out, majority of the people living in the targeted domicile (Langata Constituency) did not live with their families (especially students who schooled in the nearby institutions). Therefore the researcher had to take more time in search of a closed-knit family to match her requirements.

Children targeted were those above fifteen years of age because at this stage they have developed better reasoning capabilities and are thus more aware of what is happening around them.

Structure of the Thesis/Project

This research paper is divided into three main sections: chapter one, chapter two and chapter three.

Chapter one mainly comprises of the literature review. Different issues brought up by different authors regarding the research topic have been quoted and acknowledged. The topics covered here are: Definition of Terms, Consequences of TV Consumption on Interpersonal Communication between Family Members, Interpersonal Communication and its Relevance in a Family, Positive Use of TV to enhance Interpersonal Communication between Family Members, and, The TV Documentary and its Application as a Communication Strategy for this Project.

Chapter two presents the quantitative and qualitative research methods applied in the study. It focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the questionnaires coded through SPSS, and the data derived from in-depth interviews. Thereafter some Mass Communication Theories will be tackled, with a view to explain further the scientific trends emerging from the research. The two main theories in focus are: Socialization Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory respectively.

Chapter three comprises the Project Plan which has all the necessary details needed to justify the proposed communication strategy's credibility. Below these follow the General Conclusion which sums up the research project giving the possible impact of the proposed communication strategy in view of the main goal and objectives set for it.

1. CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This chapter will deal with the sociological analysis of the topic i.e. it will highlight the consequences of TV consumption on interpersonal communication between family members. This information is derived from the previous research paper, backed up by literature review. It will also highlight the importance of interpersonal communication in a family, and how the TV can be used positively to enhance interpersonal communication between family members. All these are aimed at stressing the fact that once family members are made aware of how TV consumption can destroy family communication, and that TV can still be used positively to promote interpersonal communication in the family; it can help enhance the family's well being. As mentioned earlier, the researcher intends to use TV documentaries as a communication strategy for this project; therefore, review of the literature on documentaries will also be highlighted.

People have got to learn how to handle TV and make it go where they want it to go, where it will do the most good for the most people. Television is not going to get there by itself. There is a very real danger that this influence which touches every facet of our daily lives, will be giving us commands before long unless we make it clear who is boss, and do it pronto.⁴

⁴R. TURKEL. *Breakthrough: the stories of communications today*, 9.

1.2 Definition of Terms

1.2.1 Interpersonal Communication

It is the process of using messages to generate meaning between at least two people in a situation that allows mutual opportunities for both speaking and listening.⁵

1.2.2 Family

A family is a small social system made up of individuals related to each other by reason of strong reciprocal affections and loyalties, and comprising a permanent household (or cluster of households) that persists over years and decades.⁶

1.2.3 Family Communication

Family communication is the interaction developed over time by a group of related people who share common living space.⁷

1.2.4 Interaction

Interaction means the exchange of verbal and non-verbal messages.⁸

1.2.5 Theory

A theory is a system of law-like propositions and any systematic set of ideas that can help make sense of a phenomenon, guide action or predict a consequence.⁹

⁵ J. PEARSON – al., *Human Communication*, 19.

⁶ K. GAVLIN, *Family Communication, Cohesion and Change*, 23.

⁷ R. ZEUSCHNER, *Communication Today*, 350.

⁸ R. ZEUSCHNER, *Communication Today*, 350.

⁹D. MCQUAIL, *Mass Media Theories*, 7.

1.3 Consequences of TV Consumption on Interpersonal Communication between Family Members

In today's era, television is well known as a good source of entertainment for the family setting. However, looking at it from a different angle, the TV is doing more harm than good on interpersonal communication between family members. Family relationships are no longer the same as those in the olden days when there were no televisions. Instead of family members talking together, discussing issues together, laughing together and solving problems together, they seem more attached to fictitious media characters on TV during family time. These television programs engage one or more of the family members thus reducing the social interaction between them.

Television becomes a 'thief of time', depriving us of opportunities for other activities.¹⁰ No one can have a conversation, no letters get written and friends calling are not welcomed since they break the sequence.¹¹

There is a loss of strong family bonding as family members become people only living under the same roof. In the previous research, the respondents stated how the TV even made them go to bed at night without asking the other how their day was. "People sit in front of the TV like zombies and say 'goodnight' after finishing and that's that!"

Apart from this, space in some houses today also serves to discourage communication among family members. As opposed to the previous generation where children shared beds and rooms, today many children have separate rooms equipped for autonomous living. This no doubt leads to a loss of experience in certain types of interpersonal encountering. If a child has his own room and his own toys, TV set, among others; sharing and problem-solving get avoided also. Thus two children don't have to

¹⁰ K. ROSENGREN, *Communication: an introduction*, 169.

¹¹ B. MULLAN, *Consuming Television*, 23.

decide together, for example, which TV shows to watch. Rather its, “you watch your show, I’ll watch mine.” Similarly, if a child and parents are at odds and the child has a nice setup in his own room, he can easily say, “I’m leaving. I’m going to my own room”. That room then becomes an escape shade when personal relationships falter.

With the busy trend in today’s modern life, most parents and children retrieve to watching TV programs as a means of entertainment and relaxation when back home from work or school.

“In the evenings, the living room became the TV room . . . it was ‘what’s on tonight?’ and everything started to give way to TV. It used to annoy me, you couldn’t talk to people!”¹²

It is even more alarming to note that parents resort to using the TV as a baby-sitter. Children younger than toddlers are today exposed to a number of TV programs. They are forced to bond more with the TV characters because their own family members are usually busy with other activities. This trend heightens, such that when these children are grown they become addicted to TV programs; they identify more with TV characters and thus bond more with them. This has other negative repercussions which lead to disagreements and eventually knock-on effect in the family. For example, children become disobedient to their parents because they do not want to be interrupted from their endless chain of programs. In some instances, it induces quarrelling among family members over what program to watch or even on whether or not to turn off the set.

Television may serve an almost limitless range of diverse uses and functions. Family members can watch television to be together, or to get away from each other; as a basis for talk or to avoid interaction; as a source of conflict, or an escape from it.¹³ It’s no-wonder, most married men admit to using the TV as a scapegoat to avoid confrontations

¹² B. MULAN, *Consuming Television*, 21.

¹³ J. LULL, *Family communication patterns and the social uses of television*, 319.

from their nagging wives. Some children also confess to approaching their parents when they are deeply absorbed in a TV program for favours because that way, the parents will just say 'yes' to brush them off quickly as they continue to watch the program.

Television has unmistakably altered the way in which our families communicate, and much controversy still exists over the possible impact of violence, alternative morals and other issues on family and children.¹⁴

It has been shown for instance that a result of heavy TV viewing among young people is a tendency towards inadequate physical activity, accompanied by increasing body weight. These are results which cannot be said to be trivial or unimportant.¹⁵

The process of family growth has a lot to do with the ability of all the family members to communicate with one another. I believe that a strong family begins with unity through good interpersonal communication with each another. And strong families make strong nations.

1.4 Interpersonal Communication and its relevance in a family

Communication plays a significant role in who we are, what we know, and what we do.¹⁶

Interpersonal communication occurs for a variety of reasons: to solve problems, to resolve conflicts, to share information, to improve perceptions of one, or to fulfil social needs, such as the need to belong or to be loved.¹⁷ It differs from other forms of communication in that there are few participants involved, the interact-ants are in close physical proximity to each other, there are many sensory channels used, and feedback is

¹⁴ R. ZEUSCHNER, *Communication Today*, 419.

