

# Influence of School Leadership Factors on Students' Unrests in Secondary Schools in Mwingi East Sub County, Kitui County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** *In spite of the Government of Kenya effort to stem out the culture of student unrests in schools, the nature of the unrests have taken a dramatic turn for the worse in some regions. It has resulted to disruption of learning, destruction of property and even lives have been lost. The study sought to establish school leadership factors that contribute to students' unrest in Mwingi East Sub County, Kitui County. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study was drawn from all the twenty nine (29) secondary schools in the sub county and was selected by purposive sampling on the basis of specific characteristics including mixed day, boys boarding, girls boarding, mixed boarding, girls day and boys day secondary schools. Stratified random sampling technique was appropriate for this study since the sample was drawn from all the categories of schools. Data was collected by use of questionnaires which were administered to the respondents selected. Analysis of data was carried out using simple descriptive statistics. The study showed that management factors that lead to students unrests in Mwingi East Sub County include; school fees increment, leadership wrangles, poor infrastructure, and harsh leadership styles.*

**Keywords:** School leadership factors; students' unrests; secondary schools

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background to the Study

An education system in any country is established as a result of the determination of the broader goals of education which are in-line with the aspirations of the country [19]. A school is therefore the functional unit of the education system. It is an organization through which the education system meets the aspirations of the society [40]. [49], noted that the tone, ambience or atmosphere of a school is the reciprocal effect of the teachers' behaviour pattern as a group and the principal's behavior pattern as a leader. Management is a social process which constitutes planning, controlling, coordinating and motivating [40]. School management rests on shoulders of Boards of management which includes sponsors, head teacher, teachers, education officers, parents and students' representatives who always are challenged by students' rogue behaviors that lead to unrests or strikes which range from killing, arson, destruction of properties and rape in educational institutions.

Students' unrest is any form of disruptive behavior that interferes with the smooth running of an educational institution [50]. Such behavior may arise from interpersonal conflicts between head teachers, teachers and students due to opposition or antagonistic interactions. Two systems or persons are in conflicts when they interact indirectly in such a way that the actions of one tend to prevent or compel some outcome against the resistance of the other [17]. This is a common phenomenon in schools as principals and teachers authoritatively enforce school rules against the resistance of some students.

Proper management of students discipline is a major function of Boards of Managements, parents and teachers. For this reason, the government of the republic of Kenya through the Basic education act (Republic of Kenya, 1968) required that schools be governed by Board of Governors. This came into place after independence following the recognition by the Kenya Education Commission. The aim was to give each school its own personality and also aimed at decentralizing authority in order to affect education goals. Education Act cap: 211 and Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 states that the Board of Governors have been given the role of managing human and other resources so as to smoothen operations, infrastructural development and provision of teaching and learning materials. However the report by the commission of inquiry into the education system of Kenya [43] emphasized pivotal role played by the BOG's in the school management. This report stated that, the role of the Board of Governors (BOG) was to manage and not to govern and that the name be changed to Board of Management (BOM).

According to the Basic Education Act of 2013, there are several functions of the BOMs, including the following: Promotion of the best interest of the institution and ensure its development, promote quality education for all pupils in accordance with the standards set under this act or other written law, ensure and assure the provision of proper and adequate physical facilities for purposes of the Institution. It also manages the institutions affairs in accordance with the rules and regulations governing the occupational safety and health. It advises the county education board on the staffing needs of the institution and determines cases of pupils discipline and make reports to the CEB. It is also mandated to prepare a comprehensive term report on all areas of its

mandate and submit the report to the CEB, facilitate and ensure the provision of education to all learners, provide for the welfare and observe human rights and ensure safety of the pupils, teachers and non-teaching staff at the institution. It is also mandated to promote sport and cohesion, integration, peace, tolerance, inclusion, elimination of hate speech and elimination of tribalism at the institution.

It also encourages the learners, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, community members and other stake holders to render voluntary services into institution, allow reasonable use of the facilities of the institution for community, social and other lawful purposes subject to such reasonable and equitable conditions as it may determine, including the charging of fees. It also administers and manages the resources of the institution, receives, collects and accounts for any funds occurring in the institution. It recruits, employs and remunerates such number of teaching and non-teaching staff as may be required by the institution in accordance with the law among other functions. This study on students' unrest did incorporate the views of Boards of Management, teachers, and students because students discipline is a major concern in Kenya.

A report by the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association in 1999 revealed that strikes in schools were on the increase and blamed it on the print and electronic media. In August 2001, the Ministry of Education formed a Task force to look into the discipline in secondary schools. The task force established that lack of learning resources, food, high handedness, peer influence and lack of communication between the administration and the students were some of the causes of the strikes [27]. [19] explained that student unrests were a symptom of inability of the schools to cultivate relevant moral values among the youth and that this situation was threatening the socio-economic development of the nation. It was therefore necessary to gather views of various BOM and make recommendations on factors related to students' unrests in schools.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Indiscipline in high schools in Kenya has remained a phenomenon that baffles education sector. The staggering cost to school property, wasted time, pain, injury and loss of tender lives makes the subject extremely important to study and understand. A study conducted by Ministry of Education in July 2008 to investigate school unrest found the following causes: overloaded curriculum, autocratic school administration, drug and substance abuse, poor living conditions in schools; excessive use of corporal punishment, lack of an effective school guidance and counseling service, pressure for excellent academic performance, abdication of parental responsibility, incompetent board of governors, culture of impunity in the society, adolescence identity crisis, highhandedness of school principals, mass media campaigns, moral decadence and the prefect system [42].

