

**AN ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES AND
ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' UNREST MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOL IN MERU COUNTY OF KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on assessment of the schools disciplinary practices and its influence on students' unrest management in public secondary school in Meru county of Kenya. In Meru County, the rate of students' unrest is about 30 % while the national average is about 10% of all cases reported in year 2017. This rate is way above the national average. The objectives of the study were; To determine method of selecting student councils, and its influence of student

unrests in public schools in Meru county of Kenya, to establish whether students councils are trained, and its influence on students unrest management in public secondary schools in Meru county of Kenya, to establish whether schools have defined disciplinary procedure, and its influence on schools unrest in Meru county of Kenya and to investigate whether schools have suggestion boxes, and its influence on student unrest in schools in Meru Kenya. The study used mixed method of research. The conclusion of the study was schools student councils are constituted in all schools. Most student councils met regularly and parents were consulted on matters affecting students, on membership of the council the findings indicated that the principal and the staff members guided students on appointing the council / selecting them. Also the student councils handled a lot of responsibilities in punishing student's resulting in conflicts and students unrest.

Key terms. Disciplinary practices, Influence, Student council, Student unrest.

1.1 Background of the study

This study focused on school management practices whose integration and adaptation to school structure, student selection process, evaluation systems, control and reward system that must fit with the school system. The study, therefore, addressed school management practices influence on students' unrest. Researchers in Kenya have dealt with indiscipline and strikes, which were prevalent in 1990s basing their studies on motivational theories influencing behavior. Yet, policies implemented have not succeeded in eliminating students' unrests in public secondary schools in Kenya. Previous studies done on students unrest management been periodic, and require significant effort to update them. The researcher has updated them in this study, and used three theories namely; administrative theory of management, sociological theory of conflicts and social disorganization to show influence of school disciplinary management practices on student unrests management and then suggested solutions to the problem of endemic students' unrest in public secondary schools in Meru County of Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Student unrest is a global problem affecting countries in Europe, America, Canada, and Asian countries. Its intensity varies from country to country, region-to-region, but still remains a concern to all stakeholders and Kenya is not an exception. Secondary schools students discipline is at crossroads in Kenya with increased rate of students' unrest, bringing to question the effectiveness of schools management practices, and its influence on students 'unrest in Kenyan secondary schools. Students' unrest has resulted in loss of life, disruption of learning, and destruction of property. Reasons advanced for the students' unrest include examination fever, drug abuse, poor parental guidance and peer pressure (Republic of Kenya, 2001). The exact reasons for the unrest have not been unveiled and this makes it difficult to eliminate them and predict when they will occur and pro-actively act on them. Studies done on student unrest have focused on the external influences of student unrest and there is scant information focusing on school management practices of communication, decision-making, curriculum supervision and disciplinary systems in the internal environment of school within Meru County. It is still not clear why students' unrests have been on increase instead of declining after implementing some policies to reduce the workload in the education system. In January to July 2017, 66 out of 192 Schools in Meru County experienced students' unrest accounting to about 30% of all Meru County Secondary Schools with Form 4 students. That level of students' unrest was higher than the national average of 8%.

This study is therefore timely and can inform policy since student unrest is a global issue as well an issue that affects Kenyan society. It was therefore, necessary to investigate the influence of school management practices and their influence on students' unrest management. If the issue of students' unrests is not resolved, the integration and adoption of management practices on school

system will lead to high rate of student unrest in Meru County of Kenya. The study focuses on internal school management practices. School management practices impact negatively or positively on the integration and adaptation of school systems leading to either high school performance or students' unrest.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1. To determine method of selecting student councils, and its influence of student unrests management in public schools in Meru county of Kenya.
2. To establish whether students councils are trained, and its influence on students unrest management in public secondary schools in Meru county of Kenya.
3. To establish whether schools have defined disciplinary procedure, and its influence in public secondary schools unrest management in Meru county of Kenya.
4. To investigate whether schools have suggestion boxes, and its influence on student unrest management in schools in Meru Kenya.