¹⁵ E. ROSENGREN, *Communication: an introduction*, 169.

¹⁶ J. COHEN, *Communication criticism; developing your critical powers*.

¹⁷ J. PEARSON -- al., *Human Communication*, 19.

immediate. This is however not maintained when one party is partly absorbed in something else e.g. a TV program.

Looking someone directly in the eye when speaking to him or her sends the message that what they have to say is important. It also ensures that you are actually hearing the conversation instead of paying more attention to something else.¹⁸

It is always much easier to share ourselves when we know someone cares enough to listen. In a very real sense, the quality of listening directly affects the quality of sharing.¹⁹ How well we listen, influences how well our children listen to us and to other important people in their lives.²⁰

Family meanings are developed as members interpret certain behaviours through communication. Comments such as “I was only kidding when I said that” serve to create a shared reality. Nicknames, non-verbal codes, inside jokes, and unique terminology usually separate members from non-members. This on its own enhances the bond between members.

Interpersonal communication within a family ensures that problems get solved, ideas get heard, feelings are expressed and intimacy grows. Otherwise, not talking often leads to lashing out in anger and depression especially among children and teens.

Good communication can benefit your family in many ways. It doesn't guarantee that your family won't have any problems, but communication is a powerful tool to use to build a strong family and to help solve problems.²¹ A family that has a strong foundation of communication is able to withstand the hard times and struggles that hit every family.

¹⁸D.C. DIEHI, PhD., Assistant Professor, Program planning and Evaluation.

¹⁹J. POWELL, “Will the Real Mc Please Stand Up?” 83.

²⁰P.T. NELSON, Family Relations, 149-150.

²¹P. T. NELSON, Family Relations, 149.

The level of satisfaction and joy that we achieve as members of a family depends to a great extent on how well we send and receive messages.²²

1.5 Positive Use of TV to enhance Interpersonal Communication between Family Members

The TV is well known to gather family members together especially during meal times. From the Long Essay research, the researcher found out gathered that at this time the family members either watched in silence or engaged in conversations that were mainly related to the program they were watching. For this reason, the TV can be used to promote interpersonal communication between family members if the family members are encouraged to share opinion about what they watch together.

The conventional wisdom is that TV has a negative influence but that conclusion is by no means certain or simple. In some instances, family TV viewing can be a positive time of family discussion and interaction, including commenting on the programs or laughing and crying together.²³

Parents can therefore take advantage of this situation to educate their children about various issues in life by pointing out what is right or wrong from the content they watch.

Parents who actively discuss and evaluate TV with their children can increase the pro-social effects of viewing and also ameliorate some of the harmful effects.²⁴

Further more, the TV provides many programs that the family can watch and have a good time together. Parents can encourage having a list of programs that the family can

²² R. W. PACE · B.D. PERTERSON – M.D. BURNET, *Techniques for Effective Communication*, Preface.

²³ R.J. HARIS, *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*, 325.

²⁴ R.J. DESMOND – al., *Family Mediation: Parental Communication Patterns and the Influences of Television on Children*, 67.

watch together as a way of strengthening family bonds through experiencing and sharing these programs together.

I believe that TV programs can provide favourite subjects of discussion too. It is very common to find people opening up to a conversation intimately, if it has to do with a program they like watching. This means that discussing a TV program can be the starting point to break the ice when two parties (even strangers) have nothing to discuss about.

The TV, used positively, can therefore create an atmosphere for conversation between people who enjoy watching it. It can thus be used to promote interpersonal communication between family members if the family members form a habit of engaging in healthy discussions with each other about the content of the programs they watch.

1.6 The TV Documentary and its Application as a Communication Strategy for this Project

Documentaries are factual programmes which aim to lead and expound on politics, the arts or science. They are usually seen as the more 'serious' aspect of television. For this reason the researcher intends to use documentaries as a communication strategy to create awareness about the consequences of TV consumption on family communication.

Most people usually believe what is presented in documentaries because of the first hand information they get which is backed up by concrete evidence from the sources. In this case, the audience will get to see how other families are affected by TV addiction, how they go about it and what is recommended to help solve this social problem. This will create a greater impact because the audience can relate directly with the circumstances presented as a reality, which in turn will make them more conscious about the actualities in their own families.

By using documentaries, the researcher will also get to find out from family members themselves why the situation is so. "Documentary is sometimes about seeing that there might be another side to any published story."²⁵ They check out the facts, the background of anything presented and the details, to enhance believability amongst viewers.

A pure documentary should be a portrait of real people living their normal lives.²⁶ From the previous research, it was evident that the respondents preferred watching comedies as their favourite type of TV program, followed by drama and soap operas. All these types of programs in the Kenyan TV stations usually revolve around family life, but of the western culture. For this reason I intend to make these documentaries look like a drama serial such that they will have a series of episodes which are left unresolved at the end to make the audience look forward to the next episode. Further more, I will use incidental music to enhance the atmosphere, and the documentary will be narrated, not by a professional voice-over expert but by a member of the family in the series. This will have a whole new effect on the audience because it will portray the actual situation in our Kenyan urban families based on the facts of reality, while at the same time, it will inform, educate and entertain.

²⁵ M. BAKER. *Documentary in the Digital Age*. 256.
(C.f.) M. BAKER, *Documentary in the Digital Age*, 55.

2. CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is based on quantitative and qualitative research which was carried out in the middle-class areas of Langata Constituency in Nairobi. The quantitative research has been analysed through SPSS²⁷ and the measurement design instrument used was questionnaires.²⁸ Qualitative research was mainly done through in-depth interviews. The researcher chose to carry out in-depth interviews because it would allow a one-on-one approach with the interviewees who will be able to open up due to assured confidentiality. This method will also allow the researcher to have lengthy conversations with the respondents as well as lengthy observation of their non-verbal responses, such that all the detailed information needed will be acquired.

2.2 Sampling criterion

The sampling criterion was purposive sampling such that particular audiences, i.e., those above 15 years old and living in the middle class areas of Langata constituency were targeted. 150 questionnaires were distributed and 126 were collected back. Of the 126 retrieved, 104 were valid thus were coded and keyed in SPSS for analysis. The rest (22) were spoilt main reason being the respondents were not from the targeted domicile.

2.3 Profile of Respondents

2.3.1 Age

Majority of the respondents (41%) were aged between 20-24 years, followed by those aged between 25-29 years (33%) and those aged above 29 years (23%). The

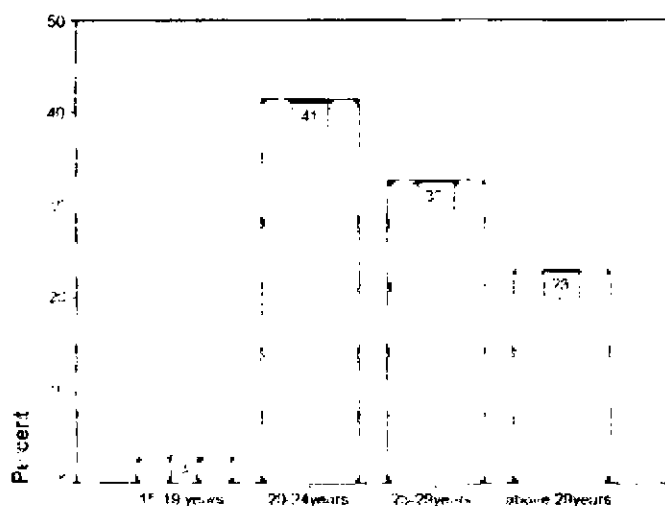
²⁷ Refer Abbreviations (VIII).