In spite of the government establishing guidance and counseling in schools, banning corporal punishment, and issuing a decree that outlawed students strikes, the nature of the unrests have taken a dramatic turn for the worse. They are not only violent and destructive but premeditated and

planned to cause maximum harm to human life. Of late, the incidences of unrest are being reported on daily newspapers, radios and televisions. Indeed according to [30], National Education Sector Plan Goals (NESSP), curbing students' unrest would reduce students' radicalization and its consequences. Kitui County has featured prominently in the recent secondary school students' unrest. Therefore, the concern of the study was to find out the perception of BOM on the students unrest in secondary schools in Mwingi East Sub County.

## 1.3 Objective

The objective of this study was to investigate school leadership factors that contribute to students' unrest in Mwingi East Sub County, Kitui County.

## 1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study revolved around the Theory X and Y advanced by McGregor [39]. Theory X and Y advanced by McGregor postulates that workers or employees are lazy and would always avoid responsibility. To achieve high discipline, there was a need to coerce, control, maintain orderliness and even threaten them [39]. Specifically, theory Y postulates that employees are human beings and therefore the role of a manager is to provide an enabling environment that enable employees to realize the potential they are endowed with. According to McGregor's philosophy there are cases where teachers and students just do not want to follow a set code of behaviour/conduct in an educational organization despite the application of various leadership skills like using set rules and regulations as well as punishments to both deter and reattribute the offenders [39]. As a matter of fact, students dislike rules. Indeed, it is a reflection of the general society where human beings dislike order together with being supervised. This means the managers, including the school principals and Board of Management (BOM), have to formulate good and just rules and try to logically explain the same to the students. This would be a classic example of application of McGregors' theory Y in schools management. In many schools this work, however, if all fails then, the school management must coerce, control and enforce discipline in students, even when some factors do not favor the students' comfort in schools. This could mean the application of McGregor's theory X.

## 1.5 The Global perspective of students unrest

It is a global issue of great concern, spanning political, economic, geographical, racial and even gender boundaries. Student unrest is synonymous with poor discipline, yet discipline is an essential element in school administration [14]. It is seen as a process of training and learning that fosters growth and development. The doctrine of school discipline according to [5] is based on the concept of "*loco parentis*" which allows school authorities full responsibility for students discipline and control. In child development, discipline refers to methods of character modeling and of teaching self control [44]. Unrest creeps in when discipline, regulations and maintenance of rules breaks down, since rules define expected standards of clothing, timekeeping, social behaviour and work ethics [7]. At times however, the

term “school discipline” may mean punishment, which is the consequence of transgression of the codes of behaviour including students’ unrest in schools [45].

Students’ unrest in secondary schools is experienced worldwide. Students have in the past protested against political regimes, conditions in schools, school administration or some form of discrimination in the school or society as a whole. In the United Kingdom for example, student politics has existed since 1880s. In Iran students protested against the pre-1979 secular monarchy and later against the theocratic Islamic republic. In the United States, student activism is often understood as oriented toward change in the American educational system. (<http://www.freehugger.com/files/2008/11>). In Uganda, research shows that “striking of secondary school students as a means of seeking attention or protest had become rampant. Hardly a term passes without a school striking and the pattern was becoming bizarre with school property being destroyed by students [11].

There is a growing concern regarding indiscipline in schools within the United Arab Emirates [15] where teaching methods were blamed for the children’s indiscipline. The parents were getting anxious and frustrated as they complained of the rising incidents of indiscipline and violence in schools. The concern was not only on the risk of destruction of property and injury to persons but also the poor academic performance associated with the growing trend of indiscipline, [10]. Student’s unrest is not peculiar to Kenya alone, it also happens in Europe and America. However, in Advanced Countries, students’ unrest is not conducted in a violent manner. The students protest using means such as placards display, peaceful rallies, and letters to parliament, and so on. For instance, in Hong Kong students protested against new ‘moral and national education’ classes.

The movement started with three high school students’ decision to stage a hunger strike opposite the government headquarters. Many people described the movement as a miracle, not only because it was orchestrated by students, but also because of the level of support it attracted, [41]. A correlation between discipline and good academic performance has been established by studies that have been carried out. According to [53], discipline in schools is essential for effective learning, good teacher relationship and peer adjustment. A democratic form of discipline leads to a healthy classroom environment that in turn promotes respect for education and a desire for knowledge. [53], quoted a number of studies which support this view. Absenteeism is a major area of indiscipline in schools. [41], in his study reported a positive correlation between performance and school attendance, namely that parenting styles contribute to students’ indiscipline. The fact is that dysfunctional behaviour from parents can lower the performance of students.

[9] explored the wide range of violence that occurs in schools. They noted the explosion of violence among juveniles of 10 - 18 years that pose a danger to themselves, to others and the school. They highlight the fact that as educators and parents, we are often reluctant to admit and

acknowledge the violence in society and in the immediate environment. This is because of many reasons. For one, there is always the denial that this is a problem. Second is the fact that the nature and extent of violence is changing and increasing and most of all and unfortunately, it is often unknown to many of us. This creates a vacuum in which the same violence is perpetuated by the same culprits in society and in the school undeterred and undetected. This is further compounded by the fact that we do not know how to deal with it. For example, in the state of California, USA, the constitution was amended to give the school inalienable rights to the safety and peace of the schools [9].

Students’ rebellions against established authority have occurred in practically every country with significant student communities. Since 1960s student disturbances have erupted in advanced capitalist countries such as France, Italy and the United States of America. In France for example, massive student demonstrations shook the foundations of the Fifth Republic. They pressured organized labour into calling a general strike. They also forced the dissolution of the National Assembly and the holding of general elections. Students were largely responsible for subsequent fall of General Charles de Gaulle’s government. In Italy, students demanded reforms and a voice in university administration. Some of the old and new regimes that fell due to student disturbances include those in Cuba, Turkey, South Korea, South Vietnam, Indonesia, and Venezuela, [24].

There has been a growing concern regarding indiscipline in schools within the United Arab Emirates, where teaching methods were blamed for the children’s indiscipline. The parents were getting anxious and frustrated as they complained of the rising incidents of indiscipline and violence in schools. The concern was not only on the risk of destruction of property and injury to persons but also the poor academic performance associated with the growing trend of indiscipline.