1.5 Hypothesis that guided the study

H₀: There is no significant influence between school management disciplinary practices and its influence on students' unrest management in public secondary Schools in Meru County, Kenya.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Management practices and its influence on students' unrest management

In a school, the output of the management practices are student knowledge, skills and attitudes or performance criteria or broadly, what is referred to as learning (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012). Learning also involves various dimensions of psychological and mental activities. Kundu and Tutoo (1993) as cited by Somashekar (2012), and Buchanan and Huczynski (2004), agree that "an academically effective school is distinguished by its culture; structure, practices, the climate of values and norms that channel staff and students in the direction of successful teaching and

learning and thereby overcoming student unrest”. According to Buchanan and Huczynski (2004), school management practices can be understood by analysing the values that govern the behaviour and uncovering the underlying and often-unconscious assumptions that determine how those in the school think, feel, interact and react. Conflicts in school may bring positive or negative consequences. Some conflicts lead to higher performance while others result in poor in performance. If conflicts are not resolved in good time, they may lead to student unrest. Conflicts in schools are disagreements in the context of school settings, between individual employees, groups, and students within the school setting. A research undertaken under the auspices of The Human Science Research Council of South Africa used observations, interviews of key informants, focus group interviews with educators, learners’, teachers and parents. Findings of the study on perceptions of discipline differed greatly, with both learners and the educators guilty of misconduct and teachers used punitive measures and corporal punishment to deal with students’ unrest.

In Kenya, schools have their own discipline mechanisms. However, there are some common methods of discipline that most schools use such as; rules and regulations, punishments, guidance & counselling, suspension for two weeks and expulsion for criminal cases. In addition, for effective and efficient management of discipline practices in schools, the teamwork of the following stakeholders is required, principals, teachers, parents, students and the community (Mbiti, 2003). In the Kenya Education, Master plan for Education Training, 1997-2010, it is argued, that the quality is not mere passing of examination or certification, but development of independent analytical, creative potential for the students, including critical thinking, spiritual, and values (Sessional Paper No.1, of Republic of Kenya, 2005). This report noted that secondary

education is characterized by poor performance in national examinations, shortage of textbooks, shortage of teachers, overloaded curriculum.

The researcher, therefore, attempted to establish the extent to which the above factors influence student unrest in public Secondary School in Meru County, Kenya. Every day, principals make decisions that influence the school in a big or in a small way and understanding how they arrive at their choices is important. Several factors influence decision making including, past experience, knowledge and skills learnt.

3.0 Research Design

The study used mixed method research design. According to Creswell (2003) as cited by Almalki (2016), triangulation is appropriate for mixed methodology and was efficient since both qualitative and quantitative data was collected at the same time during one phase of the research. The design was deemed suitable for this study as the researcher sought to examine the current state of school management practices influence on student unrest without adjusting any condition of the study. Here participants were given instruments concurrently and data collected qualitatively and quantitatively. The design facilitated the use of different methods of data collection (triangulation) as well as facilitating the researcher to get different but complementary data on the same topic to best understand the research problem. It also helped to make finding rich and comprehensive. Multiple data sources that included questionnaires and interview schedules were used, and combined to determine the study findings. The design also helped the researcher to bring together the different strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative methods with this of qualitative methods. This further helped the researcher understand the research problem, and relate quantitative results to qualitative findings (Creswell 2003) as cited by Almalki (2016). One way to envision the possibilities for combining qualitative

and quantitative analysis is the use of pathoris model of measurement design and analysis as shown below.