²⁸ Refer Appendix A 6.1 for the Questionnaire.

minority (3%) were those aged between 15-19 years old. This information is presented in Bar Graph 1 below.

From the data, we deduce that, this trend (majority of respondents being 20-24 years old) may be due to the fact that the research was done in Langata Constituency, an area where there are quite a number of higher education institutions; and these are mostly students schooling and living in the area. This therefore means that the research results will be largely influenced by those falling under this age group.

Bar Graph 1: Respondent Distribution by Age

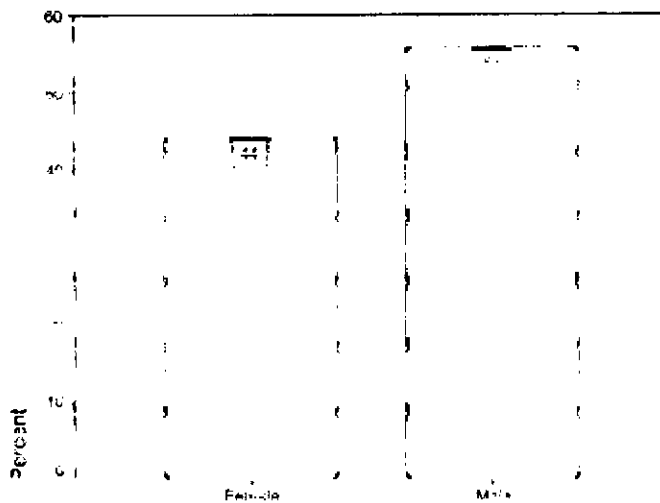


Distribution of Respondents by Age

2.3.2 Gender

From Bar Graph 2 below, we note that Majority (56%) of the Respondents were male while 44% of the respondents were female. The research had no restrictions on the ratio of male to female; therefore concrete conclusions based on the research can still be derived from both parties.

Bar Graph 2: Respondent Distribution by Gender

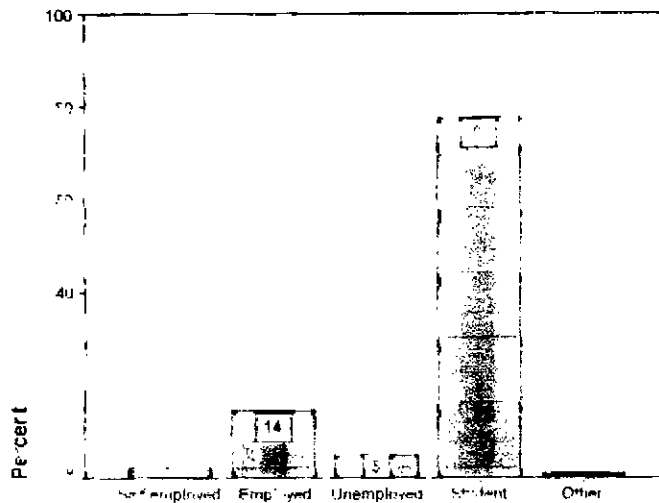


Distribution of Respondents by Gender

2.3.3 Occupation

From Bar Graph 3 below, we note that majority (79%) of the respondents were students. From this trend, in comparison to Bar Graph 1 above where the majority of the respondents were aged between 20-24 years, it's no doubt that the results of this research will be highly influenced by 'the children in a family' rather than the parents (who in this case I presume are those within the older age brackets). So to balance this trend, keeping in mind the nature of this project (to expose real life situations of families through documentaries), the researcher had to carry out in-depth interviews targeting parents only, because they are the sole decision makers in a family.

Bar Graph 3: Respondent Distribution by Occupation

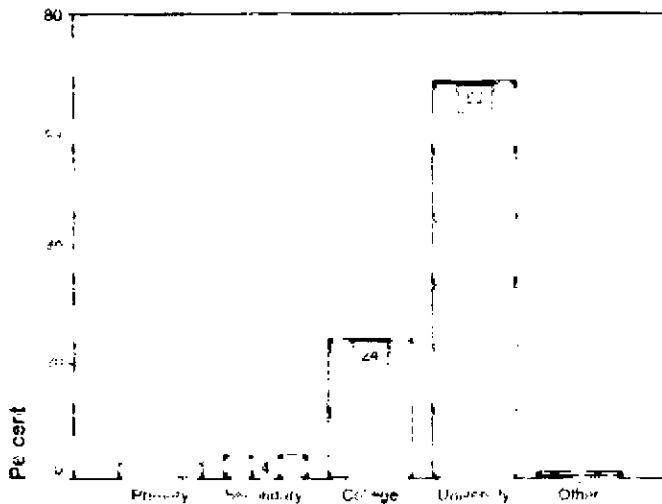


Distribution of Respondents by Occupation

2.3.4 Level of Education

From Bar Graph 4 below, majority (68%) of the respondents are at the university level of education, followed by 24% at college level and 4% at secondary level. The minority are those at or below primary level. This trend (majority being at the university level) can be attributed to the fact that majority of the respondents were university students residing in the targeted domicile, therefore the research is highly influenced by such. I also find it as an advantage for the research because these are learned people with diverse knowledge therefore I trust that their responses are of dignified value.

Bar Graph 4: Respondent Distribution by Level of Education



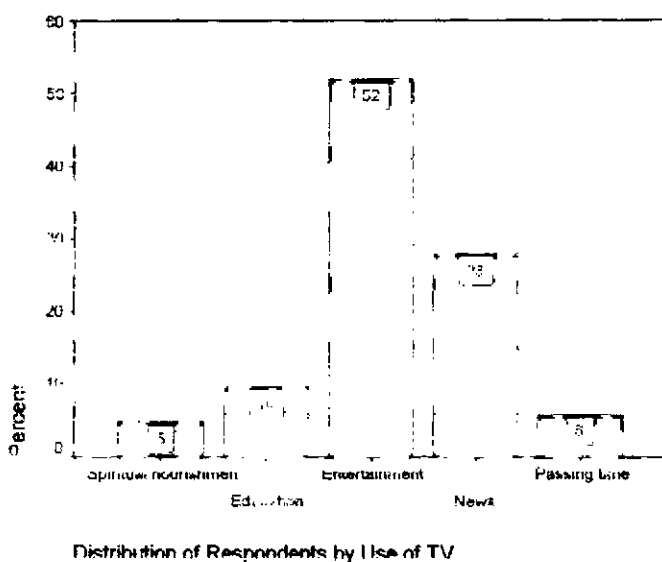
Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

2.3.5 TV Use

Bar Graph 5 below illustrates majority of the respondents (52%) mostly use TV for entertainment, followed by 28% who use it for news, 10% for education, 6% for passing time, while the minority 5% mostly use TV for Spiritual nourishment. From this we can deduce that most of the time family members enjoy watching TV mainly for entertainment. It is therefore very crucial that the proposed documentaries be as entertaining as possible in order to attract the audience as well as make them loyal to the program. It is for this reason that, as mentioned earlier, the researcher intends to make these documentaries look like a drama serial such that they will have a series of episodes which are left unresolved at the end to make the audience look forward to the next episode. The documentary will also be narrated, not by a professional voice-over expert but by a member of the family in the series to make it even more believable and interesting to the viewers. Otherwise from the in-depth interviews, majority of the respondents said that these documentaries can be entertaining for other families to watch

because they'll be depicting real life experiences and as such everyone will be entertained to watch them as they identify with some of the issues being presented.²⁹