According to [46], students’ radicals tend to come from very liberal families and their views tend to be an extension of their parents’ views not a reaction against them. He recommends guidance of students by parents and authorities through dialogue. In addition, the Indian Education system should be able to address the grievances and frustration of the students as a way of ending the vicious circle of unrest among students.

[48], attributes the causes of unrest in Indian schools and other training institutions to the following factors; demand for more freedom, both legitimate and illegitimate, defective education system, aimless life and uncertain future, economic difficulties, excessive number of students in the class, defective teaching methods, indifference family members, unsuitable teachers, student union, lack of co curricular and creative activities, defective examination system, elements of indiscipline in the society, in adequate funding of educational institution by government, international issues, and so on.

### 1.6 Regional Perspective on Student Unrests



The problem of indiscipline in schools is not unique to Kenya. It is a global issue of great concern, spanning political, economic, geographical, racial and even gender boundaries. The schools in Botswana had their image marred by acts of student indiscipline. Some students died and others became blind after they broke into the school science laboratory and consumed toxic amounts of methanol and ethanol. Classes at the university of Botswana were cancelled for three days due to students unrest [23].

Most countries have national policies and education goals to ensure safe and peaceful schools. These may complement international conventions and protocols such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights. However the capacity of school systems to include peace education initiatives in policy and practice vary according to the traditions, infrastructure, funding and current concerns of the country. For countries that have experienced internal wars, human rights abuse or been neglected by government, peace education will have a different emphasis.

Students' unrests have also been witnessed in other African countries, for instance, as the mid-year exams approached in South Africa, boycotts took place in many Soweto schools. This gave rise to the South African Students Movement (SASM) an organization to express students' grievances by organizing mass protests in Soweto. The schools in Botswana had their image marred by acts of student indiscipline. Some students died and others became blind after they broke into the school science laboratory and consumed toxic amounts of methanol and ethanol while rioting against school diets.

In 1980, there was a strike in the Central African Republic over alleged misconduct and embezzlement of school funds by a school head. In another incidence violence erupted after Secondary School and university students were killed during riots to protest against former Emperor Bokassa's decree that required them to wear special uniforms. In Liberia, many of those killed in the Monrovia 'vice riots' during the Easter season in 1979 were students. The Liberian government accused the students of 'chatting (on the streets), not always with a clear idea of what they were protesting about' president Tolbert ordered the closure of the university of Liberia, which he said was being used as a base for subversive ideas and ideologies [24].

### 1.7 Student Unrests in Kenyan Schools

A study conducted by the [27] revealed that secondary schools students' unrest in Kenya were not a new phenomenon and dated back to 20<sup>th</sup> century when the first case was reported in Maseno school in 1908. The boys refused to participate in manual labour and pressed for more reading and writing [47]. The trend continued and the strikes have been changing in nature and characteristics as the number of schools involved also increases. In August 1974, a presidential decree was issued banning unrest or strikes by students and workers but students still went on strike in defiance of this decree [18]. He points out that one major feature of these strikes was that the head teachers were the primary targets of students' attacks and confrontations and the causes were; poor diet, inadequate learning resources,

poor teaching methods, high handedness of head teachers, harsh school rules and use of drugs and other substances.

Since then, numerous strikes have occurred in schools and Educational institutions causing concern. Some have been tragic resulting in the loss of human lives. This culminated in the St. Kizito tragedy when 19 students died. [37] and later the Kyanguli tragedy [30] when 68 students lost their lives. A number of committees have been set up to investigate these unrests. These included the Presidential Committee on Student Unrest and Indiscipline in Kenya Secondary Schools set up in 1991 to look into the causes of strikes and unrest in schools and to make proposals and recommendations aimed at eliminating these strikes. Incidences of violence in schools reached such an alarming rate in 2001 so as to cause a lot of concern among educationalists, school managers and administrators, teachers, parents and students. The response was the formation of a Task Force on Student Discipline and Unrest in Secondary Schools. Violence of such magnitude has scantily been studied through the Commissions and by individual scholars [18], [1], [26].

According to the evidence presented by learners, the state of discipline at their school leaves much to be desired, since it adversely affects their school work. When new teachers cite lack of administrative support as their reason for leaving the profession, they actually mean lack of administrative support in handling student misbehavior. When administrators complain to one another about teachers, they usually commiserate about those who struggle with classroom management and discipline. Seldom did teachers and administrators spend time together addressing an equally important task of developing a solid discipline system [8].

According to [22] use of drugs among school going students and higher learning institutions has not only resulted to strikes and unrest in schools but also poor performance. He challenged parents through the B.O.G. and P.T.A. to assist in restoring order in the schools as a measure to improve performance in schools. A study conducted by the [27] revealed that secondary schools strikes in Kenya were not a new phenomenon and dated back to 20<sup>th</sup> century when the first case was reported in Maseno school. The trend continued and the strikes have been changing in nature and characteristics as the number of schools involved also increases. In August 1974, a presidential decree was issued banning strikes by students and workers but students still went on strike in defiance of this decree [18]. One major feature of these strikes was that the head teachers were the primary targets of student's attacks and confrontations [18].

The causes of the strikes as indicated by students were; poor diet, inadequate learning resources, poor teaching methods, high handedness of head teachers and harsh school rules. A report by the Kenya Secondary School Heads Association in 1999 revealed that strikes in schools were on the increase and blamed it on the print and electronic media. In August 2001, the Ministry of Education formed a Task force to look into the discipline in secondary schools. The task force established that lack of learning resources, food, high handedness, peer influence and lack of communication

between the administration and the students were some of the causes of the strikes [27].

