ROLE OF STUDENT COUNCILS IN MITIGATION OF CONFLICTS CAUSED BY STUDENTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for theConfermentof the Degree of Masters of Science in Peace and Conflict Studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work prepared with no other than the indicated sources and support, and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, a thesis entitled, "**Role of Student Councils in Mitigating Conflicts Caused by Students in Secondary Schools in Kericho County, Kenya."**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late son Kiprono Kelong, who assisted in fees payment, and my son Philemon Kibet for standing in whenever I went to MMUST for lecturers; to my daughters Joyce Chepngetich and Joan Chepkemoi for pushing me to finish the course; and my grandchildren for bringing joy to my life. I also dedicate it to my mother, Alice Cheruto for being there for me all those years. I will forever remain grateful to them for their unwavering support and appreciation.

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ABSTRACT

Student conflicts in secondary schools are one of the most common challenges faced in the 21st century in the modern world. Kenya has faced several incidents of student conflicts in Secondary schools mainly attributed to the cases of indiscipline and conflicts among students in the schools. In Kericho County, several incidences of student conflicts have been witnessed in the different schools, which have caused widespread material losses and other social impacts. The study therefore sought to identify ways in which leadership by the students and the students councils can help in managing conflicts that cause students unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County. The overall objective of this study was to examine the role of student councils in mitigation of student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The Specific objectives were to: Examine the nature of Student Unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya; Assess the structure and functions of student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya; Evaluate the Successes and Challenges of Student Councils in Mitigation of Student Conflicts in Secondary Schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The study was underpinned by participative leadership theory and the functionalism theory. The study utilized the evaluation research design. The study was conducted in Kericho County. The study targeted the following categories of respondents; students, teachers, school principals or head teachers, School boards of management, County director of education and Sub-county directors of education in Kericho county. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to obtain respondents. The total sample for the study included 384 students, 120 teachers, 19 school heads or principals, 19 deputy principals, 19 members of the school boards of management, 1 County director of education and 6 sub-county directors of education. The total sample for the study was568 respondents. Data was collected through Questionnaires, Interviews and Focus group discussions. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented through frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Qualitative data analysis utilized data coding and narrative analysis.Data was presented in form of graphs, charts and tables. Only 14% of the respondents agreed that there have been incidences of unrest in their schools within the last 3 years. However, this number is high considering the harm that the unrest causes. Manifestation of student unrest is usually through burning of dormitories, fighting among students, boycotting classes, theft of school property, refusing punishment, bullying and striking against school administration. The causes of students include changes in government policies, poor administrative skills, congestion, inadequate and poor food quality, social media and politicalagitations. On the influencers of student misbehaving, 94% of the teachers and 90% of the students blame friends at schools. The results further 81% of the respondentsindicated that the student council is elected by the students, with the administration having amajor input. Only 16% agreed that there is no interference of the administration in the formation of the SC. Majority (47%) of the student councils has 21-40 prefects, and only afew (10%) have 1-20 students.The results indicate that 68% of the respondents were comfortable with the effectiveness of the SC, 20% indicated that it was too big to be effective, while 12% said it was too small to be effective. Lack of proper training is the major challenge that the student council has in mitigating conflicts. The study recommends that it is important for the government to ensure thorough and enough participation of all stakeholders in the education sector. It also recommends that the government should restrict the interference of the administration in the formation of the student council. The administration in every school should ensure they offer proper training to the student council on conflict mitigation tactics.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANC: African National Congress

BoM: Board of Management

KSSHA: Kenya Secondary Schools' Heads Association

MoE: Ministry of Education (MoE)

NACOSTI: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation.

SASCO: South African Student Congress.

SASO: South African Student Organization

SC: Student Councils

USA: United States of America

OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Board of Management: For the purpose of this study, the term is used to mean a legally mandated committee that helps in school governance.

Boycotting Classes: In this study, boycotting classes means withdrawal from classes or refusing to attend classes until grievances are heard.

Conflict Mitigation: The term conflict mitigation is used in this study to mean the process of dealing with problems affecting students so that they do not escalate into conflicts.

Influencers: In this study, this term is used to mean something or someone with the power to make students behave in a certain way.

Learners Misbehavior: In this study, learners misbehavior is used to meanimproper conduct such as disruptive talking, chronic avoidance of work, clowning, interfering with teaching activities, harassing classmates, verbal insults, rudeness to teacher, defiance, and hostility.

Political Agitation: In this study the term political agitation refers to activities conducted by politicians, convincing students to engage in criminal activities.

Quality Food: In this study, this is used to refer to enough food for the learners that is notorious and well balanced.

Striking: For the purpose of this study, this refers to the act of attracting attention through extreme and unusual means and behavior.

Student Councils: In this study, student council refers to bodies elected by students and composed of students elected as representatives of the students

Student Leaders: In this study, these are students who represent the interest of other student to the school administration

Students: For the purpose of this study, this term refers to learners in secondary schools, with an average age of 13 to 20 years.

Unrest: In this study, the term refers to a state that disrupts equilibrium in an entity, causing disharmony and disruption of the state affairs.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter gives the background to the study. It states the problem to be studied, the objectives, and the research questions. It also gives the justification, both academic and policy. It further explains the scope of the study, and gives a chapter summary.

1.1 Background to the Study

Student unrest has been faced in various parts of the world for many decades, and has led to various reforms in the education sector globally. Peace is a crucial aspect in the society, which is paramount to the success of each entity. Scholars describe the word unrest as a state that disrupts equilibrium in an entity, that cause disharmony and disruption of the state affairs (Phares, 2002). According to Nyambarega (2018), unrests are dangerous as they disrupt favorable learning environment which is fundamental for students, teachers and other stakeholders in the education sector. Disturbing an entity's equilibrium, which is what unrest does to schools, undermines success in schools (Nyambarega, 2018). Unrest in secondary schools is characterized by violence, destruction of property, go-slows and other features that cause pain, low performance, emotional disturbance and even deaths.

In the modern world, student unrest has been faced in various parts of the world. In the United States of America school violence involving student shootings have been common place over the years(Murage, 2014). In Africa, cases of students' unrest have been faced in various countries including Nigeria, South Africa and other African Countries (Sanchez, Feb 18, 2018). In Kenya, incidences of student unrest in schools and colleges are not a new thing. Almost every year, there are cases of student unrest in secondary

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schools and universities. The incidences of student unrest in Kenyan schools have been attributed to increased cases of indiscipline among students which makes some of the students get involved in unruly behaviors that compromise on the social order in these schools (Mbiti, 2007).

Student unrest in Kericho County has been as common as in the rest of the country. In the recent years, a numbers of secondary schools in the county have been involved in incidences of unrest which have created a situation where many schools have been closed in the area and property worth millions of shillings destroyed (Mukiti, 2014). Some of the schools that have been affected by cases of student unrest in the County include Kericho Boys High, Londiani BoysHigh School and Keben Secondary School in Belgut Constituency and Kiptewit Secondary School. All the cases occurred in 2016. In all these cases dorms were burn and there other forms of unruly behavior by the students.

Educational stakeholders in Kenya have the view that the mode of leadership among students might have in one way or another contributed to the incidences of unrest in Kenyan Schools. In the past, students were led by prefects who were appointed by the school administration (Murage, 2014). Many of these prefects were disliked by fellow students and as such, student unrest would be attributed to the weak student representation in the leadership and administration in secondary schools.

The constitution of Kenya 2010 gives individual of the country to practice their sovereign power. The education system in the country needed changes to ensure students were well advocated for. So the ministry of education developed sessional papers of the basic Act of 2013 number 14 to deal with the issue as illustrated by the Ministry of Education

Science and Technology (2016). The law was instituted to ensure that students felt well represented, hence avoiding chaos and disruption of property in secondary schools. The student council law was born in the year 2008 with a common goal for the advocacy of student council. The ministry of education with other stakeholders, Children Education Fund, and Kenya Secondary School Heads Association sat together and realized that students need active inclusion in major school decisions.

Student councils that have been established in the recent times have a structure of leadership that is elected by students and which is supposed to be the link of communication between the students and the schools administration and as such (Murage, 2014). There is likelihood that these students council can contribute towards mitigating the cases of unrest among students in various Kenyan Secondary schools and specifically in Kericho County.As much as the student council has been involved in decision making, they are never considered in serious matters such as financial expenditure, disciplinary actions or even exams. In this case, the student council has not been empowered to work as expected. Thus, they do not have the capacity to do a lot, in as much as the administration is expecting too much from the student council. Conflicts continue to escalate into unrest, even with the presence of the student council. In this case, it is the prime interest of this study to investigate the role of student body in mitigating conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Instances of conflicts in schools caused by students are still rampant in Kericho County (Koross, 2015). This is happening in spite of the fact that there are student councils that

are supposed to control the cases of student unrest. According to Koross (2015), Kericho County is one of the counties where student unrest was recorded to be rising in an alarming rate in 2015. Students cite different reasons behind their unrest. It is unfortunate that most of the conflicts escalate into dangerous unrests that cause economic, psychological and physical harm to the stakeholders.

1n 1999, Kericho Boys High Schoolstudents raped and sexually molested a female teacher during conflicts (Kigotho, 2000). Such nasty incidences were happening in previous years. After the establishment of the student council in 2013, it was expected that the cases of conflicts in secondary schools would reduce. The council was supposed to act as a bridge between the administration and the students. However, in 2015 alone, incidences of student unrest in schools including Kericho Boys High, Londiani BoysHigh School, Keben Secondary School and Kiptewit Secondary School have shown that student unrest is a serious issue that has to be addressed in the county.

Despite the existence of student council which is supposed to curb the conflicts caused by students, the cases are on the rise in Kericho County. This indicates that there is a problem as the student council has not been effectively able to mitigate conflicts caused by secondary school students. In this case, therefore, it is the prime interest of this study to investigate the role of student council in mitigating conflicts caused by students in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Objectives

The overall objective of this study was to examine role of student councils in mitigation of student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The Specific objectives were to:

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i. Examine the nature of student unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

ii. Assess the structure and functions of student councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

iii. Evaluate the successes and challenges of student councils in mitigating student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

1.4 Research Questions

i. What is the nature of student unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

ii. What is the structure and functions of student councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

iii. What are the successes and challenges of student councils in mitigating student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

1.5 Justification of the Study

1.5.1 Academic Justification

Cases of student unrest have been rampant in schools and have caused not only material losses for the schools, but also emotional torture to the victims of these unrests. Students have been killed in these cases of student unrest and others have ended with injuries and other forms of disability. Therefore, the cases of student unrestsare a society wide concern that has to be addressed (Mukiti, 2014). Various methods that have been used in the past to deal with the issue such as punishing of the perpetrators of these acts have proved ineffective as the measures have not addressed the root causes of the problem.

However, the use of student councils which is a more student centered approach to addressing this problem can yield results. The study, therefore, puts into perspective the role of the student leadership in conflict mitigation among students in secondary schools.

A number of studies have been done around the country in relation to student management. Vundi *et al.* (2014) conducted study in Kakamega county that was focused on the effects of socialization of students council leaders in conflict management in Secondary schools in Kakamega County; Mwikali (2015) conducted a study on Influence of Student Councils' Involvement in Management in Public Primary Schools In Kangundo Sub-county; Mukiti (2014) conducted a study on the Role of Students Council in Secondary Schools Management in Mwingi Central District, Kitui County; Murage (2014) conducted a study on the Influence of Student Councils on Management of Discipline in Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga East District; and Kinyua (2015) conducted study on factors Influencing Effectiveness of Students' Councils in Public Secondary Schools in Kirinyaga East Sub-County.All these studies have been done of student councils, yet none focuses on the role of student councils in conflict mitigation in secondary schools.

Nyambarega (2018) conducted a study on the factors influencing student unrest in Kenya's secondary schools. He conducted a survey in Kericho, Nyamira, Kisii, Nakuru, Uasin Gichu, and Embu counties. The study concluded that unrests disturb peace and tranquility, which is paramount for the success of all entities, including secondary schools. However, the study did not consider the role of student council in reducing the unrest, and this is what the current study focused on. Additionally, despite Kericho County being one of the most affected counties in Kenya, enough study has not been

conducted on student unrest in the county (Mukiti, 2014). The study, therefore, generates new academic knowledge relating to issues concerning students' councils and conflict mitigation in secondary schools in Kericho County.

1.5.2 Policy Justification

The study findings are also beneficial to education experts and policy makers on dealing with issues relating to students' unrest and effective leadership among secondary schools students. The findings, therefore,are helpful in the process of early detection of the mood change and mitigation of conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County as well as in other parts of Kenya.

Over the years, Kenya has witnessed massive destruction of property because of student unrests. The unrest has caused the loss of student lives bringing grief and fear across the country about the safety of their children. The ministry of education together with other stakeholders, UNCEF, and KSSHAformed a student council in 2008 to help address the issues of secondary school students. The student council law, which was enacted in 2013, was a tool to help students exercise their power through the leaders they elected at school. Students were given more ownership of school programs which proved effective to most schools.