Bar Graph 5: Respondent Distribution by TV Use



2.3.6 Respondent's Cooperation to be featured in the TV Documentary

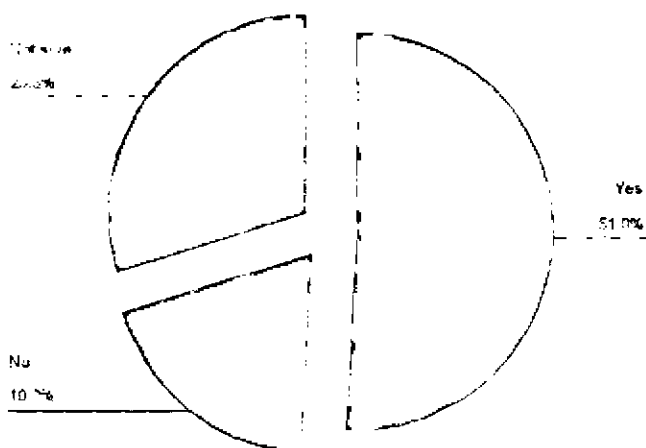
In Pie Chart 1 below, majority (51%) of the respondents said they would be willing to be featured in such a documentary. Generally they explained that they wouldn't mind to be featured in such a documentary because it would be for the good of the society, and some said they would like the fame that comes along with it.³⁰ 29.8% of the respondents said they were not sure while the minority (19.2%) said they wouldn't be willing to be featured in such a documentary. This they explained is because they wouldn't want their family matters to be exposed to the public. In the in-depth interviews, one parent confessed that they have serious communication problems in their family so he couldn't imagine the kind of embarrassment that would befall them if some of these issues are

²⁹ Refer Appendix B 7.1 for In-depth Interviews Field Notes

³⁰ Refer Appendix A 6.2 for selected responses to Question 7 of the Questionnaire.

exposed to the public. He went on to suggest that maybe these documentaries should be acted by local talents other than having real families exposed.

Pie Chart 1: Respondent Distribution by their Cooperation to be featured in the TV Documentary

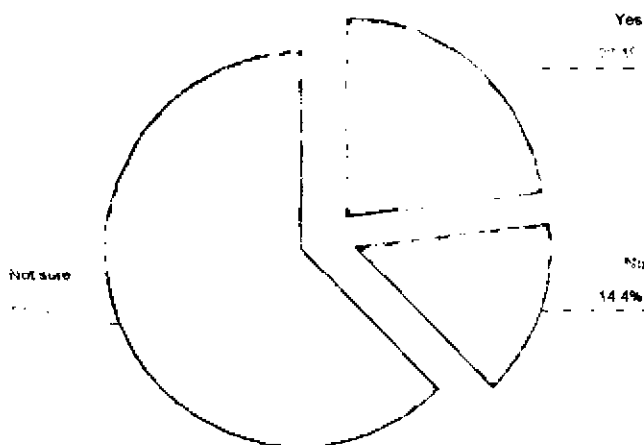


2.3.7 Distribution of Respondents by their Family's Cooperation to be featured in the Documentary

Majority (62.5%) of the respondents said they were not sure if their family members would be willing to be featured in such a documentary, followed by 23.1% who said their family members would be willing to be featured in such a documentary while the minority (14.4%) said their family members would not be willing to be featured in such a documentary. This information is presented in Pie Chart 2 below. Majority of the respondents went on to explain that they were not sure if their family members would be willing to be featured in such a documentary mainly because they did not want to speak for them. In the in-depth interviews, majority of the parents also explained that it was really up to the whole family to have a common consensus on this, otherwise it wouldn't

work out if some family members were not for the idea. From the manner in which majority of these parents responded when I asked if they think the other family members would also accept to be featured in such a documentary, i.e. they said, "I'm not sure . . . maybe you ask them!" From this I gathered that these families already portrayed poor communication in the house because if a family is cultured in good family communication they would respond by saying that they will need to discuss the matter as a family before they can give their response.

Pie Chart 2: Respondent Distribution by their Family's Cooperation to be featured in the TV Documentary

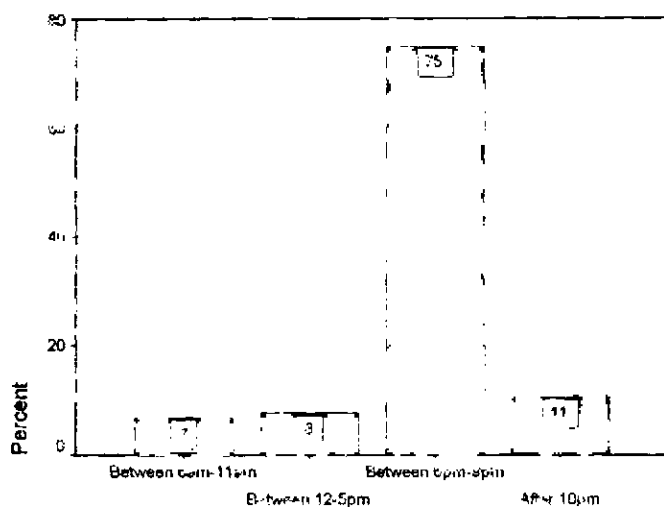


2.3.8 Weekdays Time for the Documentaries

From Bar Graph 6 below, majority (75%) of the respondents preferred having the documentaries aired between 6-9pm on weekdays. From the previous Long Essay research, majority of the respondents said they were be able to watch TV together as a family mostly during supper time which falls between this time, when they are free from

work and school. This therefore means that the target audience will be better reached if the documentaries are aired between 6-9pm on weekdays.

Bar Graph 6: Respondent Distribution by their Preference on Weekdays Time for the Documentaries

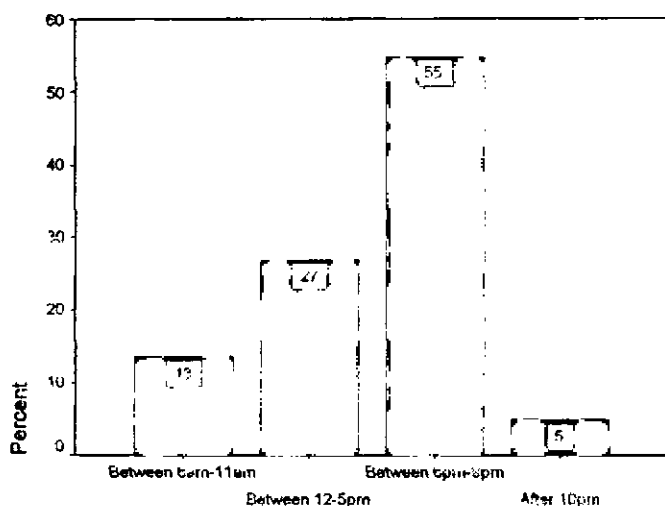


Distribution of Respondents by Weekdays Time for the Documentari

2.3.9 Weekends Time for the Documentaries

From Bar Graph 7 below, majority (55%) of the respondents preferred having the documentaries aired between 6-9pm on weekends, followed by 27% who preferred having them aired between 12-5pm. From this we deduce that majority of the respondents still preferred having the documentaries aired between 6-9pm even on weekends because this is the time when majority of the family members take supper together as they watch TV. Those who preferred them aired between 12-5pm probably had the same reasons that majority of the family members would be free to watch TV together during these hours over weekends.