[19] explained that student strikes were a symptom of inability of the schools to cultivate relevant moral values among the youth and that this situation was threatening the socio-economic development of the nation. Between June and July 2008, approximately 300 secondary schools in Kenya went on strike [16] and the strikes were declared the worst ever to be witnessed in Kenya. In Nairobi Province nine schools went on strike and many more schools experienced varied forms of unrest that were successively contained. In Upper Hill secondary school, a dormitory was burnt and one student died in the inferno. Jamhuri High School also went on strike. Other schools like Moi girls in Nairobi, Lenana School, Nairobi School, and Dagoretti High School were among the schools that experienced varied degrees of students' unrest. The schools cited high handedness of the head teacher, harsh punishments and lack of communication channels as some of the causes of the strikes [42].

The Government and stake holders blamed this situation on poor parenting, post-election violence that affected the country in January and February 2008, drug abuse, weak school management systems, lack of security, peer influence and the insurgence and use of mobile phones by students [42]. The secretary general of National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) blamed it on moral decadence, cumbersome education system and breakdown of social order. A Parliamentary Committee on Education was commissioned by the Government in July 2008 to investigate the causes of school unrest. Students interviewed called for scrapping of mock examinations saying that they were too difficult. They also blamed school administrators for what they said was a failure to give them an avenue of expressing their grievances [42]. From the above examples it could be appreciated that student disturbances were indeed an international problem. Therefore, the situation in Kenya needed to be addressed with due reference to what was happening elsewhere in the world.

Unrests in Kenya continue being rampant since 1997 despite the fact that the government had put a lot of efforts to curb them. According to [52], Kenyan schools have seen an epidemic of violence. As never before, learners are assaulting and killing other learners. A number of learners have died or wounded at the hands of their fellow learners is astounding. The number of schools burnt, property destroyed runs into millions of shillings. Clearly escalation of violence in schools is a compelling reason to look at how we reach out to students. They have given the following factors for causes of students' unrest. These include poor management of institutions by head teachers including lack of supervision of curriculum implementation, absenteeism of teachers, unacceptable leadership, style by the head teacher including strictness and dictatorial style of administration with no room for dialogue and poor public relations. All these lead to strikes, riots or general unrest. Head teachers not available or accessible to their students or other stakeholders, not observing high degree of management of the institution by way of availing and maintaining facilities, cleanliness and security has also been cited as a cause. Lack

of financial discipline in discharge of duties without transparency and accountability, delay in implementation of development projects, erratic, changes of fees, impartiality in discharge of duties with unreasonable and biased punishment meted on learners, lack of regular consultative meetings between the head teachers, the PTA, teachers and student council and other stakeholder, weak indecisive, non-functional Boards of Management (BOM) and Parents, Teachers, Association (PTA) and lack of cooperation between the BOMs and head teachers and some teachers. The vigorous nature of the current education system, fear of exams and a society that is becoming increasingly militant are the biggest factors contributing to the strikes. The ban on caning without an alternative form of punishment left teachers in an awkward position, most simply decided to concentrate on their core duty of teaching and leave the messy business of discipline to the principals and Deputies [29].

The incidence of drugs and alcohol among students is another big problem where the new crops of parents have contributed to the current state of affairs. Suddenly our parent's ways were too crude in bringing children up and the word discipline actually sounds like poison to date. We do not want to take the initiative to discipline our children then cry loud when teachers and society in general do so.

BOMs have suggested involvement of parents in the overall academic success of students. Since they were the key models for their children as they play a significant role in shaping their children's emotional intelligence skills. They recommend the following remedies as a way of curbing unrests; ensuring that the students were taught the school code of conduct and encouraged to up hold them. The parents to create a safe atmosphere where the child can grow and develop positively, they be aware of what is going on in their children life and be informed about their development and understand their children behaviour better. They should create quality time for their children. They point out that, students should be listened to and guided, give positive reinforcement for positive behaviour as this is more effective than criticism. They further recommend that the school administration should revise the code of conduct for learners from time to time in cooperation with parents, teachers and learners. They should ensure that the disciplinary practices of the school take place within the framework of the revised laws of Kenya Education Act 2013, appoint a disciplinary committee and ensure fair hearings in which the focus is on positive intervention as restorative option, keep full minutes of disciplinary hearings, hold regular meetings with parents to discuss disciplinary matters, the school principal should organize staff development sessions regarding the management of learners behaviour and ensure that the school has a good orientation programme for new learners especially form ones [30].

When addressing heads of secondary schools during annual provincial conference, [20] said that unrest in schools was a big threat to the development and stability of education sector in Kenya. He cited the following causes of unrest in Kenya; Post election violence, delay in release of FSE monies and salaries for workers where learning programmes were interfered with, sports and games seriously affected ,

workers salaries delayed and consequently the students were incited.

KNEC and exam leakages; students, parents and stakeholders have lost confidence with KNEC, laxity on the administration of exams, suspicion that mocks were being used in moderation of exams led to rejection of mock exams by students, unfair ranking of schools whereby some teachers and heads were rejected after release of results, drug and substance abuse; family unit is disintegrating, Bhang, Alcohol, Miraa is a threat to the survival of the boy child, leadership and emerging issues; divergent rules and regulations from one school to another, conflicting interests among the stakeholders, poor communication, demotivated and overworked principals, untrained prefect body and Poor boarding facilities, whereby dormitories were overstretched in some schools.

He recommended the following remedies to end unrests; Leaders should avoid demonstrations and hate speech, FSE money should be released on time, workers should be recognized, trained and paid in time, KNEC should be overhauled, revision of KNEC Act for stiffer penalties and giving of more powers to BOGs. Parents must be in control of their children, authorities to take stiffer penalties on drug traffickers and brewers, Canteens in the schools must be controlled by schools administrations, principals must be subjected to various training before promotion, increase team work in decision making and harmonize the school rules / regulations. Proper vetting of boarding schools and open rehabilitation centres across the country should take care of the hard core cases. [20] further recommended for establishment of a task force to re-look at the 8-4-4 system of education.