However the, student council has faced several challenges in trying to mitigate conflicts and disputes at school. The student council law gives power to elected representatives to bridge the gap between the administration and student effectively, and overcoming the challenges faced in addressing student issues. In this case, this study will inform the

policy makers on important aspects that should be revised to make the student council law more effective.

1.6. Scope of the study

The study was conducted within the bounds of Kericho County and all the respondents were from the county and not any other county. The study was specific on students' councils and the issues of student unrest and conflict mitigation among students. The study, therefore, did not deal with any issues apart from the ones mentioned here. The study investigated the role of the student council in conflict mitigation since it was put in place in 2013, up to 2018 when the study took place. The study was conducted in 2018, from August to November.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, justification of the study and the scope of the study. Chapter two reviews relevant literature and provides a conceptual framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews relevant literature in relation to the objectives of the study. It gives a critical analysis of what other scholars have said about the topic. It explores various studies and documented reports regarding the role of student council in mitigating student disputes. It narrows down the data and exposes the gap in knowledge that needs to be bridged using the results of this study.

2.1 Nature of Student Unrest

Student unrest has not been understood through research and as such has left many practitioners in the fields of journalism, and other educational commentators grappling with ideas on what causes these unrests. These practitioners have in this regard associated student dissidence to generational conflicts and conflicts over identities. However, the modernization and psychological analysis presents a case of historical concern relating to the breakdown of communal and corporate youth culture and its challenge by a critical counterculture characterized by different values, customs, and organizations (Konrad 2012). Aiding the process of transition from dependence on the family to independence in a range of group experiences such as student associations, socialize these young people toward roles of adult members of the community and also create a safety valve for sporadic outbursts of violence.

At some point in this process of experiencing leadership opposition groups arise, based on voluntary participation and anti-authoritarian ideals. This based on a mindset that is radically disaffiliated by the conventional assumptions of the grown-up world. These

protests are likely to take a cultural perspective such as bohemian life-style rebellion or political perspective such as radical activism directed towards revolution.

Student unrest has been faced in various parts of the world for many decades and has led to various reforms in the education sector globally. In the modern world, student unrests have been faced in various parts of the world. In the USA school violence involving student shootings have been common place over the years. In 1999, Columbine high school in Colorado USA had a shooting incident in which two students opened for on their colleagues and killed a dozen students and a teacher (BBC News,April 20, 2018).More recently Students in the USA organized the largest student protest known as the March of our lives to protest the killing of students and faculty members at Marjory Stoneham Douglas high school (Sanchez, Feb 18, 2018). The students were protesting the increasing wave of gun violence in Schools in the USA.

In 2016, South Africa experienced a long and protracted wave of student unrest in public university. The unrests that were violent and involved clashes between the police and students were caused by the students' demands for free education following the government's directive to raise tuition fee 10 to 12 percent. In the effort to resist this, a hash tag #feemustfall was used to mobilize protestors in South African university and the protests turned violent leading to damage of property as the student engaged the police(BBC, October 4, 2016).

In Kenya, incidences of student unrest in schools are not a new thing. Almost every year, there are cases of student unrest secondary schools and universities. The incidences of student unrest in Kenyan schools and colleges have been attributed to increased cases of

indiscipline among students which makes some of the students get involved in unruly behaviors that compromise on the social order in these schools (Mbiti, 2007). On many occasions student have committed acts of violence in schools in the effort to get the school authorities to give in to their demands. Some of the acts that have been committed by students include burning of school facilities such as dormitories, attacking teachers and attacking fellow students whom they do not agree with (Agenga & Simatwa, 2011). The use of violence by students to vent their frustrations has been a common activity in Kenya right from secondary schools to University. The incidence of violence and Unrest in Secondary schools was first recorded in 1991 when students from St. Kizito in Meru Ciunty Kenya invaded girls dormitory and raped several girls in the process killing 19 girls. The situation has since then deteriorated from bad to worse as the incidences of violence in schools have kept increasing in schools across the country.

The use of violence a way of venting out frustration is a major concern to stakeholders in the education sector. In some cases, these students have targeted their own leaders in this wave of violence as witnessed in the incident in Nyeri High school in 1999 when four prefects were burnt by their fellow students in their cubicles as they were sleeping.

In Kenya, prefects have for many years been used as the student leaders. This led to the situation where students rebelled due to bad treatment by these prefects. Over the years many school heads have been appointing prefects without consultation with teachers and students(Muli, 2011). Some of these students who were appointed as prefects were extremely unpopular and some were grossly in disciplined and ended up molesting fellow students. Such acts led to the situation where students would get angry and rebel against such students hence leading to unrest.

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To arrest the situation there is need to enhance communication between students and the school administration so that the issues that are of concern to students are dealt with before the issues get out of hand. One way of doing this is by having strong student leadership with desired leadership qualities and capable of communication effectively both to the students and the school administration.

2.1.1 Factors Leading to Student's Unrest in Secondary Schools

According to Mackatiani*et al*. (2016), unrest in secondary schools contributes to damages through destruction. It leads to poor performance among students, which draws the attention of many educationists, teachers, scholars, and the government. Unrest is caused by factors such as forming groups within the institutions, raised school fees, deficiency of assets, student's family background, and wrong upbringing.

According to Nyambegera (2018), formation of groups within the institution is one of the major causes of unrests in secondary schools. Division among students is usually seen in the secondary schools' institutes. These divisions are typically caused by small fights which divide the students into groups, in a way that these groups consider themselves as enemies. As a result, students develop an ego and let go of nothing (Nyambegera, 2018). Additionally, they create attitudes that create more problems among students. When the enmity between the formed groups gets worst, it becomes a fight amongst the students. Therefore, internal groups and disputes within secondary schools can cause indiscipline as they may bunk classes to fight the opponent groups. Most frequently, the arguments become worse, leading to the formation of an internal riot (Cheloti, *et al*., 2014).

Nyambarega (2018) adds that raised schools cause many students to be uncomfortable. Not all students belong to affluent families. Therefore, some students are unable to afford an expensive fee structure (Nyambegera, 2018). This means that the hike in the fee in secondary institutions is unaccepted by most students and can cause a violent riot in these institutions. Therefore, educational institutions should keep costs constant that favors students as fee hike make the students protest.

In the views of Ndavi (2016), inadequate assets also contribute to the unrests. Sometimes the secondary institutions do not deliver to their students enough educational services compared to the school fees they collect. Poor academic service delivery can be due to a lack of resources such as an insufficient number of computers, furniture, and lab equipment compared to the number of students (Ndavi, 2016). Therefore, when these institutions are not upgraded with modern technology, they may opt to protest.

Aute (2019) and Nyambegera (2018) point out that the children's upbringing mostly determines their nature and behaviors. How the parents treat their children at their homes can evaluate their actions outside their compounds. Meaningfully, if a student is spoiled with much love, protection, and care by the parents, they indirectly become indiscipline (Ndavi, 2016). Again, if the parents make every work concerning their house centered on their child, they can grow undisciplined (Nyambegera, 2018). Most probably, the children get used to their behaviors while at home (Aute, 2019). As a result, they start showing unaccepted behaviors to the teachers and other students (Aute, 2019). This can also shape riots and strikes in educational institutions. These students boycott classes of taking violent actions whenever teachers or other students do not agree with their

demands. Therefore, the wrong upbringing can significantly influence the secondary students' unrest.

Drug abuse leads to risk taking behaviors among young adults and adolescent students in secondary schools. Despite the education and the worldwide concern about the dangers of psychoactive substances, misuse of illegal drugs, and self-medication, most secondary students, especially adolescents, have limited the knowledge of their adverse consequences (Ndavi, 2016).Nyambegera (2018) also identifies drug abuse as a significant cause of strikes in secondary schools leading to low performance and increased school drop-outs at the secondary level (Cheloti & Gathumbi, 2016). Therefore, the abnormality in the students' attitudes in secondary schools is mostly the aftermath of drug abuse.

Devine (2004) argues that indiscipline in school leads to the violations of the rules and regulations that govern the school. The government under the ministry of education oversees the establishment of the polies, therefore, the schools also possess the power of establishing certain rules to enhance smooth running of the institution (Adderson & Ritter, 2017; Devine, 2004). Discipline is a fundamental concept for a student to acquire qualitative education. There are varieties of factors discussed below that leads to indiscipline within a school institution.

Misunderstanding is another factor that increases indiscipline and unrest in secondary schools. This mostly results from lack of freedom of expression by the students, hence exerts pressure that demands them to find various alternative ways to express their frustrations which eventually leads to disruptive behaviors. It is necessary for the students

to understand the importance of abiding to the school's policies. The students' council intervenes in ensuring that the rest of the students have an elaborative understanding on the issues that affect them.

The advancement of science and technology has increased rapidly; it is a major factor influencing student's behavior. Students are hooked to social media platforms to acquire psychological satisfactions. The mannerisms observed are transferred to the school premises and in a couple of time adopted within the institution (Black & Shavit 2016). Students purchase electric gadgets such as mobile phones for the purpose of entertainment and carry them to school illegally, hence violating the schools policies. This has led to the proliferation of students who are been found in possession with phones within the school premises. Keogh & Whyte (2005) argue that the penetration of internet has contributed to high cases of indiscipline, hate speech displayed on the internet during campaigns that express tribalism are inherited in colleges and universities especially during the campaigns of the students elections (Gallagher, 2010). The unorthodox means of passing the examination have been instilled by the social media since it has interfered with the positive thinking of students resulting into increased exams irregularities.

Good communication between students and teachers is essential in all learning institutions. Communication can help solve problems that may arise from personal indifferences, peer pressure, uninteresting classroom lessons, and comprehending problems. This means that a lack of or poor communication may worsen the relationship among students or between students and teachers or make the institution more unfavorable (Ndavi, 2016). For instance, most students feel uncomfortable while trying to

connect with teachers personally, making them avoid communicating. Additionally, excessive powers given to student leaders hinder free communication between prefects and other students. The research shows that religious education instructions can deal with students' violence (Ngome, 2019). Most often, teachers lack the drive and passion for influencing students' character through proper communication. Therefore, lack of communication can significantly fuel unrest in the secondary schools.

Across the world, dissatisfied individuals resort to strikes. Strikes mainly happen when institutions and groups of specific individuals feel that their frustrations are not being looked into by the relevant parties. Secondary school strikes have been present in Kenya with the first incident happening in Maseno School in the year 1908 (Cheloti, *et al*., 2014). Several factors have led to the insurgence of strikes in different parts of the country, with Nairobi County exhibiting the highest secondary school strikes in Kenya. The school is a basic unit of any education system in a country, geared to fulfilling its community needs and expectations. Frequent changes in government policies combined with poor administrative skills lead to chaos in an institution of learning (Nyongesa, *et al.* 2019). Large classes lead to congestion; therefore, boycotting and frequent fights are witnessed in school. Also, poor quality food and influence from social media fuel student unrest more rapidly. Societal tensions and political agitations push have a huge impact on student unrests in secondary schools. In Kenya, unrests are invigorated by internal and external factors surrounding the education system's functional unit.

Scholars agree that external and internal factors have proven to accelerate student unrest in secondary schools. Changes in government policies that do not favor students also increase the likely hood of having student unrest. Poor administrative skills bar

communication between students and administration. Congestion brought about by large class intakes limits space and attention leading to cases of chaos in secondary schools (Nyogesa, et al. 2019). Food is vital for teenagers, and if in little supply, it can cause mayhem at school. Also, the social media contributes greatly to the dissemination of information among students leading to cases of unrests in schools. Societal disturbances, community tension, and political agitation are the leading external factor to students' strikes and arson attacks. Student leaders, teachers, and school administrators should work together to ensure grievances are aired and dealt with to avoid further digression of student problems that lead to the destruction of property and student lives.

However, with the student council in place, even with the presence of all the above factors, student unrest should have reduced. It is unfortunate that the student council, which was initiated with an aim of bridging the gap between the administration and the students, has not managed to do that. In this case, is there are still cases of serious unrest in the study area that the study was aimed at investigating. The role of the student council in managing conflicts so that they do not escalate into major unrest required further investigationwhich this study aimed to do.

2.1.2 Manifestation of Student Unrest in Secondary Schools

According to Ngome (2019), violence in the educational institutes have been a reoccurring issue for years. Unrest is the act of disorder, strike, lawless, and indiscipline. Unrest denotes increasing agitation of secondary students resulting from unattended political needs or extreme punishment and frustrations from teachers and student leaders. Restlessness can be used to express the unwanted established authorities in an attempt to

acquire the desired requirements (Ngome, 2019). In addition, Nwokorie (2020) argues

that students can also express their hunger through noisy public disorder. They can take

violent actions as they angrily seek recognition to voice their minds to the school

administrations. Consequently, schools experience a state of disruption and instability.