Bar Graph 7: Respondent Distribution by Preference for Weekends Time for the Documentaries



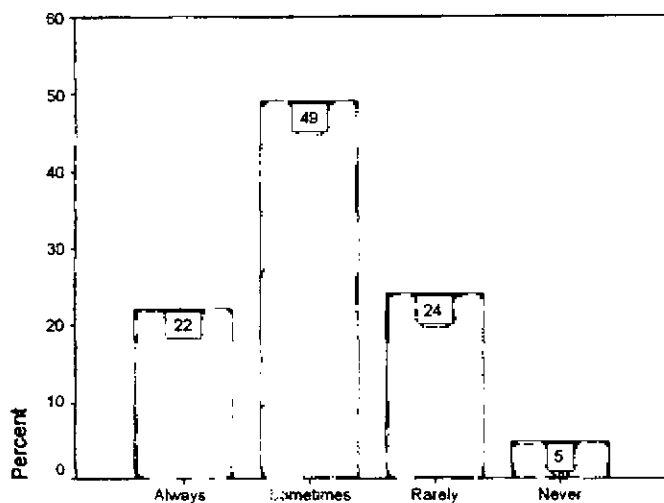
Distribution of Respondents by Weekends Time for the Documentari

2.3.10 How Often the Family Watches TV Together

Majority (49%) of the respondents stated that their families watch TV together “Sometimes”, followed by 24% who said they “Rarely” watch TV together, 22% “Always” watch TV together, while the minority (5%) stated they “Never” watch TV together as a family. This information is presented in Bar Graph 8 below. If I were to merge “Always” and “Sometimes” as those who are able to watch TV together as a family, and “Rarely” and “Never” as those who are not able to watch TV together as a family, the majority (71%) of the respondents therefore are those who are able to watch TV together as a family. This finding is good for the research because it means that the documentaries will be effective in reaching the target audience who are meant to watch them together as a family for a better impact. It also means that the family can then discuss together whatever they watch hence bringing the effect of TV stimulating interpersonal communication rather than substituting for it. Otherwise, to encourage those who don’t

watch TV together as a family, the documentaries will have an opening catchphrase that motivates viewers to watch as a family other than as individuals, for better impact.

Bar Graph 8: Respondent Distribution by How Often the Family watches TV Together



Distribution of Respondents by How Often the Family Watches TV T

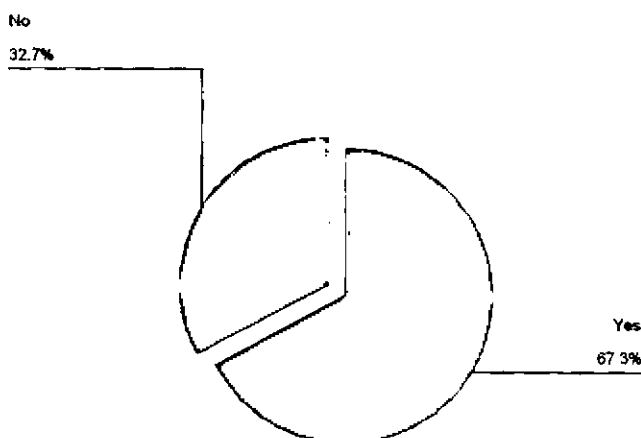
2.3.11 Possibility to Watch these Documentaries with their Families

Majority (67.3%) of the respondents said that it is possible for them to watch these documentaries with their families while the rest (32.7%) said that it is not possible for them to watch these documentaries with their family members. This information is presented in Pie Chart 3 below. Majority of the respondents explained that it is possible for them to watch these documentaries with their family members because the documentaries will be focusing on family life therefore it will be educative to watch and share together what other families go through. Some also explained that for them to be able to watch together as a family, these documentaries would have to be aired during supper time i.e. between 6-9pm. Otherwise the minority who said it is not possible to

watch these documentaries together as a family explained that it is mainly because not everyone in the family is available to watch at the same time because of work or school. Some said they cannot watch TV together as a family because they are of different ages while others explained that their different preferences will not allow others to watch the same program together.³¹

From all these, I gathered that the most important factor to be considered if I want people to watch these documentaries together as a family is the timing of the program. As the respondents insisted, the best time to air these documentaries would be immediately after the 7 o'clock news. It will also be important to convince different media stations to give these documentaries the peak time because it will be an opportunity for them to win a large audience by showing that they care for the viewers' family well being, which is also an advantage for the sake of winning advertisers.

Pie Chart 3: Respondent Distribution by their Possibility to Watch these Documentaries with their Families

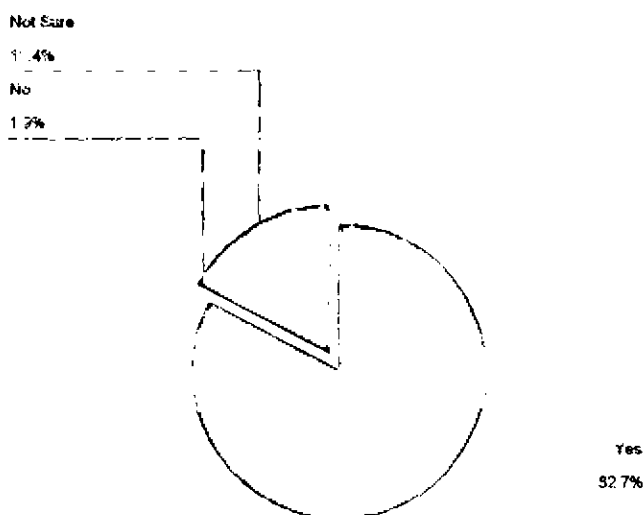


³¹ Refer Appendix A 6.3 for selected responses to question 12 of the questionnaire.

2.3.12 whether TV can be Effective in Promoting Family Communication

From Pie Chart 4 below, majority (82.7%) of the respondents said “Yes” TV can be effective in promoting family communication, 15.4% said they were not sure while the minority (1.9%) said “No”. From this it is evident that majority of the respondents agree that the TV can be used positively to promote good interpersonal communication between family members. This therefore means that them being members of their own families, they would appreciate seeing a program on TV that cares for the well being of their families. In this case the documentaries will create awareness about the consequences of TV consumption on family communication, hence people can learn from other families’ real life experiences. Because this is a social problem that is hardly ever in the minds of people, creating awareness about it can make people have something to think about; as the media is not here to tell us what to think, rather what to think about.

Pie Chart 4: Respondent Distribution on their Opinion on whether TV can be Effective in Promoting Family Communication



2.4 Mass Communication Theories

This section will deal with media theories set by different scholars and media researchers that attempt to explain some scientific trends emerging from this research. The two main theories that will be discussed are: Socialization Theory and Uses and Gratifications Theory.

2.4.1 Socialization Theory

Socialization is a process whereby one not only learns but internalizes the values, beliefs and norms of a given culture and in so doing help to develop a sense of self.³² Taking an approach similar to cultivation theory, various socialization theories stress how prolonged exposure to media comes to teach us about the world and our role in it.³³

As Berger A. states, before the development of media, individuals' socialization was more or less tied to the family and most importantly the parents.³⁴ This simply means that in the past, the family used to be the primary agent of socialization. Today however, this is no longer the case. Media has instead taken over this role.

From the Long Essay research, the researcher found out that the TV is considered the cheapest means of entertainment for families and this is why most family members resort to watching a chain of TV programs during their free time. It was also evident that majority of the respondents enjoyed watching comedies and drama, and these in our Kenyan stations, are usually TV family portrayals mainly of the western culture. Even if the program is a local one, for example, the most favourite at the time to the respondents was 'Mother-in-Law' of Citizen TV, the content still has some western culture influence.

³² D. CROTEAU & W. HOLMES, *Media Society: Industries, Images and Audiences*, 14.

³³ R. HARRIS, *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*, 30.

³⁴ A. BERGER, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theories*, 70.

