

**AN ASSESSMENT ON THE INFLUENCE OF MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION  
PRACTICES ON STUDENTS' UNREST IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
MERU COUNTY, KENYA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this research was to investigate the school management practices on communication factors contributing to student unrest in public secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya. The objectives focused on critical challenges facing principals and teachers in communicating effectively within the school. The research was carried out using the mixed method of research study in which the target population was 1,900 Principals, 1,900 Guidance and Counselling Masters/Mistresses, 1,900 Discipline Masters, 1,900 student Presidents, 19,200 students and 1 County Education Officer. The results showed that although the basic communication model of sender- message-receiver is straight forward, though communication barriers popularly referred to as “noise”. Noise in a school may be related to poor listening skills, poor language skills, a lack of trust and lack of follow-up/feedback on issues concerning students. Others include technical problems, poor selection of medium and misrepresentation of the message which may occur in the communication process.

**Keywords:** Student unrest, communication practices, misrepresentation, trust, feedback, language skills

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

In an ideal situation a basic communication model of communication process involved at least two individuals. According to the basic model of communication, even message that a person wants to send to another must first be encoded. Encoding is the process of attaching symbols to the message that the sender wants to convey. Symbols may be words, numbers, gestures, pictures or the like. For example the school principals may want to express gratitude to the teachers or students for work well done. The principal may thank teachers by writing them a letter of commendation, give them cash gifts, and shake their hands of both teachers and students. Once the sender of the message has chosen the appropriate symbols, he/she must select a medium. The medium is the method of communicating usually oral or written. Oral communications include face to face meetings, during morning assemblies and during staff meeting and use of telephones. Writings include memos, videotapes, and electronic mail. When the message has been sent via the chosen medium, the receiver of the message must decode it. The receiver (decoder) translates the symbols into meaning that makes sense to him. If the decoded message matches the encoded message, the communication is successful. If it does not match the encoded message, then the communication is ineffective. Feedback is the receiver's response to the message. In oral communication feedback is immediate but in written communication, feedback takes longer. The ideal outcome of the communication is a match between feedback and the senders intended effect/objective.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Since the year 2005, incidence of student unrest in Kenya have been on the rise specifically in Meru County, whose impact has been loss of life, disruption of learning, and decline of academic performance. It is speculated that student unrest are caused by examinations fear (fever), drug abuse, poor parental guidance and peer pressure.

Few studies have been undertaken to examine the problem or predict when it can happen. In June/July 2016, over 60 schools in Meru County went on strike out of a total of about 200, which is higher than the national average of about 11%. It is therefore prudent to investigate the cause of student unrest further, especially the internal management practices of communication in the process of integrating the school processes in the structure system of schools.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to find out how administrative processes of communication impacted on student unrest in Meru County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Objectives**

To determine the extent to which communication processes influence student unrest in public secondary schools in Meru County, Kenya.

Specifically;

- i) To establish how lack of trust influences student unrest in Meru County, Kenya
- ii) To determine how lack of feedback influences student unrest in Meru County, Kenya
- iii) The extent the principal's language skills while communicating on schools change to others influences student unrest in Meru County, Kenya
- iv) To determine how the principals listening skills influences student unrest in Meru County, Kenya.

## **2.1 Literature Review**

### **2.1.2 Student Unrest: Global Perspective**

In public secondary schools in the United States, twenty five per cent (25%) of students require intervention of guidance and counselling to overcome unrest trauma before teachers concentrate on educational programmes.

Dryfoos (2014) agrees that “those who enter school or any other organization, feeling insecure and distressed, tend to focus on their social emotional needs rather than academic curricula” (N.P.E.B.A, 1989). When large numbers of students misbehave, teachers are forced to spend more time in maintenance of discipline in their schools. Therefore discipline systems should be based on prevention and intervention programs, and data records on school indiscipline (Rich, 2011).

Craig & Suzanne (1997) agree that “even the threat of violence can result in heightened stress levels that detract from educational progress in schools”. National Policy Board for Educational Administration in a survey conducted in America found that “71% in grades 6 to 12 reported that physical assaults and robbery were not uncommon in schools”. Since the 1992-3 school year, 270 violent deaths have occurred at schools across America. The majority of these deaths, 207, were shooting victims of violence which does not result in deaths but still it affect learning. The national school safety centres report on associated violent deaths 1993. Hoffmann concurs with other researchers that students in a school environment where violence occurs will not and cannot concentrate on the achievement of very high standards or excel intellectually. When teachers and students are more concerned about being victimized than about education, they cannot concentrate on teaching and learning (Hoffman, 1996).