Some forms of unrest manifestations are bullies within students, property destructions,

boycotting of classes, disobedience of school rules and regulations, and low academic

performance. Students can also opt to manifest unrest through songwriting or oral

expression (Nwokorie, 2020).

Bullying in schools, especially during the unrest, is an issue that affects numerous

education institutes in the entire world. In 2016, the statistic reported that a fifth of the

total students is bullied in the learning institutions (Kamaku et al., 2016). Bullying is an

aggressive behavior caused by an imbalance of power to the extent of causing conflict

and harm. The students who suffer bullying feel powerless and threatened (Kamaku et al.,

2016). Bullying is usually persistent and destructive and can worsen if the teachers are

not made aware of it. Consequently, bullying can cause long-lasting physical, emotional

and psychological problems. Therefore, teachers need to know the signs of bullying and

ways to combat it.

Kamaku et al., (2016) opines that the causes of bullying include differences in

appearance, race, sexual orientation, and social status. For instance, the center for

education statistics realized that twenty-five percent of the secondary students who

suffered bullying in 2016 were African Americans. Twenty-two percent were Caucasian

students, and the rest were Hispanic and Asian students. During students' unrest, some

students bully others due to their racial differences or differences in

appearance.Additionally, as Nwokorie (2020)notes, the desire to be considered brave and confident during unrest or demonstration can drive them to bully others. Those who have problems at home, such as neglect, abuse, or divorce, can have the opportunity to bully others during demonstration due to despair, jealousy, or anger (Nwokorie, 2020).

Bullying during students' unrest can lead to long-lasting side effects such as poor academic performance, as the affected student's participation and interest in schools decreases. Bullying can also lead to self-destructive behaviors and unexplained injuries. The bullied students are likely to differ from health problems such as suicidal thoughts and actions, depression, insomnia, and low self-esteem (Ngome, 2019). Bullying impacts both the students, parents, friends of the bullied students and classmates. For instance, the unrest caused by groups' formation within a learning institute, the groups considered inferior, might experience anxiety and depression or fear of becoming a target. Therefore, bullying during students' unrest may cause long-term effects and should be prevented as soon as the start.

In the views of Kamaku et al. (2016), students' strikes and unrest have resulted in the destruction of schools' property and theft within students. Although there have been various attempts to reduce this phenomenon, there has been a reoccurrence of violence, students' unrest, and the destruction of the school's property, especially secondary schools (Kamaku et al., 2016). Ngome (2019) postulates that Furniture, buildings, books, tools, equipment, and buses are some of the school property students can destroy during unrest and strike. Replacing these properties can be quite expensive for replacing schools' administrations. Theft is also common during student unrest (Ngome, 2019).

Students can boycott classes as a way of manifesting their unrest. They may often boycott classes to express their opinions against the discrimination of students of color, insufficient furniture and other school property, and boring class lessons (Ngome, 2019). For instance, in August 2019, the local Chinese media estimated over ten thousand secondary students who joined a class boycott co-organized by two student groups as a sign of democracy protest. Therefore, schools' administrators should look for reasons and solutions when students boycott classes during the unrest.

Most students' nature is that when their problems are not heeded to, or when the school administration cannot solve their problems, they resort to violent means to attract the public's attention. When several restless students within an institution grow large, they form a bond on a common platform and decide not to adhere to the school rules as a way of manifesting their unrest (Maingi et al., 2017). These rules play an essential role in molding the students' behaviors and preparing them for the world. These rules should ensure suitable conditions and actions are established and maintained in the learning institutions. Most importantly, these rules can be more effective if the parents, teachers, and school administrators show good examples to them as they copy and imitate their characters. They should also reduce indiscipline cases through increased supervision instead of coming up with unreasonable school rules. Students' mistakes should be corrected with love rather than negativity.

Students may manifest their state of unrest by disobeying strict rules such as listening to music, putting on coats while in class, and tying the ties too short. Even though these rules do not make any difference in the students' performance, disobeying them is a manifestation of student unrest, leading to strikes if not considered (Maingi et al., 2017).

The teachers should not deal with students in an extra strict way because they have sensitive hearts and minds. Therefore, they need to be handled with love and care. This means that instead of scolding a student, a teacher should explain the mistakes in a polite way that a student can understand.

A poor performance in schools manifests students' unrest. The nature of students is mistaken. Most people think students are filled with attitude, ego, and anger. They believe the students no longer have an interest in learning or do not care about their performance but go to school to meet friends or pass the time (Nwokorie, 2020). However, this is not true. If a student is losing interest in schools or if the performance declines, then it means that they are restless. This can be due to the school administration's inability to put learners on the right track or lack of resources.

Nwokorie (2020) believes that poor performance is a manifestation of unrest caused by poor inter-personal relations between teachers and students. Poor students and teachers, constant changing of teachers, and broken home experience. Therefore, teachers should create a conducive environment where they can be accessed by all students (Nwokorie, 2020). They should also show care, inspire students, and motivate them to increase performance and reduce unrest the chances of strike and rioting. Additionally, students' unrest caused by parents, such as domestic violence, makes the students lose interest in learning, making them perform poorly. Changing teachers incessantly also contributes to students' unrest, which contributes to their poor academic performance. This slows down the learning process as it takes days for students to adapt to new teachers.

Francisca (2012) agrees that growing up as a teenager in a dynamic society is immensely challenging across the globe. Students are always under pressure to perform and follow social norms instituted by society whether they apply to a current situation. Some individual students cave in and develop rebellious attitudes towards what is required of them by parents or teachers. Hence, indiscipline cases rise, and with students influencing each other at school, student unrest cases increase. This has led to students fighting, stealing, destroying school property, and boycotting classes (Francisca, 2012). They also refuse punishment from teachers, bully fellow students, and even strike against the school administration. The manifestation of student unrest in secondary schools in Kenya has been witnessed over the years, with massive debates on the way to fix the issues.

Studies show that even with the presence of the Student council in Kenya, there has been no significant change in the change of manifestation of student unrest (Mwaniki, 2018). On the same note, Karanja & Bowen (2012) points out that Kenyan student at secondary level manifest dissatisfaction in various ways to the school administration. Parents have a huge responsibility of ensuring they bring up their children to respect and treat other people well to avoid bullying. Teachers can work together with students and institutional heads to ensure cases of indiscipline are handled before they get out of hand through administering consistent and efficient punishment methods to wrongdoers. Students need good leadership from student leaders and principle heads to ensure disobedience, proper attendance of classes, and theft are well taken care of (Karanja & Bowen, 2012).

According to Maingi, et al. (2017), the administration should ensure that rules set are fair, make an impact in the students' lives, and are democratic. The manifestation of student unrest in Kenya increased after post-election violence (Maingi, et al. 2017). In addition,

Ngome (2019) points out that many young lives have been lost and the committees that probe into the issue of strikes in secondary schools should ensure their findings and solutions are implemented to the letter using the help of school heads and teachers (Ngome, 2019; Maingi, et al. 2017).

Research reveals that secondary students' unrest can be manifested through property destructions, rules and regulations disobedience, boycotting of classes, poor academic performance, and bullies (Kamaku, et al. 2019). These manifestations can grow to strikes and riots if not taken into considerations. Therefore, school administration, teachers, and parents should work closely with students to understand and prevent the factors that cause students' unrest. In this case, this study investigates role of student council in mitigatingconflicts. Thus, one of the objectives is to examine nature of the student unrests so as to understand how student unrest is manifesting in the current dynamic society, considering the existence of a student council that is elected by the students.

2.2 Structure and Functions of Student Councils

According to Kumwenda (2010), a student council is an organization of students that entails curricular and extracurricular activities in which it provides a platform for students to exercise leadership skills and democratic rights. It's a body constituting selected students who are either nominated or elected to represent the affairs of students .The student leaders have adhered to work under the supervision of a superior body guided by a constitution that contains a variety of rules and regulations (Kumwenda, 2010). The collaboration of students is facilitated by the student's council, which increasingly impacts the activities within the schools' premises.

Mwanza, (2013) states that the student's council as a representative structure of student's works together with the school management to ensure the successfulness of the institution is attained by helping it in achieving its goals. The instances of indiscipline within a school institution are attributed by non-participative decision making process (Mwanza, 2013). Behavior is referred to the way a person conducts oneself toward a particular attribute, the management of discipline within a school institution is aimed at ensuring that the students are able to conduct themselves responsively and abide to the rules and regulations that are laid down by the institution (Daniel, 2015). Discipline is a form of guidance that helps in maintaining order; it forms the blood life of the successfulness of the institution. It is achieved when a school provides a conducive environment in which the student are aware of the need to be responsible and the consequences of being irresponsible. The students leaders are responsible for facilitating coordination of activities with the rest of the students. The good quality leadership within the student's council impacts positively to the community as they develop to be responsible adults.

Student unions also known in other countries as the student councilsand have different structures of leadership which are arranged in ways that are key in ensuring that students' leadership is organized in a proper way. Students union refers to an institutionalized group of students for collaboration of relationship among the students themselves and between them and other key social stakeholders in a nation (Akinboye & Eesuola, 2015). The stakeholders include school authorities, the political class, the media, Governments Departments, other agencies, the corporate world and the state. Globally, standard practices identify student unions as on is "saddled with the responsibility of managing the affairs of students ... to represent the interest of students" (Adelabu & Akinsolu, 2009).

In the USA, student councils are known as student governments. These student governments are found in both secondary education as well as higher education. The students' governments in the USA vary across institutions depending on the composition of the student population in those institutions. In the USA, the student governments are structured like the federal system of government with three branches of government including the executive, legislature and judiciary. These three branches of students' governments in the USA have distinct roles but are also interdependent on each other. In the USA the executive arm of student government is led by the students President who has a cabinet. The students'government also has a legislative arm which has the legislative veto, recall, and referendum.

In the UK, the structure of the students' leadership is different from that of the USA. In the UK, students unions are led by a trustee board which is headed by the Sabbatical trustees elected on one term basis of a maximum two years each. The Trustees are in charge of all matters concerning student including reputational, legal and financial integrity. They also manage student unions and act as stewards of students assets. The Trustee board can delegate its powers to operations group and union councils which then would work towards ensuring the daily operation of the unions are properly coordinated. The operations group is led by an executive officer who has delegated powers to manage the daily operations of the students union. The Union council on the other hand represents students and formulates policies on behalf of the students. The council also holds powers from the Trustee board to amend the union's constitution and also do follow ups on any issues approved by the trustee board.

Just like in other parts of the world, Adelabu & Akinsolu (2009) observed that students unions in Africa often are run like "a typical government; it has senate and also examines legislative procedures". Additionally, the scholars assert that the student unions provide a platform where students practice political leadership roles. Akinboye & Eesuola (2015) further emphasize that, students unions are made up of three branches of government: executive, legislature and judiciary. In this regard, the Unions practice representative democracy in which different faculties and halls of residents are represented as part of the leadership representing various student constituencies.

In Nigeria, traditions of the University student Unions, just like other parts of the world emerged from traditions of the Medieval Europe(Utomi, 2006). The use of conventional governance systems in the Universities is to enhance the smooth operations of the Universities. The government operations also enhance the involvement of the students in political roles and socio-political affairs in the country (Eesuola 2012). Succinctly put, the students union can be a fertile soil for experimental political skills and leadership (Akinboye & Eesuola, 2015).

The student councils are not only found in the Universities in Nigeria but also in Secondary schools. A study by Sabitu (2014) revealed that students' councils are key in ensuring proper leadership and discipline in Secondary schools. He further, suggests training of students through workshops to enhance their skills on conflict management.

Student councils in Kenya have been known more in the Universities until recently when the system of students electing their own leaders was introduced in Secondary schools. In the past, students in secondary schools were led by prefects who were appointed by the

school administration (Idu& Olugbade, 2011). The prefects were not representatives of the student but rather acted as "eyes" of the teachers when students were left alone. The narrative of student councils in Kenya has mainly been associated with activism, riots and protest which have for many years been common in Kenyan public universities.

The Idea of student Council (CS) was mooted by Kenya Secondary Schools' Heads Association (KSSHA) in collaboration UNICEF to make leadership in secondary schools more participatory (UNICEF, 2011). Based on the Initiative an autonomous team of Student Council Leaders (SCLs) would be elected by students.

The students' councils in Kenya are also run like small governments except that the councils do not have a judiciary as seen on other parts of the world. In Kenya, the students' governance structure is led by a President who is elected. Then student governing council is also made up of the executive members of the council and the legislative arms of the council known as students' congress which is made up of representatives from faculties as well as those from various halls of residence.

The role of University councils is to represent students and present their interest, issues and concerns to the University Administration. In Kenyan Universities for example, the student councils have representatives who sit in the University senate to represent students when decisions are to be made on issues affecting the students. According to Obiero (2011), lack of proper consultation and agreement between student's councils and the administration was the major cause of student unrest in the learning institutions. Mule (2011) in a study conducted in in Mwala district further asserted that the Principals indicated that they appreciated the need for participatory mode of management in schools

which would include all stakeholders including students. However, the fact that this kind of management was not embraced created disconnect between school administrators and the students who were desperate to be heard.