According to [24] it is through strikes and other student led disturbances in schools that students have brought out the problems in our schools and colleges to the knowledge of the public because they don't just happen but are caused. They point out students disturbances are indeed an international problem and the situation in Kenya needs to be addressed with due reference to what is happening elsewhere in the world. [24] attributes student's unrests in Kenya to the following factors; Lack of dialogue between school and college administrators. Administrators should be holding informal gatherings regularly like fortnightly, monthly or once a term where outstanding grievances are discussed such as food menu, they also observed that a lot of student disturbances seem to be an expression of a power struggle between themselves and the established school authority. They also protest against outdated leadership styles and rules of behaviour in learning institutions, where there is no dialogue the students have called a meeting of their own, where radical resolutions are passed. Instead they choose to stage a riot or boycott classes as a way of getting some attention. Dialogue has psychological healing power. It gives the students a feeling of power and importance. They can be listened to; any feelings of bottled-up frustration to anger are dissipated in dialogue. If dialogue is not given a chance, then despair and impatience sets in. This quickly turns into anger and rage. [24] further cites other factors as the causes of the student's unrests in secondary schools:

Communication breakdown: When those in authority fail to communicate the information required to reach the students in good time when there is no explanation to explain why events or situations are taking the trend that they are taking. This creates mistrust and mutual suspicion between the students and those in authority. So the students react to force the administration listen to their grievances.

Poor preparation and rationing of food: Children of school age are growing rapidly and need a lot of food. A hungry student cannot concentrate. This is why a lot of importance is attached to food in learning institutions. When a normal share of food given to students is reduced without warning a rebellion may arise. In other cases food is poorly cooked and becomes dangerous to the health of the students. Such food was rejected and the students might go on rampage.

Teacher transfers: During the learning experience, the students develop a certain attachment to their teachers or administrators through interaction in class and outside class, this attachment is consolidated. The good deeds of a teacher, especially good teaching and hard work in co-curricular activities; will make students develop a liking and admiration for the teacher. Students are likely to protest when their academic or extra-curricular success threatened by the unexpected transfer of such teachers. However, some teachers incite the students in order to protect their interests and to sabotage a given school administration. Other teachers may incite students to go on strike when the principal of the school is being transferred and especially those loyal to him for fear that whoever is coming is unknown to them and is likely to block the benefits that they had enjoyed from the system,

Given the interval combustion associated with adolescence and other changes taking place in the world, there has been a tendency for young people to adopt a militant and confrontational attitude, which rebels against any kind of authority. The scenario is further compounded by outside influence, particularly the abuse of drugs, the negative influence of the media and the decadence of the role of models in our society. Indeed, a good percentage of disturbances in schools are caused by physiological changes that take place during adolescence. At this stage students are arrogant, argumentative, have a know it all attitude to things and are quick to counter any ideas from authority. They derive a lot of pleasure from defying any authority that is placed over them. Research has shown that students' riots and strikes often emanate from classes whose students are in the adolescent stage. The adolescence changes affect the way in which they relate to friends, family and society at large. They feel mature and want independence [31].

Lack of sensitivity by teachers: Teachers and school administrators assume that all is well even after the students have missed night 'preps' for a whole week due to faulty pressure lamps or light bulbs. So they strike to draw the attention of the school principal to their plight.

### **1.8 Factors Associated with Student Unrests in Kenyan schools**



[32], in her research study on student unrests and indiscipline reported that discipline is considered vital for students' academic and social success. A good academic qualification without a good foundation of discipline of the individuals is of no use to the individuals, their families and the society. The society invests heavily in the education of its citizens. A positive correlation between discipline and academic performance was found in this study showing that students that are well disciplined perform well academically. This finding was also similar to that of [20].

According to [33], there is a correlation between school organizations where there is discipline and academic performance. [33] argued that a school's climate that is characterized by social rewards for academic excellence and where discipline and scholastic achievement are valued by the teachers and students has a direct influence on students' performance. Reports on the problem of indiscipline and unrests in schools have been a common feature in the media for a long time. [20] gave a chronological account of protests and destruction in public schools. According to [20], the issue of unrests and indiscipline in schools is of great concern. It has become a worrying trend in that it has evolved from simple protests to the destruction of property and burning of prefects. The upshot was that student disturbance was negatively affecting academic performance.

The report prepared by the Provincial Education Board (Central Province) indicated that indiscipline was rampant, not only in Central province but in the whole country. This same report defines student strikes as the general way word behaviours exhibited by learners in schools. The problem of indiscipline in schools is not unique to Kenya. A survey on a number of previous provincial schools also revealed that indiscipline had caused deterioration in academic performance. It is shown in schools in the form of riots, demonstrations, protests, boycotts, harassments, etc. It has become a disturbing trend in the country's economy and socio-political life, [34]. It was essential that students' unrest is checked before it reaches an alarming level and it poses a great threat to our social development.

According to [33], students in Kenya need to learn how to protest in a non-violent manner. They protest by burning lives, destroying property, and stoning cars. An action which is appealing student must be free to exercise their rights. But they must not take things too far. Students are the leaders of tomorrow, so they must be disciplined now, so that when they grow up they will continue in that path. According to [32], student unrest has become common in the public schools in Kenya. Students in the public schools form gangs, which fight other gangs in other public schools. There is no peace whenever two or more schools meet. If they come together for an inter-school competition, the school that loses wages a war against the winning school. They attack each other with sticks, stones, or any harmful object. They chase each other and injure themselves unfortunately, the innocent ones suffer. The teachers could do nothing, but run since they were unable to stop the students from fighting in such circumstances [51].