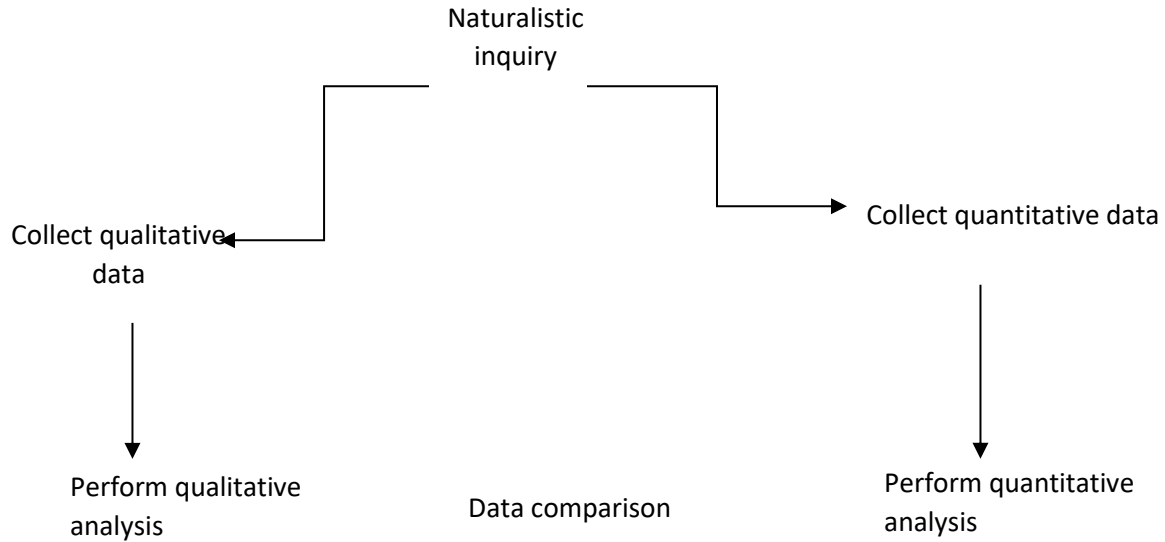


Figure 1: Concurrent Triangulation Design

Adopted from Creswell (2003)

4.0 Findings of the Study

4.1 School Characteristics and School Unrest management

To get a background about student unrests, the study inquired about whether the school had gone on strike the last four years, to the students who were the real participants in those strikes, when it occurred, and the behaviour exhibited by the students. The same information was sought from the County Education Officer.

The study findings on whether their school has ever gone on strike in the last four years between 2013 and 2016 show the following;

Table 1: Has your school ever gone on strike in the last four years?

Frequency	Percent
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Yes	187	99.5
No	1	.5
Total	188	100.0

Source: Researcher (2017)

Table 1 shows 99.5% (187) students responded that there were strikes in their schools in the last four years and about 1% responded that there was no strike in their school in the last four years. This was also supported by the information provided by the County Director of education who indicated, *“That in 2016 between January and June in Meru County, 66 secondary schools out of 192 targeted for the study went on strike”*. To establish the frequency of the incidents, the students were asked to indicate on which year the student unrest occurred. Students responded as shown in table 2.

Table 2: When did the strike occur?

	Frequency	Percent
2012	48	25.5
2013	40	21.3
2014	70	37.2
2015	30	16.0
Total	188	100.0

Source: Researcher (2017)

The findings in table 2 from student respondents indicate that 26% (48) of strikes occurred in 2012, 21% (21) occurred in 2013, 37% (70) occurred in 2014 and 16% occurred in 2015. The conclusion of the study was that student strikes occurred in almost all schools in Meru county of Kenya in the last four years.

On the kind of unacceptable behaviour did the students display during the strike the students responses are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Which unacceptable behaviour did students engaged in?

	Frequency	Percent
Refused to attend class	47	25.0
Destroy school property	48	25.5
Refused food	73	38.8
Match out of school compound	20	10.6
Total	188	100.0

Source; Researcher 2017

The findings in table 3 show 25% (47) of student respondent refused to attend classes, 25% (48) destroyed school property, 39% (73) refused to eat food and 11% (20) matched out of the school compound. The conclusion of the study was most students strikes was food related and in one quarter of the cases students destroyed school property.

Table 4: Mean and Deviation

	Mean	Std. Deviation
As your school ever gone for strike in the last four years	1.01	0.073
Unacceptable behaviour displayed	2.35	0.972

Source; Researcher 2017

In table 4, all the responses fall below 1 standard deviation which indicates that students were almost unanimous that most students strikes are food related and in most cases students refused

to attend class, matched out of school compound and in a quarter of the cases destroyed school property.

4.2 To what extent does the established school management discipline practice influence students’ unrest management in Meru county of Kenya?

4.2.1 Descriptive statistics

The researcher asked principals; whether there schools had known school routine? and whether their schools had collaborative teachers to handle student affairs? and the discipline, and G&C master/mistresses, opinion on, whether their schools had defined code of disciplinary procedure? Who makes students behaviour code? And did their schools suffer from harsh unofficial rules enforced by student council? The Student Council Presidents opinions on; whether students were involved in voting student council, and whether new student council when, constituted was trained in their responsibilities. Whether students participated in writing rules and regulations, and whether there existed a suggestion box system in the school. Further, and the researcher asked Student Council Presidents, form four students, and County Education Officer; whether there was a defined disciplinary procedure of; notification of charges, opportunity to answer charges, hearing conducted by impartial committee, decision based on evidence adduced during hearing, and whether records of proceedings are kept and students given opportunity to appeal,. The findings of the study are tabulated in form of frequencies and percentages.