Over the years, Kenya has witnessed massive destruction of property because of student unrests. The unrest has caused the loss of student lives bringing grief and fear across the country about the safety of their children. The ministry of education together with other stakeholders, UNCEF, and HSSHA formed a student council in 2008 to help address the issues of secondary school students. The student council law was a tool to help students exercise their power through the leaders they elected at school. Students were given more ownership of school programs which proved effective to most schools. However the student council has faced several challenges in trying to resolve conflicts and disputes at school. The student council law gives power to elected representatives to bridge the gap between the administration and student effectively, and overcoming the challenges faced in addressing student issues.

According to GoK (2016), the student council law has been effective in reducing student unrests because it caters to the students' needs first. The student council law helps student leaders practice disciplinary and supervisory roles within their institutions. The relationship between student's council, teachers, and non-teaching staff required good communication. Student leaders act as a model to other student because they display leadership skills, while airing student grievances and detect tension among the students. Training the elected students helps minimize interference from the administration (GoK, 2016). Also, fear of being considered an outcast leads to fear and disrespect for student leaders. Moreover, this leads to lack of an open channel to handle disputes. Student

leaders, the school administration, teachers, and non-teaching staff must work together to ensure positive learning environment is created through dialogue and active student participation in major school decisions.

Despite the fact that the student council has been effective, it has not managed to resolve most of the conflicts that the students have with the administration. In fact, as studies have proved, the student of the council requires some adjustment so that it can create an effective platform to resolve conflicts (Mukiti, 2014). Thus, this study concentrates on the role of the student council in mitigating conflicts in secondary school. It also focuses on the structure and functions of the student council with the aim of identifying the gaps in the structure, which should be fixed to come up with an effective student council.

2.3 Successes and Challenges of Student Councils

Globally student councils have been successful in leading social change. In the USA for instance in the 1960s during the civil rights struggle, students Unions in the state of Georgia were actively involved in protests with the aim of changing the Political systems in the country. Students were also actively involved in the opposition to the Vietnam War in the USA. The role of students leaders in the civil rights activities increased the Pressure that the government w facing with regard to the civil rights activities and thus helped in the attainment of equality of races in the USA.

In the March 2018, high school students organized the largest protest which millions of people attended in to protest against gun violence in schools. The March on of our lives was organized by Student leaders from Marjory Stoneham Douglas high school and was a successful event basing on the number of people it attracted and the type of attention it

drew across the world. There was massive media coverage of the event and through this event student sought to bring about change which they believed was elusive due to the insensately of the government.

In Apartheid South Africa, students councils especially by black and radical white who fought against the racial segregation in University education. The struggle for equality was born in Universities in Southern Africa as early as 1936 when the students leaders in the University of Witwatersrand Protested against segregation polices that required in students to live in separate residences, eat in separate halls, and not mix easily at social events (black males and white females). The protests were also against activities that restricted the enrolment of black students, and having restricted access to second year courses in fields such as medicine.

The students protest on South Africa took a different momentum in the 1960s. The emergence in 1968 of the South African Student Organization (SASO) as a black consciousness organization which maintained an exclusive black membership comprising African, Coloured and Indian people who rejected apartheid, however, decidedly changed the future of South Africa. The activities of SASO drew attention to the limited role blacks played in their own universities, emphasized black dignity and pride and from 1970 onwards students became involved in protest actions at several black universities. These actions included boycotts against state appointed university leaders, protests against the expulsion of student leaders and support for black people establishing a broad range of youth, women, community, and medical civil society organizations to build black solidarity. The activities of these student maintained pressure on the apartheid regime and eventually in the early 1990s gave room for negotiation between the ANC

and the apartheid leadership. In 1992, in an effort to strengthen the voice of students' leaders in the South African political struggle, black student and white students who supported the struggle for equality formed South African Student Congress (SASCO).The organization was made of black and white students who supported the ANC and pilled more pressure on the government to give room for racial equality culminating into the independence of South Africa in 1994.

In Kenya, student unions have been useful in understanding the challenges affecting students. Effective students unions have been key in helping in the students develop their leadership skills and other aspects of life. Student unions in Kenya have been important in nurturing of student talents and other skills that have helped students realize their full potential. Students for example have various clubs in their schools that allow students pursue their various interests as part of the extra-curricular activities (Yuen & Leung, 2010). Students through their clubs often elect their leaders who are able to lead them in various areas. Academic and non-academic clubs in schools can be used to demonstrate the capability of student leadership in Kenyan Schools.

Generally, the student councils are a new concept in Kenyan secondary schools but which has proven to be important in helping to resolve incidences of student's unrest in these schools. According to Kyungu (2009) student leaders in secondary schools need proper leadership training and proper enumeration of their responsibilities as leaders so that they become effective in their leadership roles.

Despite some successes of the student council, there are a number of challenges that bedevil the student councils and unions around the world. A study conducted in

Irelandindicated that student unions in smaller schools were more effective than those in larger school due to the huge number of students who were deal with. This is a challenge because when dealing with large number the student council may have a difficult time addressing student issues to the satisfaction of everyone.

Lack of support is one of the challenges experienced by student leaders after being elected. They lack someone whom they can consultation and acquire guidance from, hence leaving them with little know how to solve various problems (Anderson & Ritter 2017). They suffer negative perceptions from both teachers and students, since the teachers and students fail in most occasions to appreciate their leadership qualities and even encouraging them.

According to Kumwenda (2010), the elected students leaders are disadvantaged by unclear definition of roles which hinder them from delivering thus, making them to lose morale. This is due to the minimal engagement of administration (Kumwenda, 2010). Lack of training is another challenge they experience because they lack insufficient knowledge on how to solve problems, give instructions, resettling conflicts, engaging effectively with the staffs and on how to conduct meetings (Bassam,*et al*. 2018). These challenges are addressed through training them to enhance effective delivery, creating a formal constitution that analyses the roles and responsibilities to be carried out by the student leaders, through the provision of conducive environment which students leaders engages freely with the administration in an attempt to address conflicting issues.

There is still a tendency by school principals to have their preferred leaders as opposed to allowing students to elect leaders of their choice. A study conducted in Ireland shows that

79% of student's leaders were preferred by school heads as compared to a paltry 8% who were students Choices (Elain, 2003). This kind of intervention by school heads is likely to create discontent among students hence leading to student's unrest.

Student leaders being young people also face the challenges of peer pressure especially when students feel that their demands are not being addressed properly. Some of the student leaders can therefore give in to the pressure from their peers and end up leading riots (Obiero, 2012). In some cases, student leaders who are perceived by others as pro-school administration can be targeted for attack by the students themselves making the work of student council members a difficult and at the same time a risky one.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The study was guided by participative leadership theory and functionalism theory.

2.4.1 Participative Leadership Theory

Participation as a leadership theory was suggested in the classical Hawthorne experiments of the 1930s. The experiments represent that when small groups of workers feel their work environment is supportive, gain more satisfaction and work better (Crane, 1979). Another story explained the origin of participatory leadership as the idea of industrial democracy, stated by Rockefeller, gained currency in the late 1910s and translated to idiom of participatory leadership in leadership field (Kaufman, 2001).

Kurt Lewin is believed to be the main architecture of Participative leadership theory. The Participative leadership theory was mostly used in the 1930s and up to today it is still a famous theory especially in the management of an organization. Kurt Lewin developed the Participative leadership theory as he tried to study the behavioral conducts of the

employees in relation to the democratic management of an institution. Basically, participative leadership theory elaborates more on how members of a given organization can work together to attain a certain goal (Davis, 2003). In an organization that is practically applying participative leadership theory, all staffs have equal chances to participate either directly or indirectly in the management process. Participative leadership theory is assumed effective because the role of management of an organization is distributed to various offices and therefore the information can be distributed easily through those offices in all departments (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). This form of management also opts to treat all the employees equally thus making those who are at the lower status in an organization feel valued.

The Participative leadership theory suggests that good leadership has to put into account, other individuals. This suggests that the managerial body at the top of the hierarchy will have to encourage those that are at the lower level to participate in the decision-making process thus helping them feel relevant (Kouzes & Posner, 2003). This suggestion is based on the belief that when the thoughts of different people are combining the best decision opt to be made. There are five main assumptions in the participative leadership theory. The first assumption is that participation in the decision enhances the appreciation of the work to be performed by the organization or a certain department (Davis, 2003). The second assumption is that giving people the mandate to be in leadership will catalyze their participation in the running of the organization. The other assumption is that the participative leadership theory will minimize competition among the staff and instead encourage teamwork (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). There is also a fourth postulation which indicates that participative leadership theory will lead to better decision making

because different minds have been involved in making a particular decision. The last assumption is that participative leadership theory boosts social commitment within an organization.

The main assumption of the participative leadership theory is that the process of decision-making in an institution should be the main focus of the group (Leithwood *et al.,* 1999). The theory is further strengthened by three assumptions i.e. participation is likely to increase institutional effectiveness, participation as justified by democratic principles and that in the context of school management and governance, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder including student council (Bell, 2002). Patterson (1993) points out that institutional management is likely to succeed if the bonding of staff is facilitated. The burdens of leadership become less if leadership functions and roles are shared among the stakeholders.

The participative leadership theory does not cover the concept of conflict mitigation. It focuses on leadership only. Therefore, there was need to incorporate a theory that would cover conflict. In this case, functionalism theory was incorporated.

2.4.2 Functionalism Theory

The functionalism theory is based largely on the works of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons, and Robert Merton.

The work adopted the functionalism theory as developed by Herbert Spencer. According to Spencer (1820-1903), the society can be equipped to the human body which has different parts. All the parts of the body must collaboratively work for effective body functioning. In the same case, different units in the society must work harmoniously for a

society to be peaceful. Urry (2000) records that Spencer argued that the different social structures in every society must remain intact. The social institutions which include beliefs, norms, behaviours and patterns are crucial in sustaining peace and stability in the society. The society is a complex system that comprises interdependent sections that have to work together in different aspects for the society to be stable (Urry, 2000). Thus, the shared symbols, values and languages have to constantly remain connected for peace to prevail.

The theory assumes that there are different social facts such as rituals, fashions, customs, beliefs, values and laws, which culturally govern social life. Each of the social units plays an important role that depends on each other to be effective. In this case, therefore, all these units must interdependently work together to maintain stability, peace and harmony in every given society (Auguste, 1998).

According to functionalism, society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole society (Mooney, Knox & Schacht, 2007). For example, each of the social institutions contribute important functions for society: Family provides a context for reproducing, nurturing, and socializing children; education offers a way to transmit a society's skills, knowledge, and culture to its youth; politics provides a means of governing members of society; economics provides for the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services; and religion provides moral guidance and an outlet for worship of a higher power. The functionalist theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts.

Functionalism theory is interested in cohesion and stability of a society based on the role played by each component that makes up the society. This means that in every society, every person, institution and any other components of the society have a role to play as far as the stability of the society is concerned. All the components of the society must thus work together to ensure that the society runs smoothly. That is to say, cooperation of everyone is needed for the society to function properly.

In the school environment where this study focused, all the units must therefore work together for the programs to run smoothly. The student council as a unit, the administration, the students, the teaching and the non-teaching staff has a crucial role to play. If any of the units fails to play its role effectively, there are conflicts in secondary schools. All the units are equally important, and they have to interactively depend on each other for the survival of the institutions. The theory enabled the researcher to interrogate the role played by the student council in mitigating student unrests in secondary schools in Kericho County. Through this analysis, the researcher was also able to identify the gaps that still make the student unrest to create tension in among students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders in the education sector. This enabled the researcher to make recommendations for proper mitigation measures since the theory proposes that; to overcome the narrative of societal conflict, there is need for cooperation among various components of the society to ensure that the society functions properly.

Independent Variable   **Dependent Variable**

Role of Student Council		Mitigation of Conflicts caused by students in secondary schools
- Maintaining discipline - Reporting misbehaving students - Communicating student needs to administration	→	- Sensing tension - Reporting indiscipline - Resolving

Intervening Variables

Government policies
Cultural aspects
Administrative policies

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Model for the Research

Source: Author, 2018

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has provided reviewed literature based on the research objectives. Thus, it covers the nature of student unrest in secondary schools, the structure and functions of the student council in mitigating conflicts, and the successes and challenges of the student council in mitigating conflicts. Further, the chapter discusses the conceptual framework as well as the conceptual model underpinning the study. The Next Chapter, Chapter Three, presents the methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design, the study area, study population, sample size and population, procedures and methods of sampling, tools and methods of data collection, data analysis and ethical Considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This study utilized the descriptive research design. This design afforded the incorporation of all the descriptions of the contribution of the student council in mitigating student unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County. The studyalso described the nature of student unrest in Kericho County. It also described the structure and functions of student councils in secondary schools in the study area. Further, the research design helped in describing the successes and challenges of student councils in mitigating student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya.