According to the [13], students and teachers in schools affected by unrest find it difficult to restore working

relationship after the unrest. The emotional and psychological trauma that characterizes the aftermath of students' unrest strains further interaction amongst the people. The issue of emotional and psychological impact due to unrests in schools has not featured in various reports discussed so far. [34], suggested that there would be need for training of teachers in conflict management as opposed to use of force, which brings anger and resentment among students. There are various causes of student unrest in schools. Students show indiscipline for various reasons.

According to Standa, students' unrest in Secondary Schools manifests itself in the relationship between teachers and students in public schools. When a teacher tries to impose discipline or stick to guidelines, students sometimes resist. After the class, the students gang up and threaten or even attack the teacher. The teacher can no longer discipline the students because he fears that he might also be "disciplined", [34]. [51] argued that lack of democratic leadership together with communication breakdown is a major cause of indiscipline in schools. He suggested that there is a relationship between learning and discipline. Cognitive skills are crucial in academic success, self-esteem, coping skills and overall resilience. In the absence of discipline, the learning and teaching process are hindered. Time is wasted and energy is misdirected to deal with issues emanating from unrest.

### 1.9 Challenges faced by School management in handling unrests

Head teachers and teachers face many problems in managing discipline in schools. [53], reported that violence have implication in schools; teachers have less time to deliver teaching in order to effectively manage classroom disruption, as well as facing many other problem including lack of morale and job satisfaction. Some parents are influential and have eroded the power of teachers over the students whenever teachers punish errant students. [36] observed that teachers are reluctant to punish errant students for fear of being sued by parents. He cited a case of upper hill student who was expelled over alleged use of drugs, but won a case in which he had question the decision of Board of Governors (BOG) to expel him.

The former chairman of the Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association was quoted to have said that the ruling had set a bad precedent in schools as it has stripped teachers of authority they enjoy. This poses a great challenge to teachers in their effort to manage discipline [36]. The school surroundings have negative influence on student behavior. Students find it had to accept a teacher's advice against drug abuse, alcohol promiscuity because these are common in their environment.

### 1.10 Solutions to Student Unrests in Schools

Ideally, schools set rules and regulations for the proper governing of various lifestyles of students, containing what should and should not be done [39]. Regulations on the other hand are authoritative orders with a course of law intended to promote order and efficiency in an organization. [25], also concurred with [39], and argued that effective schools

demonstrate sound inclusive practices, which includes emphasizing school rules and regulations, collaborative leadership and their good practice. The school rules and regulations therefore prescribe the standard of behaviour expected of the teachers and the students.

According to [2], schools rules and regulation are among the strategies designed to instill good conduct of students. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behavior and obedience to school authority [2]. Also on admission to schools, students especially at secondary level, are given prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations [2]. These rules and regulations specify in most cases what school members should do and what they should not do. Despite this expectation, in most secondary schools in Kenya, students break these rules and regulations with wide spread indiscipline acts such as escaping from schools, taking of alcoholic drinks, participating in frequent strikes with closure of schools and suspension of students that affect students academic performance.

Discipline, according to [6], does not merely imply punishment, but it also refers to leading, influencing, reporting and exercising that which is good and right. If discipline does not prevail in a school situation, conduct by both learners and educators can lead to a situation which is unacceptable. That may destroy the culture of teaching and learning in any school. [6], states that maintaining discipline in the classroom is one of the sources of stress for many teachers. Discipline can and should actually be considered to be a way of doing things according to norms of decency.

According to [10], effective teachers are those who "tend to exhibit identifiable personality traits broadly characterized by warmth, a democratic attitude, effective awareness, and a personal concern for learners". In another study, [41] found that educators who reach out to learners in a warm and personal way are able to bridge hostility in the student teacher relationship, teach subject matter, and positively affect the lives of individuals. He further discovered that when learners perceive educators as caring individuals who respect learners, they receive cooperation from learners without regard for the quality of the learner's academic preparation of the excellence of his or her instructional ability.

Although [24], have said that there is no single permanent solution to the problems of strikes and students disturbances in schools, they have come up with solution to curbing students' unrests like mould students' leaders or prefects on the line of maturity. Emotionally mature students' leaders can avert a strike in the institution. Counsel the prefects on how to address situations of crisis in schools, let them be sensitive to students' discussion; moods and behaviour in relation to what is going on in the school and to report immediately any signals of danger. This gives the school administration the opportunity to address the problem before it gets out of hand. A strong and mature prefect body can also play a counseling role to the rest of the students' community, giving them the correct guidelines and delaying any negative actions while promising that the school principal will do something. Always engage the students with work, assignments and research work. Whenever they

are through with exams, let them participate in inter-class sports and games or other relevant activities. These must be well supervised by teachers lest they turn out to be rowdy or violent. Initiate a participatory approach to the formulation of school rules and matters of discipline in schools [24]

Indiscipline in high schools in Kenya has remained a phenomenon that baffles both the Ministry of Education and school administrations. The staggering cost to school property, wasted time, pain, injury and loss of tender lives makes the subject extremely important to study and understand. A school's disciplinary climate not only is the product of educators' beliefs and actions, students' beliefs and actions, and the interaction of these, but is also shaped by the legal and social context of the country [3]. According to [4], actualizing alteration of behaviors, all the school personnel especially the teachers have great responsibilities. In an era where schools across the nation have rapidly and often completely overhauled school policies and procedures as a result of actual or feared school violence, the failure to consider teacher input is especially egregious [12]. Often, the student's perspective is ignored even though he is an important stakeholder in discipline in school.

## 2. Research Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The study would use descriptive survey design in describing and quantifying data. In particular descriptive survey design was be appropriate in that it reviewed and measured the strength of a target group's opinion, attitude or behaviour or other characteristics of a group with regard to a particular subject. It was a study in which information is collected without changing or manipulating the environment. According to [7], descriptive studies could answer questions such as "what is" or "what was" as opposed to experiments that can typically answer "why" or "how". This design was more appropriate in this study since it sought to assess Board of Management perception on students' unrest in secondary schools in Mwingi East Sub-County and enabled the researcher to observe the respondents in their natural setting without manipulation of their environment.