4.2.2 Influence of school management discipline practices and its influence on students unrest management (principals)

Table 5: Influence of school management discipline practices and its influence on students unrest management

		Frequency	Percent
Do you have a known school routine?	Yes	14	82.4
	No	3	17.6

	Total	17	100.0
Does The School Have Collaborative Teachers To Handle Student Affairs?	Undecided	2	11.8
	Agree	8	47.1
	Strongly Agree	7	41.2
	Total	17	100.0

Source: Researcher (2017)

The finding in Table 5 shows that principals respondents responded that 82% (14) agreed, 17.6% (3) disagreed that their schools had regular school routine. The findings indicate that, most schools have a known routine followed by students. This helps reduce conflicts in decision-making.

The findings in Table 5 on principals’ respondents indicate that that 88.3% strongly agree and agree that the have collaborative teachers, and 11.8 (2) % undecided. Findings majority of the respondents agree that they have collaborative teachers to handle student affairs. The study concluded that most schools have collaborative teachers to handle student affairs. A study done by Bass and Avolio (2017), on principals effectiveness indicates that collaborative leadership was positively associated with measures of leadership effectiveness, followers’ job satisfaction, and inspirational motivation. This study involved 1553 principals. The study did not focus on principals’ charisma as a factor for collaborative leadership. Principals have significant impact on curriculum development through their influence on school climate and their support of the curriculum implementation process. In addition, the influence of special interest groups and local politics should not be underestimated. Polarization or conflicts have frequently obscured reasonable efforts for reform and meaningful dialogue between educators and parents concerning educational matters.

Table 6: Principals response on schools disciplinary practices, and its influence on students’ unrests management in their schools. (Standard deviation).

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Do you have school routine	17	1.18	.393
Does the school have collaborative teachers to handle student affairs?	17	3.18	.883

Source: researcher (2017)

The variable analysed in Table 6 indicates that 100% of respondent answers lie below one standard deviations of the mean. This means the group responses are homogenous, that all schools have a known school routine and involve teachers in disciplinary practices.

4.2.3 Influence of school management discipline practices on students’ unrests management
(discipline and guidance and counselling master/mistresses).

Table 7: Influence of school management discipline practices on students’ unrest

		Frequency	Percent
Our school has undefined code of disciplinary procedure.	Strongly disagree	14	37.8
	Disagree	9	24.3
	Undecided	6	16.2
	Agree	7	18.9
	Strongly agree	1	2.7
	Total	37	100.0
Students’ behaviour code is made by stakeholders?	Always	19	51.4
	Sometimes	11	29.7
	Never	5	13.5
	Undecided	2	5.4
	Total	37	100.0
Does the school suffer from harsh unofficial rules enforced by student council?	Strongly disagree	13	35.1

Disagree	7	18.9
Undecided	8	21.6
Agree	8	21.6
Strongly agree	1	2.7
Total	37	100.0

Source: Researcher (2017)

Table 7 data analyzed indicates that 22.6% (8) of the discipline and G&C master/mistresses respondents strongly agree and agreed, that their schools had undefined code of disciplinary procedure. 62.1% (23) strongly disagree and disagreed and 16.2% (6) were undecided. Conclusion of the study indicate majority of the schools have few problems since their disciplinary procedures were well defined, also almost one third experience problems due to undefined disciplinary procedures. Mwiria (1995) concurs with the study findings that schools where teachers are involved in the discipline process especially in classroom control have fewer indiscipline cases although the study was done in primary schools in Ethiopia.

Table 7 data analyzed show that 51.4% (19) of the discipline and G&C master/mistresses master/mistresses respondents stated that student behaviour code is mostly as a result of collaboration and consensus among staff members, 29.7%(11) disagreed and 5.4%(2) were undecided. The conclusion of the study was students' behaviour code was as a result of collaboration and consensus of staff and students consultation,

Data tabulated in Table 7 shows that of the the discipline and G&C master/mistresses respondents that 35.1% (13) of the respondents strongly disagreed, 18.9% (7) disagreed, 21.6% (8) were undecided and 24.3% (9) agreed or strongly agreed that their schools suffer from harsh unofficial rules enforced by student councils. The study findings indicate that majority of the schools may not have student strikes because rules that are enforced are mainly official rules. Also almost one third of the schools may experience student strikes because prefects are harsh and enforce unofficial rules. The findings of this study concur with a survey done by Fisher, Frasher and Creswell (1995), as cited by Paul and Michalinos (2009), involving 277 schools in Australia and choosing 20 teachers in every school, with questionnaires return of 850 teachers

and 50 principals a total of 900 respondents; it was found that 23.56% were directive. 23.91% were understanding 12.56% were uncertain, 11.01% were admonishing, 22.28% were helpful/friendly, 23.75% gave independence, 11.64% dissatisfied, 15.72% strict/inflexible. Schools that had inflexible and dissatisfied principals experienced conflicts leading to student unrests.