The descriptive research design assisted the study to capture the respondents' attitudes, opinions, and experiences in the study area. According to Kothari (2004), the descriptive research design is the deliberate format for the correct analysis and measurement of the data, at the end of the collection (Kothari, 2004). This design is germane for using FGDs, interviews and questionnaires to collect information about the role of student council in managing unrests among student in secondary schools.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Kericho County, Kenya. The county is composed of six Constituencies, 15 administrative divisions namely: Ainamoi, Belgut, Kabianga, Bureti, Roret, Cheborge, Sigowet and Soin. Other Administrative Divisions are Kunyak, Chilchila, Kamasian, Kipkelion, Londiani, Sorget and Chepseon.These are further sub-divided into 85 locations that are further sub-divided into 209 sub-locations (Kericho CIDP, 2013). It covers an area of 2,479 sq. km.

The county is characterized by undulating topography. The overall slopes of the land is towards the west, consequently drainage is in that direction. The county forms a hilly shelf between the Mau Escarpment and the lowlands of Kisumu County. Surrounding the county are Tinderet Hills to the north and to the north east is the Mau Escarpment and between them is the gently rolling land which forms Londiani Hills(Kericho CIDP, 2013). To the North West are the hilly areas of Kipkelion rolling towards Koru. The central part of the county rises eastward towards 3,000m high Mau Ridge. The Kericho plateau forms the central part of the county sloping gently from 2,500m to about 1,800m above the sea level (Kenya County Guide, 2017).The county is well drained with a good number of rivers that include Chemosit, Kiptaret, Kipsonoi Timbilil, Maramara, Itare, Nyando, Kipchorian and Malaget. Some of these rivers are characterized by rapids and falls which could be harnessed for hydro-electric power generation. Some of the rivers with the waterfalls include Maramara, Itare and Kiptaret.

The county receives relief rainfall, with moderate temperatures of 17 degrees Celsius and low evaporation rates. The temperature ranges between 29 degrees Celsius and 10 degrees Celsius (Kenya County Guide, 2017). The rainfall pattern is such that the central part of the county, where tea is grown, receives the highest rainfall of about 2125mm while the lower parts of Soin and parts of Kipkelion receive the least amount of rainfall of 1400 mm (Kericho CIDP, 2013).

The county experiences two rainy seasons: the long rainy season occurs between April and June whereas the short rainy season occurs between October and December every year. The driest season is mostly from January to February. The variations in the temperatures and rainfall are mainly determined by the altitude of the place. Between the periods July 2010 and June 2011, the county received an average rainfall of 1500.1 mm (Kenya County Guide, 2017).

The county's population was 758,339 in 2009 as per the national Population and Housing Census (KNBS, 2009). The Population growth rate between 1999 and 2009 was 2.5 per cent per annum. The 2012 population is projected to be 817,402 consisting of 411,730 males and 405,671 females. The male to female ratio is 1:1.01. In 2009, the population of the secondary school going age was 69,563, with the male population slightly higher than the females. In 2012 this age group is estimated to be 74,981 consisting of 37,834 males and 37,141 females (Kericho CIDP, 2013). The increasing number of secondary school going children therefore creates the need for better ways of managing these increasing numbers of schools to better manage cases of student unrest
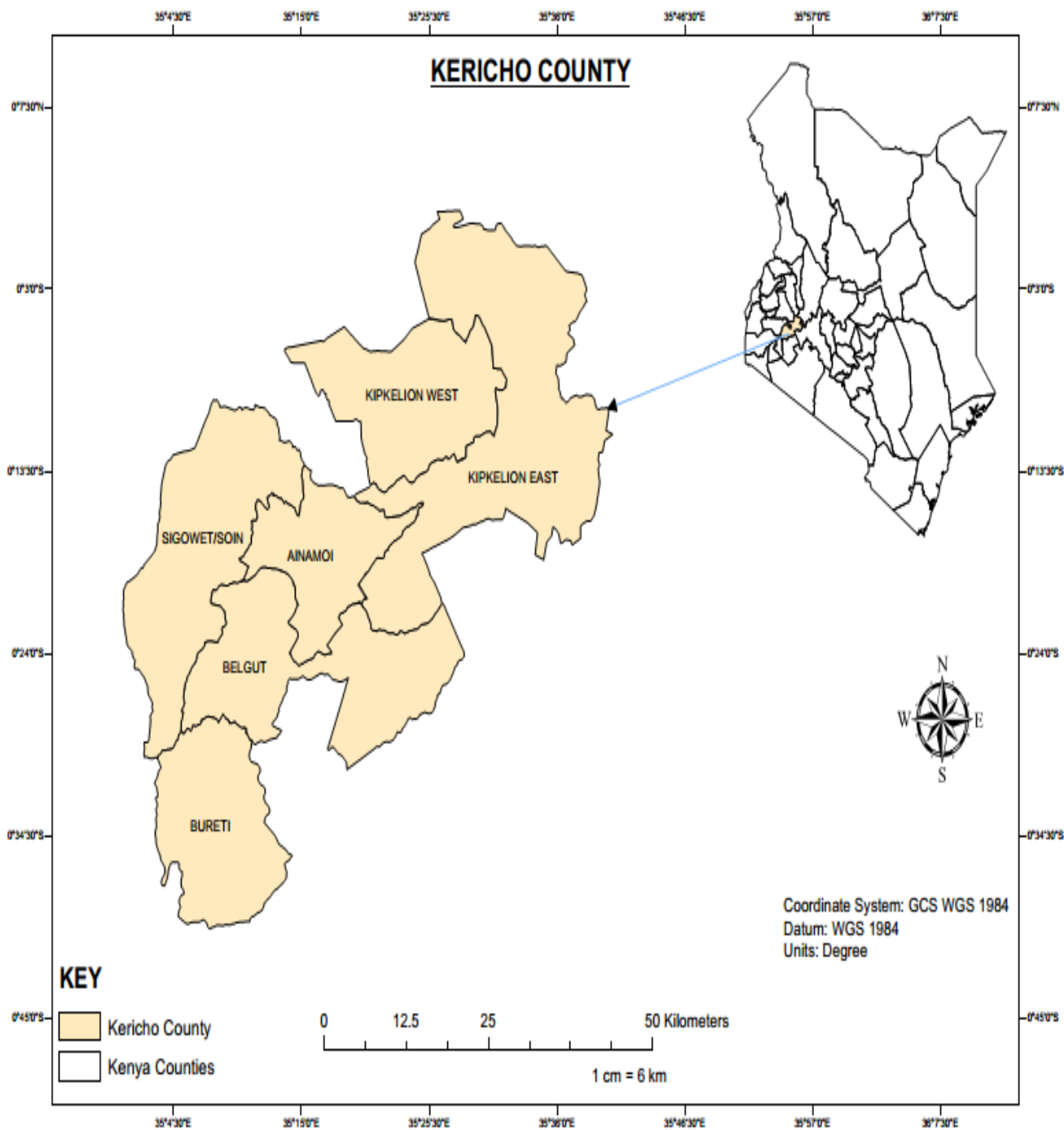
Figure 3.1: Map of Kericho County

Source: Researcher, 2018

3.3. Study Population

The study targeted following categories of respondents; students, teachers, school principals or head teachers, deputy principals, school boards of management, County director of education and Sub-county directors of education in Kericho county.

The population of secondary school going age is 74,981. The data received from the education department indicate that 33,753 students consisting of 18,692 boys and 15,061 girls are in currently secondary schools (Kericho CIDP, 2013). The number of teachers in secondary schools is 1,219 and the teacher student ratio is 1:29. There are 190 secondary schools, both public and private (Kericho CIDP, 2013).

3.4. Sampling Strategies and Sample Size Determination

This study utilized both probability and non-probability samplingprocedures. Non-probability comprises of purposive sampling and convenient sampling while probability encapsulates proportionate stratified random sampling.

3.4.1 Sampling of Schools

In the study, 19 secondary schools in Kericho County were sampled to represent 10% of 190 secondary schools in the whole County. Stratified random sampling was used to determine specific secondary schools that were involved in the study from the list of all secondary schools in County.

3.4.2 Sampling of Students

From the 19 secondary schools, a sample population was determined using the Fisher et al (1999) formula since the total number of students in the whole county is more than 74,

981. Therefore, the desired sample population was determined using Fisher's formula for sample size determination (Fisher *et al.*, 1983 cited in Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999:43) as stated

$$n=\frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n=\frac{(1.96)^2*0.5*(1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

n=384

To get the 384 sample size from the 19 schools, 20 students were sampled using stratified random sampling.

3.4.3. Sampling Teachers

The study sample also included 120 out of the 1219 which represents 10% of the teachers as supported by (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Using simple random sampling techniques, 6 teachers were selected from each of the 19 schools.

3.4.4. Sampling Principals, Deputy Principals

From the 190 principals, and 190 deputy principals, 10% of the population was sampled. Thus, the study also utilized purposive sampling to get 19 secondary school heads, 19 deputy principals from the sampled schools.

3.4.5 Sampling Board of Management Members

There are 13 Board of managementmembers in every school. For the purpose of this study, one member of the schools board of management from each of the sampled 19 schools. Thus, 19 BoM members were purposely selected to participate in the study. The BOM chair was given the first priority, and when not available, his assistant participated.

3.4.6 Sampling County Director of Education and Sub-county Directors

There is only 1 county director of education, and 6 sub-county directors of education. Thus,purposive sampling was used to sample the 1 county director of education and 6 sub-county directors of education from the 6 sub-counties in Kericho County.

3.5 Sample Size

The total sample for the study included 384 students, 120 teachers, 19 school heads or principals, 19 deputy principals, 19 members of the school boards of management, 1 County director of education and 6 sub-county directors of education. Therefore, the total sample for the study was 568 respondents.

3.6. Data Collection Instruments

Data collection instruments are methods that are used to get information from the respondents. These instruments sought specific information for the respondents and were useful for this study. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used. The following Data collection techniques were employed during the study.

3.6.1 Primary Data

3.6.1.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to collect data by asking a range of individuals the same questions related to their characteristics, attributes, how they live, or their opinions(David & Sutton, 2004). The questionnaires were used to reach a large number of respondents to allow for comparisons, generate standardized, quantifiable, empirical data. Two sets of questionnaires were used during this study. The first set of questionnaires was given to the sampled students. The second set of questionnaires was given to the teachers.

3.6.1.2. Interview Schedules

This is a method of data collection that involves researchers seeking open-ended answers related to a number of questions, topic areas, or themes (David & Sutton, 2004). The researcher used Interview Schedules to collect data related to the topic from key informants who included school heads or principals, deputy principals, members of school board of management, county director of education and sub-county directors of education. The interviews were both formal and informal depending on the interviewees.

3.6.1.3. Focus Group Discussions

Focused group discussionswere conducted in various schools within the county and involved students from various schools. Four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in schools in the county and involved students from boy schools, girl schools and mixed gender schools in the study area. The FGDs included students who are members of the student's councils in the respective schools.

3.6.2. Secondary Data

Documents such as research publications,journal articles, new paper reports, policy reports, government reports, and information from government officials including minutes of board meetings and website searches of relevant literature were reviewed as secondary data which was essential for the study.

3.7Data Analysis and Presentation

The term analysis refers to the computation of certain measures along with searching for patterns of relationship that exist among data-groups (Kothari, 2004). The data was processed and analyzed in accordance with the objectives of the study. Data was first processed, summarized and categorized into appropriate themes. It was coded and classified in terms of qualitative data. Analysis was done using descriptive, content and narrative approach. Primary and secondary data was organized by assembling responses from interviews and questionnaires on hand and documents on the other hand.

Dexterity was observed when data was classified into themes, topics and key result points before coded in relation to objectives to draw conclusions. Patterns among various categories of data were established by giving weights to each cluster. Thereafter, data was then interpreted by attaching meaning, significance and relationships to the analysis. Interpretation linked the research findings to the wider academic discourse and provided room for future research. Data was presented in descriptive format and measures were taken to safeguard the reliability and integrity of the study. Quantitative analysis was used where appropriate. This included the use of frequencies and percentages. Charts, graphs, tables were used to project and compare scenarios and any other information that

couldbe best presented quantitatively. Charts and figures were used to provide summaries of responses particularly from interviews.