Researchers have looked for evidence that television's images of marriage and family life influence the conceptions that children and adults hold about family. For example, Bandura's Social Learning Theory argues for imitative behaviour and learning from TV of behaviours seen as rewarding and realistic. It uses both imitation and identification to explain how people learn through observation of others in their environment. It is from this view that I was concerned that our Kenyan families are being socialized to behave in ways contrary to our African culture. In the in-depth interviews of the long essay, I observed how families that owned TV's behaved so differently from families that did not own TV's. For example, as TV family portrayals show children who disobey their parents and get away with it, so are today's children, because they bond more with TV characters other than their own family members hence they learn a lot from them as they are socialized into this TV culture.

TV is the window through which children learn about the world of adults, which is no longer kept secret to them.³⁵ Majority of TV programs unfortunately do not focus on programs that promote ideal family values except in rare talk shows and religious programs which unfortunately are not as popular amongst the respondents. The family's well being is thus at stake because both parents and children are highly influenced by what they watch on TV, and if the TV does not promote good values, (it being the main socialization instrument in this modern society), the family is at jeopardy.

2.4.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory

Chaim Eyal, points out that uses and gratifications theory can be said to stem from the work of Raymond Bauer in the 1960's.³⁶ Bauer suggested that, contrary to the prevailing conceptualization, media audiences are active, purposive, and goal directed in

³⁵ R. HARRIS. *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*. 30.
³⁶ J. BERGER, *Essentials of Mass Communication Theory*, 99.

their media-seeking and media-use behaviour. He offered the idea that people turn to, and use the mass media and media content to certify certain needs and desires. Further more, Bauer suggested that people are selective and relate to their media consumption as an exchange, which they enter with certain expectations, anticipating fulfilling those expectations. Audiences exercise initiative, free will, and independence. This theory therefore proposes that the audience members are individuals with personal and unique needs.

People generally watch TV programs to look for role models or personalities whom they admire or can relate to at a personal level, and to satisfy curiosities on various relevant topics concerning the world around us. From this research, majority of the respondents said that they enjoyed watching TV mainly for entertainment. As mentioned earlier, viewers are individuals with personal and unique needs. What is entertaining for one may not be necessarily entertaining for another. It is no wonder majority of the parents interviewed pointed out that the major conflict caused by TV consumption in their homes is the choice of programmes to watch. Viewers are selective — when, that is, there are significant choices open to them. This is why the constant arguments over which channel to watch never cease! Everyone is in dire need to fulfil their gratifications.

Family members can watch television to be together, or to get away from each other; as a basis for talk or to avoid interaction; as a source of conflict, or an escape from it.³⁷ This statement by James Lull therefore means that the TV can not be blamed entirely for the social problems in our society. It can also be used positively to promote good values in our society. For example, having found out that TV consumption destroys family communication, I thought of using documentaries to expose real life family situations for

³⁷ ! LULL. "The Social Uses of Television." *Human Communication Research* 6: 197-209.

other families to learn from. Apart from the viewers being entertained as they identify with some of the issues presented, they also get to learn a lot from them. In the end they will feel gratified seeing some of their concerns being addressed.

From these theories therefore, it is evident that the TV greatly influences the well being of a family. It being a common means of entertainment in most urban households, family members use it to satisfy their various needs as discussed above. Because much of their time is spent watching TV as opposed to bonding with family members during their free time, the TV is thus their main socialization agent that shapes their general attitudes and behaviour. This project is thus extremely important because it aims at using this same medium that has become a favourite past time for many, to create awareness about its consequences on interpersonal communication between family members. It will be an eye opener for parents to be aware of these facts so that they can set a good foundation for their families from the word 'go', hence promoting a healthy society to live in.

3. CHAPTER III

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is the final stage of the participatory process that involved considerable study, learning from past experiences and discussion with the respondents, who in this case are the prospective beneficiaries. The project plan will be laid down with all the necessary details needed to justify its credibility. Realistic goals will be set and the resources needed determined.

3.2 Background of the Project

From the previous Long Essay research, it was evident that the TV is a 'thief of family time'. It substitutes interpersonal communication rather than stimulating it between family members. Being a Social Communicator, I believe I have a role to play in making a positive contribution to the society. This is why I saw the need to come up with a communication strategy that will help get to the bottom of this social problem.

Because majority of the respondents admitted to using the TV a lot, primarily as their cheap mode of entertainment, I intend to use this same medium to create awareness to people, before it is too late. The type of program I will use is TV documentaries because they are factual, and factual programmes are usually seen as the more 'serious' aspect of television.

"All factual forms stand in some sort of relation to the reality that is their subject matter and bear some sort of responsibility towards it."³⁸

³⁸ P. HOLLAND, *the Television Handbook*, 143.

3.3 Defined Goal of the Project

To boost interpersonal communication between family members

3.4 Objectives of the Project

The objectives for carrying out this project are:

- To create awareness about the consequences of TV consumption on interpersonal communication between family members.
- To educate on the importance of good interpersonal communication between family members.
- To enlighten the public on the fact that the TV can be used positively to enhance good family communication.

3.5 Target Audience

The target audience are family members, both male and female, aged above 10 years old. The beneficiaries of the project however will be all the family members in a family setting, irrespective of their ages.

3.6 Content of the Communication Strategy to be Used

The main issues to be covered in the documentaries are generally the typical lifestyle of different families as affected by TV use in their homes. As the respondents discussed the conflicts they go through in their families because of TV consumption, these documentaries will highlight such issues with a view of educating other families on how to go about such situations in their own families. The existence of such a program on its own is an effort to bring into consciousness what has been sub-conscious in the minds of

many. The name of the documentary programme is “Our Family”. Both English and Kiswahili languages will be used, together with sub-titles to compliment either of them.

The documentaries will be in form of drama serials such that each episode will be left unresolved at the end so that viewers can look forward to the next episode. There will be the use of incidental music to enhance the atmosphere, sound effects, captivating shots and camera angles and an intriguing narration done not by a professional voice-over expert, but by a member of the family, to make the program as authentic and entertaining as possible. Further more, the narrator will narrate in such a way that the most dramatic and engaging parts of the story will be well presented.

To prolong the life span of this project, constant research will be done in search of families that are willing to be featured in these documentaries in future series’.

3.7 Project Location and Time Schedule of Activities

The research was done in Langata Constituency; therefore the documentaries will also be shot within the same location so as to achieve accurate results as per the findings. An episode in each documentary will last 25 minutes. The contents of each episode will be a collection of edited material from one week’s activities of a particular family. Therefore each family will have a chance to be on air four times, in four episodes, after a month of intense shooting. At least six different families will be needed to enable the documentaries run for a minimum of six months on air. This means that a total of 24 episodes are needed for the first series before evaluation of the outcome is done to produce the next series. The documentaries will be aired once in a week after the 7pm news on a weekday, and a repeat of the same on a weekend at the same time. A summary of this information is listed in the table below.

Summary of the Project's Time Schedule of Activities:

Location	Length of Programme on air per Series	Total No. of Families per Series	Total No. of Episodes per Series	Duration of One Episode	Length of Shooting per Family	No. of Episodes per Family
Langata Constituency	At least 6 Months	6	24	25 min.	1 month	4

3.8 Resources

The project will require human resources, financial resources and infrastructure. The human resources will include camera operators (who will be working in shifts between 5 am to at least midnight everyday), two editors, a director, boom mic operators, a researcher and a driver. Some of the most essential equipment needed include: at least three professional Camcorders, Two Boom Microphones, A Computer with Final Cut or Avid Liquid editing software.