Table 8: Teachers response on disciplinary practices in their schools Standard deviation

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Does the school have undefined disciplinary procedure?	2.24	1.234
Who makes disciplinary code of behaviour?	1.73	.902
Does the school suffer from harsh and un official school rules enforced by student council?	2.16	1.191

Source: Researcher (2017)

The variable analysed in Table 8 indicates that 100% of discipline and G&C master/mistresses respondent answers lie below two standard deviations of the mean. This means the group is less homogenous, i.e. one group of students have a slightly different opinion on curriculum supervision practices influence on student unrest at 95% confidence level ($\sigma < 2$).

4.2.4 Influence of school management discipline practices on students unrest management (student council leaders).

Table 9: Does the principal follow the procedures below in picking student council leaders.

Item	Frequency	percent
What are the methods of picking student council?		
Proposed by school administration, voted by student	5	26.3
Principal and staff members appoints the student council	5	26.3

Students vote in, the student council		8	42.1
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Does school principal train student council after they are newly constituted?	Yes	15	78.9
	No	3	15.8
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Does student council meet with the principal/deputy principal regularly?	Always	6	31.6
	Sometimes	12	63.2
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Do teachers and parents participate in disciplinary procedures?	Rarely	2	10.5
	Sometimes	8	42.1
	Often	5	26.3
	Always	3	15.8
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Do schools have written rules and regulations?	Always	16	84.2
	Never	2	10.5
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Does your school use a suggestion box?	Never	3	11.8
	Rarely	10	58.8
	Sometimes	4	17.6
	Often	1	5.9
	Always	1	5.9
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Does the school consult you in designing and writing down school rules?	Never	3	15.8
	Rarely	1	5.3
	Sometimes	3	15.8
	Often	1	5.3
	Always	10	52.6
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Does your school suffer conflicts from undefined disciplinary procedure?	Strongly disagree	5	26.3
	Disagree	8	42.1
	Undecided	2	10.5
	Agree	2	10.5
	Strongly agree	1	5.3

Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0

Source: researcher (2017)

The findings in Table 9 indicate that 26.3% (5) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that they were proposed by school principal and voted by student, another 26.3% (5) appointed by the principal and teachers, then 42% (8) was voted by student body. This indicates that the principal and teachers have a lot of influence in the Student Council body. Most schools at 42.1% are moving to the system where students have a say in the governance in the schools. This is a positive move to participative disciplinary system resulting in reduction of conflicts, which also reduces students' unrest in schools.

The findings in Table 9 show that 80% (15) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that the schools train their student council and 16% (3) does not train them. Training enhances consultation in disciplinary practices and enhances fairness in disciplinary procedure and therefore reducing student strikes

The findings in Table 9 show 95% (18) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that respondents said they consulted with the principals or deputy principals regularly. This enhances consensus in schools and they take minutes of the meetings, thus indicating serious consultation to ensure discipline in schools is improved.

The findings in table 9 show that 42.1% (8) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that their schools involve parents and teachers in disciplinary procedures in the school, 10.5 (2) rarely and 42.1% (8) sometimes. These findings indicate that almost all schools involve teachers and parents in disciplinary procedures in the school. These findings concur with Wang'eri (2014). In a study carried out in Thika found that, 27.7% involved parents in helping enforce school discipline and applied other sanctions when punishing students. In another study by

Maina (1986) as cited by Simatwa (2010), indicated that 50% of the teachers played an important role in school discipline and another 40% played an adequate role in maintain school discipline.

The findings of the study tabulated in Table 9 indicate that 84% (16) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that the schools have written rules and 11% (2) did not have written rules. The conclusion was the schools that had no written rules might be day schools and absence of rules encourage absenteeism, high dropout rate because of conflicts and student unrest

The findings in Table 9 indicates that 29.4%(6) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that, use of suggestion box always, sometimes or rarely help in enhancing discipline, 58.8%(10) said that it rarely helps, and 11.8% (1) said that suggestion box never help in enhancing discipline.