Table 3.1: Summary of study population, sampling and data collection instruments

Respondents	Totalpopulation	Method of sample size determination	Sample size	Sampling method	Method of data collection
Students	74,981	Fischer's *et al. formula*	384	- Stratified random sampling	Questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions
Teachers	1219	10%	120	- Random Sampling	Questionnaires
Deputy Principals	190	10%	19	- Purposive	Interviews
Principals	190	10%	19	-Purposive	Interviews
Board of Management	2470	1%	19	- Purposive	Interviews
County Director of Education	1	100%	1	-Census	Interviews
Deputy directors of education	6	100%	6	-Census	Interviews
TOTAL			568		

Source: Researcher, 2018

3.8   Reliability and Validity

Reliability and validity are true attributes of good research. Reliability is ameasure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Newman, 2011). Reliability was tested during the piloting phase in Naivasha Sub-County, Nakuru County. Naivasha Sub-County was ideal for the piloting as it has had

several serious unrests in secondary schools. Naivasha is in Nakuru County, in Rift Valley Region where Kericho County is. Thus, it could give relevant data to test the instruments of data collection. On the other hand validity is the measure to which results obtained from analysis of data is representative enough of the phenomenon under study. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2009) observe that it has to do with how accurately the data obtained in the study represents the variables in the study. This was achieved with very able guidance of the supervisors assigned to the study who determined the sample size and advised on appropriate dimension.

3.9   Ethical Considerations

The study abided by strict ethics that govern research. Persons and entities that were involved in the study were assured of their confidentiality and privacy and information gained in the course of research would not be divulged to third parties under whatever circumstances. The researcher would only proceed after obtaining authority and consent from concerned parties and competent authorities. In this regard, an authorization letter was obtained from the Directorate of Post-graduate Studies of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

Interviewees, informants and respondents were approached with courtesy and civility to participate in the research. Letters of requests were forwarded to potential respondents and interviewees to attend interviews. Respondents were informed of the aims, methods, objectives, significance and anticipated benefits of the research to enable them acquiesce and fully participate. The respondents were assured that participation in the study was voluntary, and that they reserve the right to make a choice whether to participate or not.

The respondents included students, some of who are below the age of eighteen. The Kenyan law considers anyone below the age of 18 years as a minor (Gok, 2010). Therefore, there was not to ethically consider involvement of minors in the study. Thus, in this study, teachers were used as guardians. The researcher only engaged the students with the permission and presence of the teachers.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter explains the methodology of the study. It covers the research design, study area, study population, sampling determination and sampling procedure, methods of data collection, reliability and validity, and ethical considerations. The next chapters present the results of the study in line with each research objective.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE OF STUDENT UNREST IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

4.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the first research question in line with the first objective of the study. The objective sought to examine the nature of student unrests in in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The researcher gave questionnaires to students and teachers from various secondary schools. Key informants such as school principals, deputy principals, county director of education and sub-county directors were interviewed.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the sample size of 568 comprising 19 principals, 19 deputy principals, 19 board members, 120 teachers, 1 county director of education and 6 sub-county directors of education, 518 respondents participated successfully. This showed that the response was equivalent to 91.2% of the target group. The response was good and reliable. The composition of respondents was essential since it represents all groups that deal with issues related to student council and its role in mitigating students' conflicts.

4.3 Category of Schools

The study shows most of the schools that had respondents are county schools and this is as per 74.8% of the respondents. Only 5% of the respondents were from national schools, and; 20.2% of were from Sub-County schools as shown in Figure 4.1.
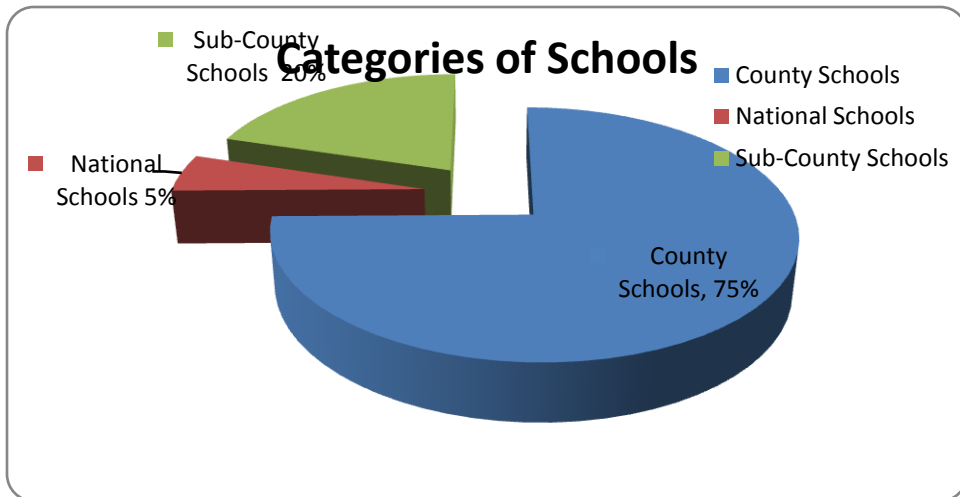
Figure 4.1 Categories of Schools

Source: Field Data, 2018

4.4. Age of Respondents

The results of the study showed that the majority of students (74%) are aged between 16 and 19 years. Those who are aged between 13 and 15 years comprised of 23 %. A small percentage of 3% was aged 20 years and above as shown in Figure 4.2.
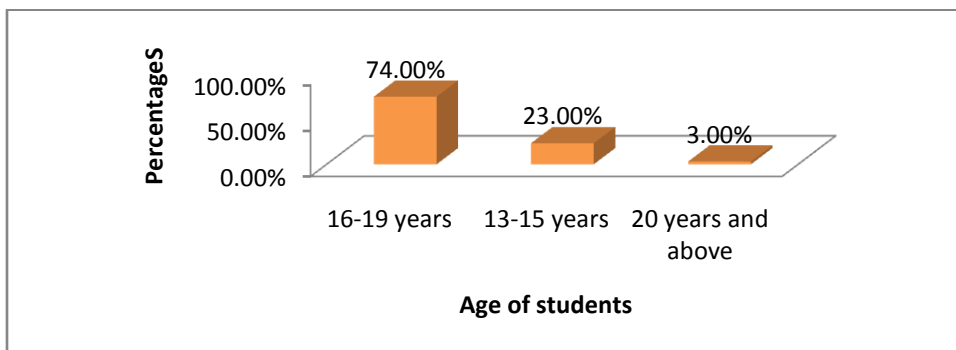
Figure 4.2: Age of Students

Source: Field Data, 2018

4.5 Class/Form of Students

The questionnaires required the students to indicate their classes. Majority of the students were in form four (46%). Those who were in form three were 42%. The form two students comprised of 8% while form ones were only 4%. It was important to have form threes and fours as the majority, since they were more conversant with the student council and its function as compared to the form ones and twos. Further, most of the students in the student council were in the form three and four. Therefore, they had first-hand information on the contribution of the student council in the school management.

4.6 Teachers' Experience

The questionnaire required the teachers to indicate their experience in the teaching profession. Teachers with the least experience of 1 to 5 years were 25(21%). Those who had experience of 6 to 10 years were 31(26%). Teachers with experience of 11-20 years were 28(23%). Majority of the teachers 36(30%) had an experience of over 20 years. The category of over 20 years' experience had the majority of the respondents. It was crucial for the study as the teachers had enough knowledge of the importance of student council.

Table 4.1 Teachers Experience in the Profession

Teachers' Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	25	21%
6-10 years	31	26%
11-20 years	28	23%
Over 20 years	36	30%

Source: Field Data, 2018

The duration of time the teacher had taught in the current school was sought. The results indicated that most of the teachers had stayed in their current schools for 6 to 10 years with a frequency of 46 and 38%. Only a small percentage of 6% had been in the currents school for over 20 years. Teachers who had been in the school for 1-5 years were 41(34%) while 11-20 years in the same school had 26(22%).

Table 4.2 Duration of Stay in the Current School

Teachers' Stay in Current School	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	41	34%
6-10 years	46	38%
11-20 years	26	22%
Over 20 years	7	6%

Source: Field Data, 2018.

The respondents above 20 years in the same school were principals, deputy principals and heads of departments which means they had a good experience in issues involved in discipline, and guidance and counseling. They were in positions of authority and responsibility which require open-mindedness and appreciation for participation.

4.7 Incidence of Unrests in Secondary Schools in Kericho County

When asked whether their schools have experienced any unrest while they were students, only 14% of the students agreed that there has been unrest since they joined the school. The remaining percentage indicated that there have not been cases of unrest in the school.
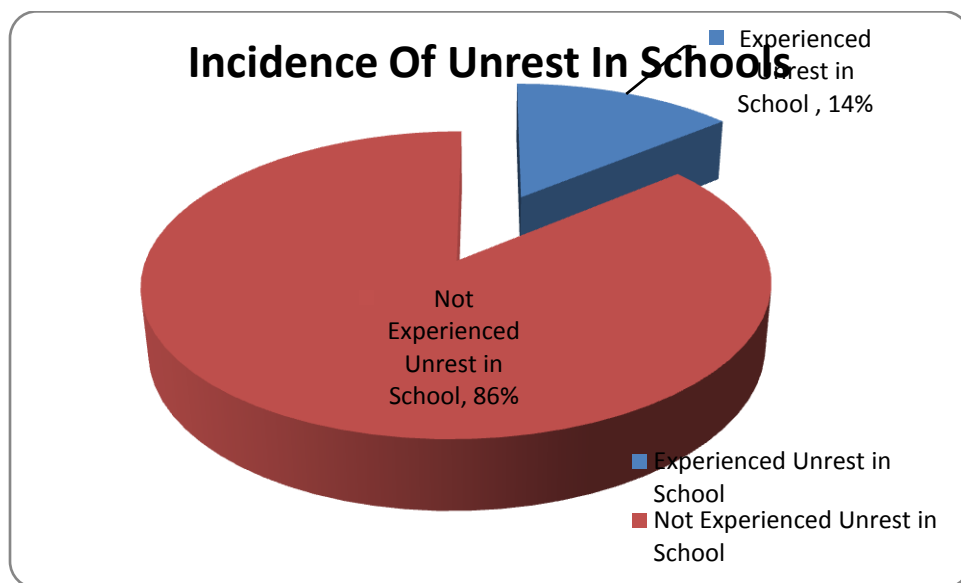
Figure 4.3 Incidence of unrest in schools

Source: Field Data, 2018

The results of the questionnaires show that most of the students have not experienced unrests in their schools. However, 14% is a high number considering the damages that

55

school unrest in the current world is causing. During Focus Group Discussions with students, the majority pointed out that they have not had any serious unrest in the school. They have been disagreeing with the administration, but usually resolve the matters before they escalate into serious unrest. On the other hand, there were students who had witnessed serious unrest in the last 3 years. Several participants in the focus groups discussions explained how they were involved in a strike and why they were striking. They narrated the incidences and seemed to be traumatized by their actions.

During the interview with the principals, the majority pointed out that there has not been serious unrest in the school that they are currently teaching. They argued that they have been doing the best they can to ensure that the students remain calm. One deputy principals from a school that has not experienced unrests in the last two decades said:

> We ensure that we have a strong student council that gives us information about the dissatisfaction of the students. We hold frequent meeting with the student council and encourage them to be our eyes. Further, we ensure that the senior students take care of the juniors and remain in control. They act as role models to the junior students and show them the culture of peace in this institution (Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

According to the sub-county directors of education interviewed, the county has experienced several major unrests in the last three years. The sub-county directors confirmed that there have been 4 main dormitory fires in 2018 alone. Schools which have witnessed the unrests have lost property worth thousands of money. Also, these respondents confirmed that there have been several cases of strikes in the county.

The administration and the teachers can reduce the possibility of school unrest occurring through cooperating with students. Cowley (2001) points out that there can be a tendency for teachers to think that misbehavior is planned or premeditated by their students. She

adds that whilst it is certainly true in some cases that students make conscious decisions to misbehave, in reality, the majority of poor behavior stems from very different factors. Cowley points out that if teachers understand some of these causes and learn ways to deal with them, they can avoid setting up situations where confrontations occur between them and the students. Waithaka (2005) adds that the success of instilling positive discipline, therefore, calls for the establishment of a relationship of trust and respect between the adult and the child. For the trust on students to bear fruits, there is a need for the students and administrators to have common ground and mutual interests or agreement where they work towards the same goals.

The results of this study as revealed during the focus group discussions with the students' show that the students who have been involved in unrests are remorseful for their actions. However, it is surprising that the cases of serious unrests continue to increase in Kenya every year, instead of reducing. They wish the factors that led to their misbehaving were handled before the escalation of the dispute to serious unrest. The consequences of the unrest are felt until the students complete their studies. They blame poor performance to the unrest as it destabilized their mind. They also waste a lot of precious time which should have been used positively in their studies. Mueni (2008) points out that students suffer academically or have high chances of low academic performance if they were involved in school unrest. Further, the schools experience difficulties in curriculum implementation, as they dedicate resources to mitigating the conflicts. Despite the remorse those involved experience, the effects of the unrest affect both students and the administration.

4.8Manifestation of student unrest in Schools in Kericho County

When asked to indicate the most common cases of indiscipline that has led to unrest in their respective schools, the result of the study was as follows.