### 2.2 The Study Area

This study was carried out in Mwingi East sub County, Kitui County. The sub County is located in Eastern part of Kenya where the major ethnic group is the Kamba, even though there were other few communities of Arabs, Kikuyu and Somali origin. The major economic activity was subsistence farming, livestock and bee keeping.

### 2.3 Target Population

Kitui County has Two hundred and twenty (220) secondary schools. Specifically, Mwingi East sub County has twenty nine (29) secondary schools of various categories. This has been summarized in table 3.1.



**Table 3.1:** Target population

School categories	No. of schools	No. of students	No. of teachers	No. of BOM members
Day School Single Gender	2	219	7	32
Boarding Single Gender	7	1574	27	102
Mixed day	19	1924	48	304
Mixed Boarding	1	221	5	16
Total	29	3938	87	464

(Source: CDE Kitui, 2016)

## 2.4 Sample design and sampling technique

Schools in Mwingi East Sub-County were selected by stratified sampling. This technique was used because it is less prone to sampling errors and ensures that specific groups are represented even proportionally in the samples and thus was used so as to have representation of all the four (4) categories of schools in Mwingi East Sub-County. According [21] stratified random sampling technique was appropriate when the population from which the sample share at least one common characteristic and thus homogenous. According to [28], a sample ratio of 0.1 to 0.3 should be sufficient to obtain sample representation of each stratum of respondents giving a sample of 80 respondents as shown in table 3.2.

**Table 3.2:** Sample size

Categories of schools	Number of each category	Number of BOM members	Sample size	
			No. of schools	BOM members
Day School	2	32	1	16
Boarding Single	7	112	1	16
Mixed Day	19	304	2	32
Mixed Boarding	1	16	1	16
Total	29	464	5	80

NB: Each school has 16 members of BOM.

Source: sub-county director of education (2014)

## 2.5 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected by using self administered structured questionnaires as tools. They were used to obtain the desired information from the population of interest and since each item designed was addressing specific objective of the study. The questions had been simplified in order to promote convenience and ease of use by the respondent. For the purpose of this study, the questionnaire consisted of closed ended and open ended questions.

## 2.6 Data analysis

The data collected from the sampled respondents were processed using the data processing operations which involved the following: editing, coding and computing of data in order to ensure accuracy and consistency, coding of data were done in order to put responses into categories. This led to data analysis whereby descriptive statistics were used to compute statistics. Qualitative data was categorized and described according to themes whereas quantitative data was organized, edited, coded and computed through use of SPSS. The data was presented in form of pie charts and tables. Simple descriptive statistics used were frequencies and percentages. With help of SPSS package, statistical measures were used to summarize descriptive survey data,

the measures of central tendency or statistical averages; mean, median and mode.

## 3. Data Analysis and Discussion of Findings

**Table 3.3:** Headteacher leadership style can lead to unrests or riots in schools

Head teacher leadership style can lead to unrests or riots in school	No. of Respondents (F)	Percent
Yes	6	85.7
No	1	14.3
Total	7	100.0

The respondents were frank to declare that the Headteacher leadership styles were to certain extent responsible to unrest or riot in schools. This was indicated by the way they responded to this question. Where "yes" had the highest with a percentage of 85.7(6) while the "No's had the least percentage of 14.3%.

According to [35], the teachers might promote indiscipline among students by putting learners to class for long hours without minding about their hours of breaks or games. [35] stated that breaks and inclusive curriculum was quite vital and encouraging to learners because it has balanced hours of the day should be utilized. [39] supported the idea of [35] by saying that strikes were methods of heads that some stress needs attention or to be addressed.

In elaborating the head teacher leadership styles if it could lead to unrest or riots in schools. The respondents indicated that the factors which could lead to strikes in schools were; head teacher performance, ignoring students' views, lack of co-operation, poor exam performance, being a dictator, poor physical learning facilities. The respondents agreed that these were factors which could lead to unrest in schools.

In elaborating how different factors like: being a dictator, Head teacher performance, ignoring student's views, lack of co-operation, leadership could lead to riots, poor exams performance, poor physical learning facilities, according to the respondents they indicated that these variables did encourage riots and unrest in secondary schools and hence they should be addressed immediately whenever they were noted among students.

About the issues related to food whether it could cause unrest to schools the respondents revealed that the following factors were; insufficient food, change of diet, cooking students favorite food, provide clean cooks, provide food on time, right kind of food, sufficient food, the respondents did indicate without proper handling of enumerated issues in secondary schools, students might engage to riots to schools. Respondents continued to argue that such related food factors should be widely discussed by all stakeholders inclusively. Respondents went on to say that heads should continually engage parents in food matters when a need arises. Food matters are sensitive to schools and therefore great care and concern should be enhanced in schools when such need was there.

In the leadership factors which could lead to students unrest, the respondents indicated that mentioned factors

were; delay in addressing students problems, harsh treatment lack of co-operation from leaders, lack of entertainment, misuse of school funds and poor administration statistical indicators to unrest in the schools of Mwingi sub-county. According to researcher BOM should formulate rules and guidelines that are engaging students to management policies and curbing of unbecoming behaviours among students.

Respondents indicated that BOM was unfair to students, ensures students rights are adhered to, unprofessionally; hard demands by the BOM, poor infrastructure in school, poor management, students miss class when sent for fees. The listed factors were indicated as causes of unrests in secondary schools. The respondents reviewed that much was needed from BOM in order to minimize unrests in secondary schools.