The conclusion of the study was that, suggestion boxes were not useful in enhancing discipline in schools. This suggests that, suggestion boxes content follow up was lacking, but can be used as an informal way of screening student feelings.

The findings indicated in table 9 shows that 15.8% (3) of Student Council Presidents respondents responded that school administrators when designing, and writing down rules never consulted them. 20.1% (4) were rarely and sometimes consulted, while 57.9% (11) were often and always consulted when designing and writing down school rules. Weldy (1979) as cited by Sim (2011), states that every school must have an accepted set of school rules, or a code of discipline drawn by the head teacher with the help of members of staff and students. It must be possible to enforce and be beneficial to the school and the community. Weldy (1979) as cited by Sim (2011) therefore agrees with the above findings. Sushilla (2004) also states that all schools have a code of conduct however, it is in the method of implementation of these rules that

difficulties or inconsistencies occur. Rigid implementation of rules sometimes creates anti-establishment attitudes or negative attitude or fear towards authority. There develops among the school population a dislike for the school and its managers.

Data in Table 9 indicate that 68.4% (13) of the student council respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that undefined discipline procedures influence in discipline in schools and 15.8% (3) agree that undefined discipline procedure influence in discipline in schools. There was 10.5% (2) undecided number of respondents. Okumbe (2005), states that education manager should be able to apply disciplinary actions in a progressive manner (progressive discipline). Failure to follow progressive discipline leads to conflicts or biasness leading to student unrest.

Table 10: Does the principal follow the procedures below in picking student council leaders standard deviation.

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Method of picking student council	3.26	1.098
School train student council after they are newly constituted	1.11	0.315
Student council meet with the principal/deputy principal	1.79	0.419
Teachers and parents involvement	3.21	0.631
Suggestion box	2.89	1.37
Design and written down rules	4.16	1.425
Undefined disciplinary procedure	1.95	0.705

Source: Researcher (2017)

The variables analysed in table 10 lies below two standard deviations of the mean. This means the group is not homogenous in their responses. One group of student council leaders have slightly different opinions on disciplinary practices influence on student

Table 11: does the principal follow the outlined disciplinary procedure below (student council leaders)

Item		Frequency	Percent
Notification of charges expelling	Never	1	5.3
	Sometimes	2	10.5

	Often	4	21.1
	Always	11	57.9
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Opportunity to answer the charges	Never	2	10.5
	Sometimes	1	5.3
	Often	1	5.3
	Always	14	73.7
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Hearing conducted by impartial committee:	Never	4	21.1
	Rarely	2	10.5
	Sometimes	3	15.8
	Often	4	21.1
	Always	5	26.3
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Decision based on evidence adduced at the hearing:	Never	1	5.3
	Rarely	1	5.3
	Sometimes	7	36.8
	Often	1	5.3
	Always	8	42.1
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Written record of the proceedings: Students' council leaders' respondents	Never	2	10.5
	Rarely	1	5.3
	Sometimes	2	10.5
	Often	4	21.1
	Always	9	47.4
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0
Opportunity to appeal an adverse:	Never	4	21.1
	Rarely	1	5.3
	Sometimes	1	5.3

	Often	2	10.5
	Always	10	52.6
Missing System		1	5.3
	Total	19	100.0

Source: Researcher (2017)

The findings of Table 11 student council respondents indicate that 57.9% (11) responded always 21.6%(6) responded often and sometimes, 15.8%(3) respondents responded rarely and never to the practice of notification of charges before suspension. This indicates effective communication and effective discipline practices in the school. The study concludes that there is a discipline mechanism in place in all schools, but enforcing then may be lax

The findings of the study in Table 11 show that 73.7% of student council respondents indicated that students are given an opportunity to answer charges and 21.1%(4) respondents claimed that they were not given opportunity to answer charges. The findings agree with Okumbe (2005) that an effective discipline procedure starts with a preliminary investigation with notification of charges and then an opportunity to answer the charges before oral or written warning are issued or suspension and expulsion.

The findings in Table 11 indicate that the student council respondents on whether decisions are based on evidence adduced at the hearing, 42.1% (8) answered always, often and sometimes totaled to 42.1 % (8) and those who answered rarely and never amounted to 10.6% (2). The study concludes that schools should change student negative perceptions on discipline committee's impartiality so that they feel treated fairly. The findings concur with Okumbe (2005) that principals and teachers should be fair and friendly when dealing with student, which may forestall future unbecoming behaviour, or they face the consequences.