4.8.1 Burning of dormitories

The researcher required the respondents to address whether the burning of dormitories had been witnessed in the recent past within a span of a year. The outcome was as in the Table 4.3

Table 4.3: Incidence of Burning of Dormitories

Very common	Common	Fairly common	Not common	I don't know
0	3	33	255	9
0%	01%	11%	85%	03%

Source: Field Data, 2018

The occurrence of the burning of dormitories indicates a small percentage as not to a large extent as an indicator of unrest from school. This does not imply that the small percentage should be ignored. Its impact is felt in all forms of media. The unrests in schools are characterized by burning of buildings, especially dormitories, administration blocks, classrooms, and food stores. Conflict as a result of the burning of schools has an

adverse effect to all in the nation not only at school levels. One of the interviewed principal said:

> With current technology in place, we can't wait until it happens; the burning of schools is too expensive and lethal. Animosity develops within generations even leading to nationwide grudges. Our institution has installed fire/smoke detectors to solve the problem even before it begins. It works for us(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

During the Focus Group Discussions with students, those who had their dormitories burnt down explained the experience with tears in their eyes. It was disheartening that their parents had to cater for the damages, which could have been avoided if they had used the right methods of channeling their disputes to the administration.

According to one of the sub-county directors interviewed, there have been cases of burning dormitories in the county. He felt that the administration should have realized that there is a problem. Further, the respondent felt that the student council is in place even in those schools. There are enough student leaders in every school who should report any suspicious behavior. Nonetheless, the respondent does not put the entire blame on the administration as he agrees that it is hard and complex to deal with teenagers especially if they are under the influence of certain drugs or alcohol.

The results of the study agree that burning of dormitories is a common manifestation of student unrest in secondary schools. The most common form of student unrest witnessed in Kenya over the recent years has been burning of school property. Cooper (2014) opines that students consider involving themselves in acts of unrest as an instrument of negotiation with the school authorities. However, Samuel & Changwony (2019) contradicts the finding by stating that unrest is brought about by the type of parenting

style used. Parents should lower the expectations they place on their children, contribute emotional support, appreciation, and little control. For instance, in 1991, St. Kizito Mixed Secondary school dormitories were burned down and 19 students lost their lives as 70 girls were raped (Fransisca, 2012). Burning of school property has been noted in Kenya as one of the most used ways to manifest unrest in secondary schools.

4.8.2 Fighting amongst Students

Heated arguments result in fighting especially where the authority is not well represented in the classroom setting. This phenomenon seemed to take higher chances in day schools than boarding schools. Among the schools visited, only one boarding school cited a case of fighting of students in the recent past. Day schools tend to capitalize on the absence of school authority and end up exchanging fists on their way home. Such conflicts tend to extend to the communities where the learners reside. A clear display of the findings is tabled in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Fighting among students

Very common	Common	Fairly common	Not common	I don't know
21	39	42	198	0
07%	13%	14%	66%	0%

Source: Field data, 2018

Most of the schools have tough rules prohibiting fighting. During the interviews with board members and school heads, they pointed out that they discourage any physical

violence. They understand that the students can cause a lot of harm to each other if the conflict becomes physical. During the focus group discussions, most of the students also agreed that fighting can lead to expulsion. Therefore, they try their best not to fight as the consequences are not attractive. A respondent during the focus group discussion said:

> You don't expect students to fight where tough rules are in place like suspension from school. Here we don't fight. Better solutions are found. The students' council and peer counseling groups work(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

Irrespective of the tough rules that the schools in the county have put in place, cases of fighting among students is still evident. Sometimes the teenagers are unable to control their emotions and anger. They end up fighting, though the fights are not very serious. Further, the study showed that the fights which do not take place because of the strict rules often happen when the students are going home. During the interviews, a deputy principal said that:

> Girls always fight over boys when we are going home from school. Since they are out of school, we do not punish them as the information reaches us when it is too late. These are teenagers and they experience a lot of issues that make them keep grudges(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The board members interviewed agreed that it is practically impossible to have an environment that is totally free from fights when teenagers are concerned. However, they agreed that putting strict measures helps the student behave as they do not want to be on the wrong side of the law. Further, the board members emphasized that there should be good teachers who equip the student with the right knowledge. The role of the parents is crucial in ensuring that they bring up children in a violence-free family. According to the Bobo Doll Experiment of 1967, children who grow up in a violent environment end up

being violent. They emulate the violent actions of the adults in their lives. Thus, as the board members agreed, most of the students who are found with fighting cases came from homes experiencing violence.

The results of the study agree that fighting occurs during school unrests. Drug abuse and poor parenting care are the leading cause of frequent fights in secondary schools in Kenya. Mwaniki (2018) projects out that the leading cause of fights in schools were highly orchestrated by student leaders or prefects. Fransisca (2012) adds that the special privileges given to prefects were also a leading source of conflict in secondary schools. Most of the fights were experienced with student leaders blaming the administration and students blaming prefects for administering corporal punishment and molesting students. According to Mwaniki (2018), students need to be involved in making school rules and reviewing them by the head teachers. Hence, avoiding the use of only prefects to contribute to overall school rules, which may be oppressive and vague, avoiding resentment, which leads to frequent fights and truancy.

4.8.3 Boycotting Classes

The results indicate that most of the learners enjoy attending classes and most likely like learning. There is, however, a percentage of learners who are not happy about attending school or despite their efforts in class they are not doing well hence they boycott classes as shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Boycotting Classes

Very common	Common	Fairly common	Not common	I don't know
24	27	6	270	0
08%	09%	02%	80%	0%

Source: Filed data, 2018.

One of the members of the student's council cited that controlling learners boycotting classes is challenging. The interests of individual learners are better taken by teachers. The student council is usually unable to control such activities because they are in class when some naughty students boycott classes. In this case, the administration is the only solution. The student leaders try to encourage their colleagues to do the right thing, but they are sometimes absent because they have to be in class.

According to the principals interviewed, sometimes students plan as a class not to attend a particular class for some reasons. One principal cited an example where students boycotted the lessons of a certain teacher because he was punishing them unfairly. The students claimed that the mathematics teacher was sending them out of class whenever they failed a question, yet his teaching method was wanting. They refused to attend any mathematics lesson until the administration intervened. However, the principals agreed that most of the times the boycott is not planned by a group. The study agrees with UNICEF (2011) report which argues that in most cases, individual students boycott classes for untold reasons. It is usually a personal decision and is punished individually.

Indiscipline cases on the rise have led students to boycott attending classes. Strikes in secondary schools have been witnessed all over the world because of a lack of facilities and poor student-teacher relationships. The year 2008 experienced the highest number of classes boycotted as students felt left behind in their class work because of the post-election violence in 2007 which progressed to the following academic year as emphasized by Francisca (2012). For instance, Lema Girls Secondary school in 2008 asked for a break and the principle refused which led to a strike to attend classes as rumors spread that mock results would be substituted with the K.C.S.E results in case of cheating or exam leaks (Cooper, 2014). Main shareholders should actively participate in probing the root causes of student unrest and work on reversing the trends.

However, with the student council in place, it was expected that the boycotting trend would reduce as the student would comfortably share with the council the problems they are going through, and it would be solved before escalation. Nonetheless, the boycotts are still evidence as shown in this study. It is unfortunate to note that the student council has not managed to be an effective bridge between the school administration and the students.

4.8.4 Theft of School Property

The results of the study show that cases of theft or vandalism are frequent as shown in Table 4.6

Table 4.6 Theft of School Property

Common	Very common	Fairly common	Not common	I don't know
42	27	42	186	0
14%	09%	14%	62%	0%

Source: Field data, 2018

Students destroy or steal what is made to serve generations. During the interviews with school heads, it was uniquely discovered that theft of school property extends to the staff. The respondents argued that some teachers stealing on behalf of their families or learners for fun. Also, during focus group discussions with the students, some student reported to have seen teachers take school property. A student respondent was frank enough during a focus group discussion and said:

> Some of the items lost are not in our possession; teachers hide them and easily plant the suspicion on us. I once saw a teacher who was in his teaching practice move out of the kitchen stores with a packet of milk. The form one students washing the store were later accused by the matron of stealing the milk. The teacher was on duty and in fact punished them for that and promised to report them(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

Stealing in school is an old indiscipline case that has been there since time in memorial (Republic of Kenya, 2001). Students steal school property and also amongst themselves. In most cases, students steal clothes on the hanging lines, books in the library, and personal items in the lockers during break time. Every school prohibits stealing, but the

practice continues. The culture is passed on from one generation to the other. It is only the society that can curb that malicious practice by encouraging a culture of honesty and content.

The results of the study agree that cases of theft increase during unrest in secondary schools. Students come from different background with different upbringing. Karanja & Bowen (2012) rightfully state that common indiscipline cases with inconsistency in punishment have made students feel like stealing from each other or the school is not a serious offence. Mwaniki (2018) also observes that students steal from each other due to peer pressure in trying to fit in to their friend's social circles. Theft is a deep manifestation of drug abuse, poor administrative leadership and lack of adequate guidance and counseling in Kenyan secondary schools. The student council has a role to play as the prefects should act as the eyes of the administration even during unrest. However, disruption during unrest makes it hard for the student council to identify the students who take part in stealing.

4.8.5 Refusing Punishment from Teachers

Majority of the respondents agreed that students frequently refuse punishments from teachers as indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Refusing Punishment from teachers

Very common	Common	Fairly common	Not common	I don't know
84	54	87	72	0
28%	18%	29%	24%	0%

Source: Field Data, 2018

Majority of the students are teenagers and are likely to make mistakes in school. However, sometimes they refuse to handle the punishment that the teacher gives if they think it is unjustified. During the focus group discussion, some of the students agreed that they refused to do a punishment by a teacher; which is considered a serious crime in most school and leads to suspension.

During the interviews with the principals, they argued that there have been many cases of students refusing to do punishments. One principal argued that:

> In the current society where corporal punishment is illegal, learners test especially newly posted teachers on their reaction once their orders are rejected. This results in more severe cases like suspension from school or even being pushed outside the school gates to take assignments as it happened recently in our school. It was all in the social media(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The principals blame the refusal to do punishments to the societal cultures. As Murage (2012) argues, the breakdown of traditional values is a contributing factor to discipline problems in our schools. Traditional norms and customs are no longer valued in our modern society due to the influence of western culture. There is a breakdown of

traditional ties due to urbanization, formal education, and white collar jobs, leading to individualism (Murage, 2012). The society is no longer concerned about the welfare of the child. The discipline of a child is left to the teacher who has too much to handle and only concentrate on academics. This has raised an undisciplined generation in the modern society. Further, the society makes the student believe that they have rights, and they should not be punished unfairly. As a result, the teachers are left with the responsibilities of instilling discipline in children who do not obey them. Also, there are frequent go-slows, demonstrations, and strikes amongst workers and professionals agitating for better pay and other rights in Kenya. Examples include teachers, doctors, nurses, lecturers among others.

Young individuals must be guided by rules and regulation or they may cause mayhem in an institution. When students are caught on the wrong and punished by the teacher, they rebel and refuse to take the punishment leading to unrest in school. Cooper (2014) points out that the students refuse to take up punishments from their teachers especially when they realize the school administration does not value their staff. The author also gives an opinion that when the students are unruly they will not follow a teacher's instruction if the rules of punishment used are not effective; hence give a leeway for students to boycott a punishment (Cooper, 2014).

However, Samuel & Changwony (2019) argues that the biggest contributing factor to students' refusal to obey teachers is because of how they are brought up by their parents. If their parents do not have an issue with their child talking back at them and disobeying, it reflects on the teachers. In April 1999, a student from Oklahoma Middle School shot at other students injuring five of them because he was tired of taking orders from the

teachers and his parents as well as his fellow students (Cooper, 2014). In Kenya, refusal to take a teacher punishment contributed to the ban of corporal punishment and caning.

4.8.6 Bullying of Learners

Bullying occurs in a cycle or chain forming long-term bullying cultures in schools. According to Hoy & Miskel (2008), permanent grudges are formed from bullying of learners. During the interviews with the principals, they pointed out that learners who are bullied by the seniors tend to project the same to juniors and history repeats itself. Most of the bullying goes unnoticed by the school administration, teachers and even the student's council. The bullied suffer inwardly as they fear more oppression by their seniors once discovered they reported. The school administrators have settled knowing bullying is over. The results of this study agrees with a study conducted by Kisilu (2013) that the hidden stress treated as ignorance by the oppressed from the authority erupts like volcano when the opportunity of transmission arises.

According to Abwere (2009), 70% of the learners have experienced bullying in one way or another. During the FGDs, the students argued that they were bullied when they joined the school. Some agreed that they also bullied someone to revenge on what was done to them. A response during a focus group discussion reported that:

> Our seniors have taught us songs which we sing for them. Even prayers on their bed seem ironical but we have to do it. They constantly remind us of the promotion night(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

Discrepancies in the questionnaire by the teachers and learners demonstrate the unknown for both. A questionnaire administered to both teachers and learners is tabled in table 4.7

addressing whether bullying of students has been a serious indiscipline problem experienced in 19 selected schools in Kericho County.