I made enquiries to find out how much it would cost if I were to hire equipment only, and I found out it would be way too expensive because I would be required to pay an extra licence fee from the Ministry of Information and Communication, and I would also have to cater for transport costs; therefore I resorted to finding a different alternative. I approached the Department of Film Services which is under the Ministry of Information

and Communication for the charges to hire equipment and a production crew for the full length documentaries. The results were satisfactory. Below is a summary of the project budget:

a) **Equipment + Professional Crews** = KSH. 15,000 per day.

Total per Month = KSH. 420,000

b) **Editing per Episode** = KSH. 10,000.

Total per Month = KSH. 40,000

Σ = KSH. 460,000

c) **Petty Cash** = KSH. 5,000 per month.

Total Costs per Month = KSH. 465,000

Total Costs per Series = KSH. 2,790,000

Potential Sources of Income

I wish to raise funds from different sources. First and foremost, from my own savings through the part-time piano classes I offer to young children in Mombasa. From this I can raise up to KSH.28, 000 a month which totals up to KSH. 168, 000 in six months to cater for the first series. I also sought donations from my parents who offered to sponsor the project with KSH.150, 000 and my elder sister offered to loan me 1000 Euros. Therefore so far I am guaranteed of being able to raise up to KSH.418, 000 for the project.

The remaining KSH.2,372,000 I intend to raise by seeking financial support from existing non-profit organizations and other potential donors who can sponsor the project.

Below is a list of the potential donors and sponsors:

- Kenya Commercial Bank
- U.S. Agency for International Development
- British Department for International Development
- UNICEF
- Hewlett Foundation
- Procter and Gamble
- The Ford Foundation
- The Kenya Human Rights Commission
- The Global Fund

Evaluation and Follow-up

There will be constant evaluation of the project through feedback from the target audience. The documentary programme will allow viewers to e-mail or SMS their views or questions about each episode. This will enable the production crew work on what needs to be rectified, in order to ensure that the objectives of the project are effectively met. There will also be scientific research and follow-up carried out three months after the completion of the first series, so as to gauge whether the project is really being fruitful in its goal to boost family communication. The results will then be used to determine which angle the next series will take. Apart from this, more research will be done to get more families that would be willing to be featured in the next series of the documentaries.

Justification of the Project

This communication strategy was proposed with a view to solve the social problem discovered in the Long Essay research, which is TV consumption destroying family

communication. The researcher gathered that the TV takes up most of the time when family members could instead be bonding together through interaction with one another

“In the evenings, the living room became the TV room . . . it was ‘what’s on tonight?’ and everything started to give way to TV. It used to annoy me, you couldn’t talk to people!”³⁹ There was a particular respondent who retorted, “People sit in front of the TV like zombies and say ‘goodnight’ after finishing and that’s that!” This trend is a threat to the society as a whole because as the old adage goes, ‘charity begins at home’; for people to be able to appreciate and care for others, it has to start from their own families. Children especially learn by emulating what they have been taught in their family. Therefore, how one is brought up in a family greatly determines their future relationship with the society at large.

The communication behaviours learned within a family will influence greatly a person’s future relationships, particularly his or her family and friendship relationships.⁴⁰

However, working within one’s home to have TV viewing enhance rather than detract from family life is a major challenge for families.⁴¹ It is for this reason that this project intends to use the same medium that is so popular amongst family members to educate them through other families’ real life experiences on how to go about strengthening their family bonds through interpersonal communication with one another.

This communication strategy is further justified by the socialization theory discussed which states that prolonged exposure to media is highly influential because people learn and internalize the values, beliefs and norms presented and tend to live by them. “The media are continually offering pictures of life and models of behaviour in advance of actual experience.”

³⁹ B. MULAN, *Consuming Television*, 73

⁴⁰ K. GAVLIN, *Family Communication Cohesion and Change*, 100.

⁴¹ R. HARRIS, *A Cognitive Psychology of Mass Communication*, 325.

In this case, emphasizing on a programme that promotes good values means emphasizing on good values for viewers to model. Therefore as they continue to watch these documentaries, they continue to improve their family's well being by learning and internalizing the values presented.

From the needs assessment done through questionnaires and in-depth interviews, this project is warranted to be effective because it was participatory in nature, the respondents gave their views on the kind of programme they would want and the timing of the programme, evidence that nothing was imposed as to make the project fail for not reaching its target audience.

Conclusion

From the project plan presented, it is clear that the communication strategy proposed can be effective in reaching its main goal, that of boosting interpersonal communication between family members. This will be a unique type of programme, probably the first of a kind in our Kenyan stations because most of the reality-based TV family portrayals are usually of the western culture. Therefore this one that is strictly Kenyan will give a whole new effect in our home screens— an advantage to attract the largest number of viewers.

The only challenge I foresee is in raising the funds needed for its implementation, i.e. the project is largely dependent on sponsors and donors for it to see the light of day. Otherwise, if the worst comes to the worst, I could still sell the idea to well established organizations who can take up the matter; therefore I'll still have made my positive contribution to the well-being of our society. Otherwise another alternative strategy I could use that can be both informative and entertaining is composing a song that

highlights all these issues and working together with some of the popular local musicians so that the music video can be effective in delivering the message intended.

4. GENERAL CONCLUSION

“TV can be used positively to enhance interpersonal communication between family members” --- was the general idea behind this project. Much was said about how TV consumption is ripping away family cohesion, therefore a remedy was called for to solve this social problem. Because the research revealed that much of the time that family members spend when they are free is in front of the TV, the same medium was recommended as the best to educate this target audience on the importance of good family communication.

Both quantitative and qualitative research showed that the TV documentaries can be effective in promoting good family communication. Majority of the respondents said that this is so because documentaries are usually seen as the more ‘serious’ aspect of TV, therefore viewers will take what is presented as realistic thus they can identify with the issues being presented in a bid to improve the situation in their own families. The respondents also said that contrary to the notion that ‘documentaries are not as popular’, these ones can be entertaining because of the uniqueness of the content they’ll hold.

In general, if the project becomes a success:

- Families will be aware of the consequences of TV consumption on family communication.
- They will be educated on the importance of good interpersonal communication between family members.
- They will be enlightened on how to use TV positively to enhance good family communication

Above all, Interpersonal communication between them will therefore be boosted, and as such, the main goal and objectives of this project will be met.

“Having essential communication is essential to having a happy family and thus a strong, happy society to live in.”

Recommendations

From the discussions in this research paper, it is evident that in as much as the media ought to regulate on the kind of content they air on TV because it is the main agent of socialization in today's modern society; on matters concerning the family's well being, it is really up to parents to set the ground from the word 'go' if they are to bring up a happy family, thus a strong, happy society to live in. The American Academy of Paediatrics has been active in addressing concerns related to children's media usage and has issued recommendations⁴² which could be very helpful as a starting point for most parents. These include:

- i. Limit children's total media time (with entertainment media) to no more than 1 to 2 hours of quality programming per day
- ii. Remove television sets from children's bedrooms (create an “electronic media-free” environment in children's rooms).
- iii. Discourage television viewing for children younger than 2 years and encourage more interactive activities that promote proper brain development such as talking, playing, singing, and reading together.
- iv. Monitor the shows children and adolescents are viewing. Most programs should be informational, educational and non-violent.

⁴² D.C. DIEHL, PhD Assistant Professor, Program planning and Evaluation.

- v. View television programs with children and discuss the content. Use controversial programming as a stepping-off point to initiate discussions about family values, violence, sex and sexuality and drugs.
- vi. Encourage alternative entertainment for children, including reading, athletics, hobbies, and creative play.