The findings of the study in Table 11 indicate that 41.1% (8) student council respondents responded always, 41.1% (8) often, sometimes responses, 10.6 % (2) of the respondent answered never and rarely that the decisions were based on evidence adduced in the committee sittings.

The findings in Table 11 indicate that 47.4% (9) of the respondents who answered always 15.8% (6) often and sometimes as to whether the schools kept records of proceedings, and 5.3% (1) of the respondent answered that their schools never kept records of proceeding. Records for further reference are necessary to understand student's behaviour and to undertake progressive discipline measures.

The data in Table 11 indicate the respondents answered 52.6% (10) always, 15.8% (3) often and sometimes and 26.4% (5) never are students given opportunity to appeal. The findings imply that if students are given an opportunity to appeal adverse decisions, they are not likely to react violently, or with anger because most of the times they consider discipline measures taken to be fair.

Table 12: Disciplinary procedure Standard Deviation (Student council leaders)

	Mean	Std. Dev.
Notification of charges	3.74	1.098
Opportunity to answer the charges	4.58	1.261
Hearing conducted by impartial committee	2.47	1.712
Decision based on evidence adduced at the hearing	3.47	1.172
Written record of the proceedings	3.95	1.079
Opportunity to appeal an adverse	4.16	1.573

Source: researcher (2017)

The variables analyzed in Table 12 lie below two standard deviations of the mean. This means that the group is homogenous, which means the respondents have a similar opinion of the disciplinary practices on student unrest management, at 95% confidence level ($\sigma < 2$).

4.2.5 Testing the hypothesis. H_0 : There is no significant influence between school management disciplinary practices and its influence on students' unrest management in public secondary Schools in Meru County, Kenya.

Table 13: Chi-square on influence of Discipline Practices on student unrest in Meru County

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.011 ^a	16	.220
Likelihood Ratio	21.859	16	.148
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.554	1	.110
N of Valid Cases	188		

a. 13 cells (52.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .26.

The P value for the chi-square on discipline practice influence on students' unrest was; what are the methods of picking students council, does the principal train student council leaders?, does the student council meet with the principals regularly?, do teachers and parents participate in disciplinary procedure?, do schools have written rules and regulations?. In addition to the above, does the school consult students in designing and writing school rules?, does the school suffer conflicts from undefined disciplinary procedures? Does the school follow the following disciplinary procedure?; notification of charges when expelling students, hearing conducted by the impartial committee, decision based on evidence adduced at the hearing, opportunity to answer the charges, written record of the proceedings and opportunity to appeal an adverse which all had p values less than 0.5. The study finding established a significant relationship between discipline practices influence on student unrest in Meru County.

The researcher rejected the null hypothesis H_0 , that there is no influence on school management disciplinary practices influence on student unrest management, and accepted the alternative hypothesis H_1 that there is significant influence on school management disciplinary practices influence on students' unrest management in Meru County of Kenya. This implies that the more retrogressive discipline practices that are followed in schools the more the conflicts that lead to indiscipline and students unrests.

4.2.6 Thematic analysis and interpretation

Under thematic analysis, the researcher sought the opinion of the County Educational Officer on how the school management discipline practices influence on students unrest management in Meru County of Kenya. The variables in the thematic analysis focused on responses from the

interview schedule conducted on the County Education Officer. She specifically gave her opinion on, do principals notify the students of disciplinary charges facing them?, do schools have disciplinary committee? Are records of proceeding kept regularly? Are students given an opportunity to adverse? On who maintains discipline in schools, on whether schools use progressive disciplinary practices, and whether funds management in schools cause indiscipline. The respondent responded that based on issues referred to the county education office,

“Principals notify the students of disciplinary charges facing them” (County Educational Officer, 2016).

On whether all schools have a disciplinary committee, the respondents responded that

“not all schools had disciplinary committees. The deputy principals, assisted by the discipline masters/mistresses, mainly handle discipline matters. In some schools, even the Student Councils handle simple disciplinary issues”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

On whether proper records of proceedings are kept regularly, the respondent responded that

“The records kept are charges, types of punishment meted and the authority concerned”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

On whether those who feel unfairly treated are given an opportunity to appeal, the respondent responded that

“Most secondary schools do not give an opportunity to appeal if one felt unfairly treated. The feeling was that there would be a lot of time wastage in dealing with petty issues”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

On why schools do not allow appeals, the respondent responded that

“the feeling was that there would waste of time due to the many schools that send students home due to student unrest”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

Analysis of interview responses on principals', teachers, and student council body on maintaining discipline in their Schools, the respondent said,

“Principals, teachers and student student Councils are viewed as role models for the students and are expected to foster positive discipline” (County Educational Officer, 2016).