### **2.1.3 Student Unrest: Africa Perspective**

Zulu, Urban and Merwe, (2004), agree that “despite the introduction of new democratic political dispensation in 1994, violence in schools has not abated. School violence unfortunately impacts negatively on a culture of learning and teaching. Schools have become highly volatile and unpredictable places”. Violence has become a part of everyday life in (some) schools. According Landsberg & Hlophe, (1999), “racial tension between black and Indian learners in Kwa Zulu Natal Province leads to racial clashes in and out of schools”.

Unequal treatment of learners has been practiced on the pretence that black learners are slow learners and should be taught separately, and such treatment, causes misunderstanding and mistrust among learners' this in turn results into school unrest.

Ndetei, Ogecha-Owour, Khasakhala, Mutiso and Odhiambo, (2007), in their study among adolescents (15-19 years of age) on determinants of trauma and post trauma stress disorder (P.T.S.D) states that in Kenya, 29.6% adolescents witnessed full P.T.S.D who were chemically dependent, 69% of adolescents in juvenile justice systems suffered P.T.S.D. There were almost twice as many females than males identified with full P.T.S.D (24.3% for males and 45.3% for females) two-thirds of the community population of 18 years and below have experienced at least one traumatic event. The community sample where the above study was undertaken had a general prevalence of 16%. In Cape Town where the study was done about 104 adolescents in four secondary schools were exposed to at least one type of violent event either as victim or a witness and only 6% were likely to meet the criteria for P.T.S.D.

#### **2.1.4 School Unrest in Secondary Schools in Kenya**

Violent learner behaviour has become a common feature in Kenya with tragic loss of lives, destruction of property and declining standards of education. The institutions and systems charged with eliminating or reducing, violence and learners disruptive behaviour have failed miserably for example, in June and July 2008, there were over 250 cases of violent disruptive learners behaviour reported all over the country in public institution. The tone and character of violence in schools and disruptive learners behaviour in Kenyan secondary schools has changed subtly but dramatically in the past several years and students protests have become more militant; it occurs more frequently, involves more public secondary schools, covers more issues and involves students in a more direct manner than several years ago. There is more threat of actual disruption of classes and administration.

More incidents of property damage occur in the course of protests. There are few studies on strikes and indiscipline in Kenyan public schools by a few researchers like Sagini (1991) and they revealed that mismanagement of schools, poor models, drugs abuse and mass media causes indiscipline in secondary schools. The committees received oral, written presentations from members of the public data through questionnaires and discussions with head teachers, students and board of governors. Other researchers such as Ndetei et al, (2007) have presented a paper on philosophical perspective to occurrence of student unrest and violence. By adopting a framework within which the students were addressed as individuals who are always continuing searching to find out "who" and "what" they are through their (school) life as they make choices based on their experiences, values and outlook.

A report by Kenyan Bishops regarding the post-election violence wrote "some student's moral responsibility was totally killed. They burned houses, they saw people being killed, people dying of hunger and thirst for food and water". They became immune to any feeling of humanity. What we are witnessing now is the result of demonization of moral responsibility (Commission of Education Report: Bishops Conference, 2008). Another report by Ministry of Education on schools unrest in June/July in year 2008 indicates that about 254 schools went on violent strike in Kenya distributed as follows: Central (68), Rift Valley (55), Eastern (53), Nyanza (27), Coast (24), Nairobi (19), Western (8) and North Eastern (0). This trend has continued and especially in Meru County, where 66 public secondary schools went on strike between January, 2016 and June, 2016. This translated to almost 34% of all sampled public secondary schools in Meru County.

## **2.2 Communication Practices Influence on Students' Unrest**

The communication practice involves the exchange of information between sender and receiver, the sender mainly being administrative staff and the receiver being staff members and students.

Communication means the management practices by which ideas contained in one mind is conveyed to the other minds and this information is transferred in codes. A code is a system that maps a set of signals into a set of meanings and is transmitted on a channel to the receiver and decoded by the receiver to give meaning. Messages received may not be identical to the transmitted ones in that all communication channels contribute some degree of noise to the message, and noise interferes with effective communication, and if unresolved cause conflict leading to student unrest. Noise has deleterious effect on all communication because it forces the recipient of the message to “fill in” the information the noise has distorted (Deutsch, Coleman & Marcus, 2006). Hoy and Tarter, (2013), define communication as transmitting information via codes. A code is a system that maps a set of signals into a set of meaning. Hoy and Tarter view that “human communication as encoding and decoding practices in which the encoded message is transformed into a signal whose elements are transferred by the sender, transmitted over a channel and decoded into an abstract proposition that is believed”.