The above recommendations will be integrated in the communication strategy to boost interpersonal communication between family members

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6. APPENDIX A

6.1 Questionnaire

Tangaza College

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

Dear Respondent,

I am a student in the above mentioned college pursuing a B.A. degree in Social Communication. I am carrying out a research (for academic purposes only) on how the TV can be used to promote good family communication in our families. Please fill in this questionnaire with utmost sincerity, there are no right or wrong answers.

N.B:

- DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THE PAPER.
- BE SURE TO TICK THE BOX PLACED BEFORE THE ANSWER OF YOUR CHOICE.
- FILL IN THE GAPS, OR, EXPLAIN BRIEFLY, AS INSTRUCTED.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

1) How old are you?

15-19years 20-24years 25-29years above 29years

2) Which gender are you?

Female Male

3) Where do you live?.....

4) Are you ... (Tick where appropriate)

Self employed Employed Unemployed Student Other.....

5) Level of Education

Primary Secondary College University Other.....

6) I mostly use TV for (tick only ONE of your favourite)

Spiritual nourishment Education Entertainment News Passing time

7) If you and your family were to be featured in a TV documentary that exposes the reality about your family life as affected by TV consumption, would you be willing to cooperate?

Yes No Not sure

Why?.....

.....

.....

8) Would your other family members be willing to be featured in such a documentary?

Yes No Not sure

Explain.....

.....

.....

9) What would you suggest as the best time for these documentaries to be aired on Weekdays?

Between 6am-11am Between 12-5pm Between 6pm-9pm After 10pm

10) What would you suggest as the best time for these documentaries to be aired on Weekends?

Between 6am-11am Between 12-5pm Between 6pm-9pm After 10pm

11) How often does your whole family watch TV together?

Always Sometimes Rarely Never

12) Is it possible for you to watch these documentaries together with your family members?

Yes No

Why?.....

.....

.....

13) Do you think TV documentaries can be effective in promoting good family communication in families?

Yes No Not sure

6.2 Selected Responses to Question 7 of the Questionnaire

Questionnaire no.1

“I would be willing to be featured in the TV documentary because it would be an occasion or a chance to share the reality depicted with the rest of society.”

Questionnaire no.6

“Like other people who appear on TV, I’ll also be happy to see myself and my family featured on TV.”

Questionnaire no.8

“It will help reshape some values lost as a result of TV consumption in the family.”

Questionnaire no.13

“This documentary may be used for educating others with the same reality hence assist in improving.”

Questionnaire no.37

“It will teach the other citizens on how to manage their families well.”

Questionnaire no.65

“As a kid I have always wanted to be featured in a media product.”

6.3 Selected Responses to Question 12 of the Questionnaire

Questionnaire no.1

“It is possible for me to watch these documentaries together with my family members because it enhances cohesion and integrity of family.”

Questionnaire no.2

“We appreciate watching programs that add value.”

Questionnaire no.17

“Just to have fun together and comment on the documentary”

Questionnaire no.45

“It is not possible to watch these documentaries together as a family because we are of different ages.”

Questionnaire no.58

“It is not possible because not everyone is always at home because of work and school.”

Questionnaire no.95

“It is possible if such a documentary features immediately after dinner.”

7. APPENDIX B

7.1 Field Notes (In-depth Interviews)

Date: 19th-21st Feb. 2010

Place: Langata

Target Group: Parents living with their family

Questions asked:

- a) Would you accept for your family to be featured in a TV documentary that exposes your family life and how it is affected by TV consumption?
- b) Would the other family members be willing to be featured in the documentary?
- c) Do you think the way you live can help educate other family members?
- d) Apart from educating, do you think such documentaries can as well be entertaining for other families to watch?
- e) What do you think will be brought out as a major conflict in your family caused by TV consumption?

The following were their responses:

1. Mrs. Catherine Njiru

Laughing, she says. . . “Yes I would like to be featured in the documentary but I’m not ready now; maybe in future” She goes on to explain that the other family members wouldn’t have a problem with it either. These include her unborn baby whom she is expecting, her six year old son, her husband and the house girl. She says that her six year old son puts all his concentration on TV cartoons when he is idle and this brings disagreements when anyone tries to distract him from that. “He doesn’t think of anything else except the cartoons.” She feels that the TV affects her son’s studies but when she tries to restrict him, he thinks “mum is denying him”.

Answering the third question Mrs. Njiru explains that indeed the documentaries can educate other families by the way they live, and if living a good life, other families will want to emulate that. She also adds that these documentaries can also be entertaining because they are based on real life experiences so other families will identify with some of the issues portrayed. She says the major conflict in her family caused by TV consumption is when she tries to restrict her son on the content he watches or the timing of the program he wants to watch. “My son thinks mum is mean. . .” She whispers, but her son wouldn’t hear this anyway because his full attention is on a TV cartoon at the time.

2. Mr. Godwill Kidenda

He says he would wish for his family to be featured in the documentary but the other members’ cooperation would depend mainly on what is going to be aired about them. He has two sons, 12 and 11 year olds. He says that the documentaries can be educative as well as entertaining because families can learn from other people’s family life. He adds that restriction usually brings conflict but parents have to know how to go about it. The major conflict that can be brought out in his family is the fact that his sons argue over whether to watch movies or football. Things heat up even more when he insists that by 9pm they should be going to bed. Mr. Kidenda concludes by confessing that the conflicts in his family can be a big embarrassment to them if they are exposed to the public, so he suggests that maybe the documentaries should be done in form of a drama by local talents other than a real life family situation.

3. Mrs. Ann Macharia

She has no problem with her family being featured in the documentary, depending on how far it will go. Stating firmly, she says she would prefer an interview because a reality show can be very tricky to handle. She speaks the same on behalf of the other family members. She adds that the documentaries however can be educative to some extent. For example, she explains that they don’t have a TV in the living room so that they can socialize better with visitors and this she feels can be a good idea for other families to emulate. She also thinks that documentaries are more

informative than entertaining so they can be able to relay the seriousness of the matter more effectively. TV consumption in their family is controlled because as she puts it, they don't watch TV 24/7. However the major conflict that might be brought out in their family is in the selection of programmes especially when there is football and movies at the same time on different channels.

4. Mr. Boniface Muitu

He agrees that his family can be featured in the documentary and states that once he accepts, the whole family will also agree with him. "I think my family, whatever I do, we shall be one thing."

He has two children, a five year old girl and a three and a half year old boy. He is watching football and says his wife and children also enjoy watching football, in fact has made them Arsenal fans like him. He thinks the documentary can be very educative because it will set an example to other families. He added that his family does not face any major conflicts caused by TV consumption. (From my own observation, I gathered this man dictates what the whole family should watch, or rather, he seems to be the one who makes the final decisions in that family. This I also observed when his wife — a house wife, requested me to wait until her husband is back from work to interview him instead.)

5. Miss Marylyn Wambui

She is a single mother of a four year old daughter who is in pre-unit. She lives with her sister and a house help. She says she has no problem if her small family is to be featured in the documentary so long as it is something positive. She adds that her sister would be excited to be on TV because she is studying Mass Communication to be a TV anchor so this would be her first step towards publicity. Though they rarely watch documentaries in the house, she states that documentaries are usually educative and can be entertaining too. When asked which major conflict might be brought out in her family due to TV consumption, she laughs, then goes on to explain that addiction to certain programs is their major problem. Apart from that, they have conflict with her sister every time because she doesn't seem to care about the content she watches before her

four year old inquisitive daughter. They have two TV's in the house but she admits it still doesn't solve the problem.