The respondent responded further that

“Discipline teachers were effective problem solvers and also effective in their teaching”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

On whether Schools in Meru County follow progressive discipline practices, the respondent responded that

“Many Schools do not follow progressive discipline practices while expelling students. Also, disciplinary hearings are not done by an impartial committee and are mainly done by discipline masters/mistresses and the deputy principal. Also, the majority of the Schools do not give students an opportunity to appeal an adverse decision, which brings hard feelings to students, parents and guardians”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

However, on following good disciplinary practices when dealing with student indiscipline, the respondent responded that,

“most principals, and discipline masters/mistresses do not follow disciplinary procedure recommended to Schools by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The disciplinary practice is; students should be notified of charges they are facing, given an opportunity to answer the charges, hearing to be conducted by an impartial committee, decision of the committee to be made by considering evidence adduced at the hearing. And any student who feels aggrieved or unfairly treated should be given an opportunity to appeal the decision to the committee” (County Educational Officer, 2016).

The respondent response on types of indiscipline in public secondary Schools were;

“Embezzlement of funds, fears of mock examinations, poor food, harsh School rules, and lack of funds to finance sports and athletics” (County Educational Officer, 2016).

On what actions the County education officer had taken to reduce students’ unrest, the respondent said

“the Ministry has given guidance on Schools midterm breaks to reduce academic stress, internal mocks have been recommended in place of county mock examinations and guidance and counselling has been introduced in all Schools”(County Educational Officer, 2016).

On which body disciplines students, the respondents responded that

“Principals, deputy principals, discipline committees and student leadership councils can discipline students depending on the magnitude of the offences in question. However, some schools delegate the punishments to student leadership and sometimes leading to mishandling of some cases resulting in student unrests” (County Educational Officer, 2016).

4.2.7 Mixing of data and interpretation

The study established the significance of the various variables concerning discipline practices in Schools from various respondents, the principals; teachers, student leaders form four students, and County education office. The researcher concluded that school management disciplinary practices had significant influence on students’ unrest management in Meru County. The findings of this study indicate, that majority of Schools notify students of the charges when expelling them, however, almost a third never or rarely notify the students of the charges before suspension or expulsion. This is also supported by the county educational officer that students are not notified of the charges, neither is the hearing conducted by an impartial committee, and

neither do students get an opportunity to appeal an adverse decision. This was evidenced by the many complaints that are brought to the County Office regarding the same.

On whether school disciplinary practices influence student unrests, the CEO perspective was that although it is accepted that the principal plays a primary role in providing leadership in maintaining discipline in schools; teachers, student council and parents should be active participants.

Mbiti (2003) and MoEST (2008) view are that schools' disciplinary practices should be handled by a disciplinary committee which should give students an opportunity to appeal a decision which they feel is unfair.

5.0 CONCLUSION

5.1 School management discipline practices and its influence on students unrest management in Meru County of Kenya

Conflicts are unavoidable when people interact at work or in schools. The principal and teachers should be trained in conflict management to defuse negative emotion. Positive discipline should be encouraged for both students and staff. Positive discipline requires that teachers and students should be involved in designing rules and regulations, picking students' councils and defining the disciplinary procedure. When dealing with staff and students, principals should handle personal difficulties with human feelings by empathizing with the concerned and helping them solve or resolve the personal issues hindering quality performances. However, principals should follow progressive discipline process and should not overburden student leadership council with handling many disciplinary cases beyond its capacity.

When staff, and students are excluded from decisions that determine the way they do their work, demotivation and resentment can bring negative results especially when changes are being

implemented in the Schools. Since changes cause instability or indiscipline in the short term and sometimes in the long term. It is necessary to manage resistance to change by involving many people in producing plans for change.

Planning change can be done by identifying capable change agents who can think critically and laterally who has the drive to improve and transform the Schools, people who are strong and have emotional control, those who can think forcefully and independently and can do paradigm shift or create a new frame of reference.

5.2 Recommendations for further study

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should investigate whether Schools have discipline committees and whether they follow due process and fair practices in disciplining their students.

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