As it concerns occupation the respondents were from different areas. This is a clear indication that this researcher used respondents not from one side of education but from all the experts of different professions. This is true because there were the, accountants, administrators, Bee Keepers, Business men and ladies, Farmers, Pastors, Nurses, Kenya wild life service, Lecturers, Lab Technicians, chiefs, Human rights officers and Architecture all these people from different professions were respondents in the BOM section. This being a clear indication that the researcher wanted views from different persons and professionals of Mwingi sub-county so that they can give a clean feature of how riots can take place in schools of Mwingi sub-county.

**Table 3.4:** No. of respondents on school leadership style.

Which factor lead to students unrests in schools	No. of Respondents (F)	Percent
School leadership styles	7	13.2
Peer group influence	25	47.2
School diet	3	5.7
Family upbringing	10	18.9
Drugs abuse	8	15.1
Total	53	100.0

According to table 3.4 several factors lead to student’s unrest in secondary schools in Mwingi East Sub County, with the peer pressure registering the highest percentage of 47.2%. Family upbringing was considered as another strong factor with 18.9%.

**Table 3.5:** Is school leadership one of the causes of unrest in schools

Is school leadership one of the causes of unrest in schools	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	77.4
No	12	22.6
Total	53	100.0

As pertains to the above table and pie chart the respondents reviewed that secondary schools leadership is one of the causes of secondary school unrest in Mwingi East Sub County. This is shown by the ‘Yes’ which posted a percentage of 77.4%., While ‘No’ has a percentage of 22.6 %.

According to respondents there are measures which can be taken to reduce student’s unrests in secondary schools in Mwingi East Sub County. These include the following: administration to start guidance and counseling students, holding forums with students regularly, enhancement of spiritual guidance and nourishment in schools, strengthening guidance and counseling department and holding. According to the ministry of education, the corporal punishment has been banned in schools. Therefore, there is a need for schools to seek for an alternative form of punishments in secondary schools.

There were factors of management which could lead to student’s unrest. According to the respondents they indicated that these factors were: increases of fees when the school fees are increased the students can be affected and riots. Leadership wrangles, poor infrastructure, regular fees send off when the students are regularly sent to collect schools fees at home quite often. Students denied rights by H/teachers, threats from management. These were some of the factors which the respondents said they could lead to student’s unrest in these schools of Mwingi sub-county. This was a clear indication that administration methods of communications with students would be important. This might help in solving the student’s grievances and make the students release their tension which lead to unrests in secondary schools.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

### 4.1 Conclusion

There are different causes of school unrest this can be: uncooperative teaching and non-teaching staff, over loading the learners with class work, lack of proper guidance, lack of enough learning facilities, exam fever, bad company.

Incidences of students’ unrest should not be left to teachers alone but it should a joint responsibility for all the stakeholders. The respondents challenged the parents through the B.O.M and P.T.A to assist in restoring order in the schools as a measure to improve performance. This was a clear indication that the B.O.M and P.T.A were not best playing their roles in schools..In addition, the method of administration used to communicate was important. Intervention strategies should be put in place to curb students’ unrest. BOM members should identify prevalent problems in their schools and see how they may help solve some of the problems that may require support from all the stakeholders. Based on the findings of this study, the BOMs are advised to establish effective intervention strategies for redressing the incidences of strikes in secondary schools. The Deputy principals, teachers, guidance and counseling departments should work together by putting in place measures that would detect any signs of dissatisfaction amongst the students and address them immediately. Students should be advised to report their grievances through open forums and suggestion boxes which should be availed for them. The school teachers, parents and other leaders should embrace role modeling. The respondents indicated that lack of parental guidance was quite minimal among their children; the respondents indicated that parents had few with their children and hence they were poor

models. The study has shown that parents had negative attitude towards teachers' punishment to their children. Parents from study have shown that they did not support fully when handling indiscipline cases of their children. The study has shown that it was big challenge to teachers to handle indiscipline cases in such situation; they should understand that their actions speak louder than words so they should serve as an example when talking about good discipline. There is a need to improve on good channels of communication between the school administration and the students as well as teachers. The school should enhance spiritual programmes. This should be done through employment of school chaplain and invitation of religious leaders who should give spiritual guidance to students from time to time. Individual student's academic progress record should be closely monitored so that any decline in performance or absenteeism should be known and reported and the root causes established immediately. The BOM should set funds aside for teacher capacity building particularly to social skills development and early responses to students well being needs. Subjects that teach about moral values should be made compulsory in schools such as Christian Religious Education

The study showed that management factors that lead to students unrests in Mwingi East Sub County include; school fees increment, leadership wrangles, poor infrastructure, and harsh leadership styles. Students denied their rights by head teachers and threats by the management. All these are management factors which can lead to school unrest. According to learners the state of discipline at their schools was questionable and adversely affected their school work.

The causes could be curbed. If the handling of indiscipline cases, poor performance in internal and external exams, lack of enough learning facilities could be handled amicably with students. In the leadership skills, principals should communicate school regulations and rules openly and cite consequences if students broke one.

The study has shown need to amend management methods for schools. Peer influence from study has shown that it should be well handled and students should be educated on advantages and disadvantages of the same. School leadership should come up with methods of reducing unrest in schools which would make the students feel respected and listened to. This was to make their leadership and the student's time in school easy and conducive for learning.

#### 4.2 Recommendations

To reduce student's unrest in secondary schools student's voices should be heard. The discipline cases should be handled fairly and properly without embarrassment of the student. BOM should source for funds to increase school facilities to enable the students to utilize their time properly. The head teachers should embrace proper channels of communication to all stakeholders so as to avoid suspicion from one another. B.O.M members to create forums and occasions for discussions and sharing amongst BOM, PTA and students. This would enhance team work spirit and unity among all the stakeholders. The ministry of education should be innovative in creating devices and techniques of

handling students grievances and even in serving teachers to counteract new technology development. It should also organize guidance and counseling clubs for schools. Where by the students would be advised on good habits of living and how some things like drugs can be harmful to them when they use them.

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