One reason why received message may not be identical to the transmitted one is that all communication channels contribute some degree of noise (any undesired signal) to the message. Noise in the communication practices may be caused by incomplete understanding or poor listening skills (gap) which the recipient of the message “fill in” based on his experience with cultural recitation which may distort the message and cause misunderstanding and sometimes unrest in schools (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2012).

First, there is no need to communicate issues about which shared beliefs and values exist. Second sharing information provides guidelines and cues to help the receiver interpret messages. The values and attitudes about what to communicate and how openly to communicate are crucial and this impacts on the language of the parents, teachers and students. In a study by Freshow, (1989), working with performance systems internationally indicate that principals spend 70 per cent of

their time communicating, while it is estimated that over 30 per cent of the principals time is devoted to listening, tests of listening suggest that these individual listen at 25 per cent efficiency.

### **2.2.1 Listening Skills**

Listening skills affect the quality of staff, students and support relationships in the work place. The language of communication in a school speaks volumes about the school cultural practices for example, how staff dress, describe students, express anger and greet stakeholders and how co-workers relate. If the language is positive, the organization will have a positive image and vice versa. In addition, the physical infrastructure, size, shape, and location of buildings can indicate other set values. Hoy and Tarter, (2012), Maniero and Tromley, (2012), agree that in as much as they have written on culture influence on the communication practices, they have not addressed the impact of communication practices and self-interest of the principals concern to ensure the outcome favours them and ensure they are in control and therefore, distorting the practices. This study therefore tried to unveil whether the principals communicate effectively and efficiently to all the stakeholders. According to Watson Wyatt's communication survey for (2005), organizations that have effective communicators "have the courage to talk about what employees want to hear, redefine the employment deal based on changing circumstance and have effective discipline plan and measure their progress effectively". The study showed that these organizations had 47% higher return to stakeholders over a five year period from 2012 - 2016. The intention of effective communication by the school administrators are to achieve integration of management practices of communication to all stakeholders in terms of the school mission, objectives and goals, and then adapt to the changing global environment that is dynamic, and failure results in conflicts that ultimately leads to student unrest.

### **2.2.2. Language Skills**

People have certain expectations about communication process and have learned emotion reactions associated with those expectations. Those reactions range from acceptance and pleasure to outrage hostility and frustration. Our emotions are intimately tied to value judgment and contributions, which people normally make without a second thought. These judgments seem only natural because they are rooted in people upbringing and they are the only types of judgment they have learned to make. Emotions, and values, are guidelines in helping form opinion about others and ourselves (Marsumoto & Juang, 2008). Intercultural communication where people are interacting with others from a different culture, people bring their own verbal language and nonverbal language which are culture specific and that makes it difficult to focus on the content of the message being exchanged. As people may be encoding and decoding messages using different cultural codes, communication does not proceed smoothly and understanding occur and the implicit judgment mode is that the individual does not know how to act appropriately, is rude or is not a good person (Marsumoto & Juang, 2008).

### **2.2.3 Trust**

Trust is another critical item in effective communication. According to Robbins (2016), no institution can exist without trust. Trust in a School only exists among people who understand that their objectives are compatible in the long run. The concept is based on the assumption that if one does not understand what someone then one cannot trust them. Therefore, they cannot develop intimate professional relationships between staff and students. This study tried unveiling whether the principals communicate effectively and efficiently to all the stakeholders about the mission, objectives and goals of the school. Educational managers must have honest commitment to encourage two-way communications between themselves and students through effective communication.

Educational managers gain new knowledge and perceptions that help them better understand each individual student who is under them. The educational administrator should avoid unfair and unequal treatment on student, sex, age, race, religion and physical limitations.

#### **2.2.4 Feedback**

According to Hoy and Miskes (2012), conceptualize school management practices in terms of dominant beliefs that teachers and principals' share about controlling students and their studies focused on student control with regard to both structural and normative aspects of the school management practices and describe antagonistic student sub cultural and attendant conflicts. They concluded that student control and feedback had significant effect on student achievement.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study adopted a mixed method approach methodology because it has both the qualitative and the quantitative aspects. Qualitative and quantitative data collection was carried concurrently. The choice of these methods was significant since it allowed the researcher to collect both qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously and allowed use of quantitative standardized instruments or a qualitative theme analysis of interview data (a combination of both). The study used concurrent triangulation design. According to Creswell (2011), 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.

In this study the target population was drawn from all public secondary schools in Meru County. Target population is an entire group of individuals, events or objects that have common observable characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The population comprised 192 principals (head teachers), 192 Guidance and Counselling Master/Mistresses and 192 discipline Master/Mistresses, 19,000 students and one County Education Officer drawn from Meru County, Kenya. According to Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003), and Yuko and Onen, (2005), both suggest

that 10% of the accessible population is adequate as a sample for a study. The researcher therefore used 10% of principals, teachers and students. The county education officer in Meru County was also involved in the study.

After the sample size was ascertained, the researcher used stratified random sampling technique to select the sample of the study in the nine Sub-Counties of Meru County. Each sub-county was allocated two Schools through random sampling. That was done to represent three categories of School features representative of Kenya's 47 Counties. Then the researcher used purposive sampling of 10 students per School in Form 4 who had been in the School long enough to understand the Schools management practices influence on student affairs. The reason for using ten students was that most mixed Schools had between 10 to 20 students in form 4 and that made the researcher purposively choose 10 students in each School to give them equal opportunity to participate on the study.

The study was expected to achieve the following; content validity and face validity. The content validity refers to the representation of the whole study items on the instruments being measured. The content validity must measure sample adequately, the domain of the content the researcher claims it measures, that was determined subjectively by a thorough examination of the instruments deployed through a combination of panel of experts, literature searches and pre-testing of the open-ended questions (Be11, 2005). The researcher used split-half method to test the questionnaire for reliability. The researcher used six Schools in each sub ethnic group within Meru County: namely Igembe, Tigania and Imenti. Researchers such as Kothari (2005) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2014) recommend Cronbach alpha coefficient to measure reliability of a test.

This study attained a reliability test coefficient is 0.824 thus the results are acceptable in educational research. Prior to going to the field the researcher collected a letter of introduction from Mount Kenya University to public secondary schools where the respondents were located. The letter assisted the researcher to obtain research permit from (NACOSTI), to go out and do the research. The researcher gave a self-introduction letter to the County Education Officer and the principals of the sampled Schools, explaining the purpose of the research and requested for permission and participation in the research.

### **3.1.1 Research Instruments**

The researcher also gave the County Education Officers the questionnaire in advance in order to prepare the detailed information before the scheduled day of interview. The researcher sought authority to conduct the study from (NACOSTI), the County Commissioner, and County Director of Education (Meru) to carry out the study. After that, the researcher booked appointment with the sampled Schools principals to visit them and administer the questionnaire. The researcher protected and recognized human rights whose purpose is to guarantee the dignity of individuals and promote social justice, as freedoms expressed in the Bill of Rights (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). The researcher disclosed to the respondents the purpose of the study was honest, open minded and guaranteed privacy of the individuals and sought informed consent from the participants, i.e. the subjects can participate or refuse to participate in the research activity. The researcher actually got voluntary participation from the respondents who participated in the study (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

The researcher used three questionnaires and one semi-open interview schedule to gather the necessary data for this study. Before the researcher administered the questionnaires, he explained to the respondents the purpose of the study and assured them of confidentiality when dealing

with their responses. The gathering of information was through face-to-face interrogation of the interviewee (County education officer) by the researcher, by use of interview schedule.

The use of open-ended interviews provides a chance for the subjects to tell their story. The researcher captured their words and statements as accurately as possible, recorded them exactly as told without sacrificing their richness and without passing moral judgment.

### **3.1.2 Data Analysis**

The data was analysed by conducting four major activities namely, data editing, data coding, classification and tabulation. Data was first edited to identify and correct any wrong entries, errors in responses, omissions and other inconsistencies. Data was then coded according to major variables included in the instruments such as age, gender, professional grade and opinion on major issues that influence student unrest. The researcher arranged data in groups or classes on the basis of common characteristics. Data having common characteristics were placed in one class and in this way the entire data got divided into a number of groups and classes. The researcher used two types of statistical techniques namely descriptive statistics and inferential statistics in data analysis. Descriptive statistics was used to compute percentages and frequencies.

The inferential statistical method was used in the study was chi-square which revealed the association between independent and dependent variables and data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 22. The hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance; 95% confidence level. Construction of triangulation was a step taken by researcher to use structured questionnaires and interview schedule by researchers by considering ideas and explanation generated by studying the research participants.

The study used triangulation approach in the search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in the study. Justification for that

method is that the researcher felt confident with results after using different methods (Creswell, 2011). Data was presented in terms of frequency tables besides inferential statistics which mainly used the chi-square to determine the extent of the influence of the hypothesis of the independent variable (management practices) on dependant variable (student unrest). The hypothesis was tested at  $P > 0.5$ , where the researcher chose  $\alpha$  to be small at 0.05 in testing the level of significance of each of the variables. The outcome of the Chi-square test guided in the acceptance or rejection of the null hypothesis or the alternative hypothesis of the study. To make valid and replicable references from data, qualitative data collected from open ended questionnaires were analysed through themes and presented in narrative form.

#### 4.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS

**Indicator - To determine the extent on communication practices influence on student unrest in public Secondary Schools in Meru County**

##### 4.1.1 Do Administrators listen to student issues?

**Table 1 – Listening Skills**

|              | F         | %            |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Always       | 6         | 35.3         |
| Sometimes    | 2         | 11.8         |
| Never        | 9         | 52.9         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The findings in Table 1 indicate that 47% listen to student issues always or sometimes and 53% never listen to student issues. Watson Wyatt's communication survey for (2005), organizations that have effective communicators "have the courage to talk about what employees and students want to hear, redefine the employment deal based on changing circumstance and have effective

discipline plan and measure their progress effectively”. The study showed that these organizations had 47% higher return to stakeholders over a five year period from 2012 - 2016. The above findings are also supported in another study by Freshow, (1989), working with performance systems internationally indicate that principals spend 70 per cent of their time communicating, while it is estimated that over 30 per cent of the principals time is devoted to listening, tests of listening suggest that these individual listen at 25 per cent efficiency. Listening skills affect the quality of staff, students and support relationships in the work place.

#### 4.1.2 Do Administrators have Good language Skills?

**Table 2 – Language Skills**

|              | <b>F</b>  | <b>%</b>     |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Always       | 6         | 35.3         |
| Sometimes    | 4         | 23.5         |
| Never        | 7         | 41.2         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Data in Table 2 indicates that 59% of administrators have good language skills and 41% have poor language skills. The findings indicate almost half of the students in sampled schools do not have good language skills. These views are similar to Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) observation that communication entails the idea of information transfer. Information that originates in one part of a system is formulated into a message that is transmitted to another part of the system in the education system. Noise in the communication practices may be caused by incomplete understanding (gap) which the recipient of the message “fill in” based on his experience with cultural recitation which may distort the message and cause misunderstanding and sometimes unrest in schools.

#### 4.1.3 Do Administrators Give Feedback to Student Grievances?

**Table 3 – Feedback Skills**

|              | <b>F</b>  | <b>%</b>     |
|--------------|-----------|--------------|
| Sometimes    | 5         | 29.4         |
| Rarely       | 7         | 41.2         |
| Always       | 5         | 29.4         |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>17</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

The findings in Table 3 indicate that 29.4% of administrators always give feedback to student grievances, another 29.4% give feedback sometimes and 41.2% often to not give feedback. The conclusion of the study was often, 41.2 rarely give feedback. Maslowski (2001) concurs with the research findings that schools which have strong participative culture that practice shared values) have teachers and students who are committed and follow negotiated routine that is likely to be more effective in achieving their goals.

#### 4.1.4 Administration and Parents Trust Teachers with Professional Judgment?

**Table 4 – Trust**

|                   | <b>F</b>  | <b>%</b>     |
|-------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Strongly Disagree | 1         | 2.7          |
| Undecided         | 1         | 2.7          |
| Agree             | 16        | 43.2         |
| Strongly Agree    | 19        | 51.4         |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>37</b> | <b>100.0</b> |

Analysis of data in Table 4 indicates that 94% of the respondents agreed, 3% disagreed and 3% were undecided.

The conclusion of the study indicates that administration and parents trusts judgment and ability of teachers to carry out their professional activities. Robbins (2003) and Lunenburg and Ornstein (2012) concurs with this finding that no institution can exist without trust. Trust in a school only exists among people who understand that their objectives are compatible in the long run.

The concept is based on the assumption that if one does not understand what someone then one cannot trust them. Therefore, they cannot develop intimate professional relationships between staff and students.

**Table 5 - Communication Process Mean/Std.Deviation**

|  | <b>N</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|--|----------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Do Administrators listen to student issues                                   | 188      | 2.18        | .951                  |
| Do Administrators have Good language Skills?                                 | 188      | 2.06        | .899                  |
| Do Administrators Give Feedback to Student grievances                        | 188      | 4.29        | .772                  |
| Do Parents Trust Teachers to act Professionally in Discharging Their Duties? | 188      | 4.41        | .798                  |

The variables analyzed in table 15 lie below one standard deviation of the mean. This means that about 70% lie between one standard deviation of the mean and the group is thus homogenous which means the respondents have similar opinion of the communication practices on student unrest, at 95% confidence level ( $\sigma < 1$ ). The conclusion of the study was dialogue is one of the methods used by schools to enhance effective communication in Schools. Maslowski, (2009), concurs with the research findings that schools which have strong participative culture that

practice shared values have teachers and students who are committed and follow negotiated routine that is likely to be more effective in achieving their goals.

**Table 6 - Chi-square on influence of communication practices on student unrest in Meru County**

|                  | Listening | Language | Feedback | Trust<br>Teachers |
|------------------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------------|
| Chi Square Value | .075      | 0.010    | 0.040    | .191              |
| df               | 1         | 1        | 1        | 1                 |
| P-Value          | .048      | .010     | .040     | .043              |

a. 2 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .07.

Based on Chi-Square results, the obtained chi-square value for; listening to students was 0.048, the language used 0.010, opportunity to offer feedback was 0.040, and for a teacher to act professionally was 0.191. All the P values obtained were less than 0.05 indicating that the observed frequencies for all the variables would be significantly different from what you would expect to get by chance.

Thus the researcher rejected the null hypothesis that there is no significant influence on communication practices on student unrest in public secondary Schools in Meru County and accepted the  $H_1$  alternative hypothesis that communication practices influence student unrest in public Secondary Schools in Meru County. Therefore the study conclusion was that, there is significant influence between communication practices and student unrest in public secondary Schools in Meru County of Kenya, a chi-square test statistic was carried out, with hypothesis tested at 95% level of significance.

## **5.1 Conclusions**

### **5.1.1 Discussion - Communication Practices**

On communication practices association with student unrest it was evident that communication practices influenced students' unrest. Majority of the students responded that administrators do not give feedback on most issues concerning students. Most respondents concur with the findings that effective communication practices reduce role conflicts, interpersonal and intra department conflicts leading to collaborative communication practices. Collaborative communication practices encourages listening, giving feedback and commitment of students and staff members in achieving the goals of their institutions which enhance common values, beliefs and norms which reduce conflicts in institutions leading to high level of trust for effective communication across department, students and staff members.

Hoy and Miskes, (2005), Lunerberg and Orsteins, (2005), support the study findings by arguing that resolving of disputes in an open School system involves cooperation of teachers, students and good community relations which enhances trust in the leadership of the whole organization. The study found out that principals do not listen to student issues most of the time. The County Education Officer concurs with these findings that most administrators in the county do not listen to student grievances, and the study also found that a majority of school administrators had good language skills. Slightly more than half of the students in sampled schools indicated that they get feedback, while slightly less than half do not get feedback from the school administrators, and majority trust the principals to handle student affairs.

### **5.1.2 Conclusion – Communication Practices**

Sometimes highly organized, sometimes haphazard communication happens all the time. Principals and teachers should improve communication quality by being open, honest and accessible to everybody. This can be done by encouraging contact by moving to where the teachers and students are attending official and informal activities, reducing bureaucracy by keeping it to a minimum and using different media, one channel of communication is never enough, the more they are the better. The use of team meetings that occur more often must have a purpose and must keep people informed of the School progress in achieving set goals. Minutes and Agendas should be circulated to staff members well in advance before meetings. The principal should endeavour to listen to everybody and gain trust and commitment of employees, staff and students.

This can be done by meeting their key needs, paying attention to all people at all levels trusting and being trusted, tolerating individuality and creating a blame free atmosphere where people are appreciated and valued. Staff, students and principals should use language that is civil and to recognise dominant values with society and be given feedback on grievances, student issues through formal and informal interactions.

### **5.1.3 Recommendations**

Sometimes highly organized, sometimes haphazard communication happens all the time. Principals and teachers should improve communication quality by being open, honest and accessible to everybody. This can be done by encouraging contact by moving to where the teachers and students are attending official and informal activities, reducing bureaucracy by keeping it to a minimum and using different media, one channel of communication is never enough, the more they are the better. The use of team meetings that occur more often must have a purpose and must keep people informed of the School progress in achieving set goals. Minutes

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