Table 4.8 Bullying of Learners

Very common	Common	Fairly common	Not common	I don't know
LEARNERS(384)				
126	119	24	115	0
33%	31%	06%	30%	0%
TEACHERS(120)				
5	6	13	96	0
4%	5%	11%	80%	0%

Source: Field Data, 2018

The figure demonstrates either a total ignorance from the teaching staff or an exaggeration by the learners. This, however, confirms a hidden truth which needs to be excavated further when it comes to bullying of learners. The discrepancy is a serious conflict on its own. It indicates a trend of students suffering under ignorance of those who are supposed to protect them.

Surprisingly, the administration and the board members keep on denying the truth. Majority of the board members interviewed said that there is no bulling in their schools. The principals also argued that bullying is a forgotten thing in this century. They were so confident in their answer that the research found reports of bullying, by student, in those

schools intriguing. The response of the students, on the other hand, gives a very contradicting picture. A respondent principal argues:

> If the learners say they are bullied, this would be a lie. The kind of systems we have in place especially the student's council ensures none of this is heard of.

The administration expects that in the presence of a strong Student Council, there can be no bullying. Most principals argue that if there were cases of bullying, the student council would have reported the cases. However, Walsh (2009) cautions against expecting too much, too soon from a council. Duffy and Flynn (2010) found that there were unrealistic and often conflicting expectations of the student councils that lead to frustration and discouragement among the members. In this case, the administration should stop expecting too much from the student council and listen to the reality so that the students can stop suffering.

The perception of the administrators encourages or facilitates bullying in schools. The concept that the administrators strongly believe there are no cases of bullying in their schools explain the continuation of the unrest without any reporting. The victims fear the repercussions of reporting the perpetrators, and when the teachers and principals say that students claiming to be bullied are lying shows the low possibility of retribution if the victims reported. Therefore, the bullies enjoy protection for their indiscipline from the people who should be protecting the victims from them. The study agrees with Walsh (2009) that the principals' expectation from the student council could consciously or unconsciously promote incidents of school unrest when the expectations are not met.

The results from the students confirm that bullying in secondary schools has over the years become a norm, especially for new comers. Prefects are the first bullies most new

students have to deal with. According to Nyaga (2019) most secondary schools in Kenya continue to bully each other because they were also bullied and find the system hard to eradicate. Head teachers rarely do anything about it, hence the reason why it thrives in most secondary schools in Kenya (Nyaga, 2019). Christian unions and guidance and counseling groups work hand in hand to eliminate bullying by showing students its effects on academic performance and self-esteem (Karanja & Bowen, 2012). In 1999, four prefects from Nyeri High School were torched in their sleep using petrol (Cooper, 2014). This showed hate among students of the highest order based on the consistent bullying experienced in school from student leaders. In Upper Hill High School, a student was molested and lost his life in the process.

Nyaga (2019) points out that the head teacher, stakeholders, prefects, and students should work together in ensuring the school rules are strict and well defined especially on the issue of bullying as it may cause other unrest issues in school. Bullying is also evidently displayed on how teachers treat students who have poor grades in class and this lowers their self-esteem opting to rebels towards the school administration and the whole system as well creating unrests which lead to strikes and destruction of property and the school term.

4.8.7 Striking against School Administration

The results from Focus Group discussion and Interviews indicated that the students strike against school administration. According to the sub-county directors of education interviewed, teacher transfers and administrational changes play a great role in the school unrest in the county. This may be politically instigated, or the Newton's first law of

motion taking place in nature where bodies resist change. Some administrators create a good rapport to the extent that a change may not auger well with the learners, parents and other stakeholders.

According to the students as indicated during the FGDs, it is supposedly true that some policies developed by school administrators without involving all the stakeholders partly play a great role in the schools unrest. In a focus group discussion, some learners openly admitted that introduction of porridge during tea break rather than tea was not in agreement and it was a cause of unrest within the learning institution. The introduction of new policies angered also the parents who made the situation worse. They influenced the students to strike against the administration. One of the students said:

> Our parents could not hold their anger when the school management brought additional charges on school bus without consulting them. We can't have a vehicle carrying out public services and our parents are told to pay its maintenance cost(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The results of the study agree with the study conducted by Buhere in (2008) which identified poor administration as a primary cause of student unrest. Mostly, school administration enacts policies affecting student's welfare without consultation with the students. Therefore, there is increased dissent amongst students during the implementation of such school policies. In many cases, where the school administration remains hard-headed, students often resort to violent protests as a tool of expressing their dissenting views. This often leads to loss of school property and in worse cases fatalities.

Most secondary schools around the world provide a means by which students can point out burning issues. Through observation method, the results of the study confirm that in

Kericho County, suggestion boxes are displayed so that students can write down what is bothering them. Unfortunately, their concerns are never dealt with until it is too late and students destroy property and risk each other's lives. In 1990, Nigerian students rioted against the administration causing immense damage of school property and the police had to be deployed to calm down the students (Francisca, 2012). In Kenya students have also been pissed off by corruption cases as the schools governing boards, hiked fees, and provision of poor quality school supplies leading to student dissatisfaction as pointed out by Samuel & Changwony (2019).

Students follow up and identify corrupt principles who allow external influence affect how a school is run and strike against the administration. The year 2008 was the worst year as it was marred with student strikes as the students felt the school administration was not supportive enough when it came to academics and living school conditions. The 2007/2008 post-election violence displaced many students and some were not able to go back to school and sit for their final year examinations. The school administration had a huge role to play in supporting and encouraging students to continue learning despite the insecure state of the nation (Cooper, 2014). Ministry heads on the other hand could be heard stating that the mock exams would be used as a final result if cases of cheating were to rise. School administrators had a role to rule out the rumors that caused so many strikes that year, which led to massive loss of school property. Striking against the student administration has deep rooted causes among students and it is often one of the main reasons most secondary schools go on strike in Kenya.

4.9 Causes of Student Unrest in Secondary Schools in Kericho County

 In Kericho County, the unrests as described are attached to several causes as outlined by this study.

4.9.1 Changes in Government Policies

Buhere in (2008) argues that frequent changes in government policies without consulting all stakeholders seem to carry a lot of weighty in the conflict development. During the interviews with board members, they agreed that most severe unrest like burning of schools seems to be invoked by untimely government policies. Focus group discussions seemed to base the unrest in schools to have been caused by sudden transfer of teachers and new examination rules. A mysterious march on percentage of 80% on this area for both teachers and learners was a timely emphasis that the government is not doing enough public participation before enacting most of the rules.

The results of the study indicate that students may not appreciate the government policies instituted at a specific time. They may feel that a policy such as frequent transfer of teachers does not help solve the issues they are experiencing. For instance, the transfer of school heads and teachers often does not assist deal with the issue of inadequate teachers or the level of discipline in an institution. Mackatiani et al. (2016) argue that when the government is involved without major consultations from the concerned parties, there is bound to be resentment from one side. Correspondingly, Ngwokabuenui (2015) also states that when government policies frequently change without any positive impact on the institution and student, they will reject the new intervention. Changes in policy decisions foster umbrage among students causing unrest.

In Kenya, Lenana high school and Moi Nairobi girls have witnessed strikes because of policies instituted by the government, and they felt they were not in line with their overall goals as an institution. According to National Crime Research (2017), subordinates have been used as puppets to perpetuate student unrest if the school administrative management is not content with the policies. Policies such as making education free in secondary schools have proven to be a challenge as large public schools with boarding facilities cannot continue to run smoothly without funds from parents as what the government is providing cannot sustain a student at a time in school (Mackatiani et al, 2016). Moreover, this has created conflict, and pressure builds up among students leading to student relentlessness.

4.9.2 Poor Administrative Skills

Poor administrative skills seemed to come second as a key factor as it cuts across from the principal to the student's council. During the FGDs, the respondents argued that some principals are conspicuously absent from schools, either running businesses or in learning institutions. The deputies with less authority are left to run the institutions. Being overworked and overloaded reduces the output. As a result, there is misappropriation of school funds which leaves some services not administered, or poorly done. This leads to conflict with the beneficiaries. Besides, pool administrative skills lead to poor conflict mitigation strategies, which overlook the students' reactions to the environment. Before students engage in any form of unrest, there are always telltales that there is a change in the wind. Proper administrative skills would be quick to note and identify such telltales, but with poor administration, the students dissenting views or indiscipline issues come to light a little bit too late when the unrest occurs.

The results of the study confirm that excellent communication across an organization is vital for progression. All administrative heads must strive to use a system that is fair and addresses the main concerns raised by its employees. Cheloti et al (2014) propose that principal authorities are the primary decision-makers of an institution as they act as change agents. However, the author states that the decision-maker must consult relevant stakeholders, teachers, and students for the solution to be efficient.

In Chicago, Detroit, and Washington, high truancy and insolence to staff has been on the rise. The situation has been attributed to peer pressure and how the school administration works. Cheloti *et al*. (2014) highlight that students report cases to the administration expecting something to be done. Unfortunately, the issues go unresolved. According to a report by the National Crime Research (2017), students in Kenya have been known to strike when the administration is not working effectively. The research gives a list of schools like Kagumo High school in Nyeri and Kokuru secondary school in Migori who burned down school property when the issues affecting them were not taken seriously by the administration of the school. The school administration can work together with student leaders closely to ensure that concerns raised are handled to assist studentsto reach their academic and life goals through transparency.

4.9.3 Large Class Sizes and Congestion in Dormitories

Large class sizes and congestion in dormitories comes third with 48% vote on being common in relation to school supplies and the demand. One on one contact which is the number one policy in education is ignored, leaving the learners under the survival for the

fittest natural law. Struggling for space brings conflict as other learners develop hard lines. One sub-county director interviewed argued that the students become unruly when the teacher has no direct contact because of their large numbers. It becomes hard for the administration, including the student council, to detect changes in moods which can provide prior suggestions that there will be unrest. Consequently, most of the unrests get the administrations off-guard.

The government of Kenya introduced free primary education, which was successful and later introduced free secondary school education. Free secondary education faces immense challenges as it is more involving and requires more facilities compared to primary schools (Mackatiani, 2016). Thus, parents have to pay school fees to cater to other services the student will receive, especially in boarding facilities such as food, dorms and food. The system has led to an influx of students with several public schools experiencing congestion in classes and in the dormitories (National Crime Research, 2017). The government funded the building of more classes and dormitories but the high number of recipients from free primary education is overwhelming the secondary education system.

Students across the country are experiencing congested classes that make learning and teacher-student management difficult. The dorms are also congested, thus, movement and privacy becomes an issue to students. According to Mackatiani (2016) the students feel compelled to have larger classes, more dormitories, and teachers. If the conditions worsen, it is also a risk to their health and mental well-being which is a leading factor to student unrest in secondary schools. Well performing public secondary schools such as Jamhuri High school and Aquinas high school have had too much congestion in their

dormitories as well as classrooms. The government and relevant stakeholders should work together with school heads and find a solution before the situation escalates out of hand as it may cause serious damage to existing school property (Cheloti et al, 2014). Student-teacher relationships become far-fetched due to the high number of students and many classes. The teachers become exhausted due to their limited number, and large workload that they may fail to deliver and students become frustrated by it, causing unrest.

4.9.4 Inadequate and Poor Quality Food

Inadequate poor quality food which may seem to marry with mismanagement comes about due to poor storage or hardships during different times of the year. During FGDs, a student argued that:

> Sometimes we have our food filled with paraffin which makes it disgusting. How do they expect us to eat food that tastes that bad, yet they tell us that we are like their own sons and daughters? Which parent can add paraffin to his/her child's food? We cannot understand.

This may look as a mishandling of food but repeatedly it does not go unnoticed. The learners will detect malice then over react. In most cases, as indicated during the FGDs, the students complain about the poor quality food. However, the management ignores or is too busy to concentrate with such matters. In this case, therefore, the students are left with no option but to strike to capture the attention of the administration.

The results of the study confirm that students who are not well fed end up causing chaos in school. On several occasions, students in secondary schools have reported that the food served in their schools is of poor quality. In other instances, they have tried to prove to the administration that their food has paraffin. Such cases have led to demonstrations

from students in schools such as Karoti girls in Kirinyaga. In agreement with these results, the National Crime Research (2017) has also noted that several students have complained about the kind of food they eat and their rations. The lack of quality food supplied in very low quantities, especially to growing teenagers, is a devastating problem that leads to school unrest. Ngwokabuenui (2015) further supports the results in stating that students would entirely thrive and concentrate where they are certain that they will have quality and enough food supplies.

However, as pointed out by some BoM members during interviews, Kenya has witnessed corruption from individuals in the school board or Parents Associations where you will find individuals provided with tenders to supply food to institutions, but they do no deliver the stated quantity and quality of supplies. In such situations, the administration is responsible for ensuring that they follow up on what is procured without practicing favoritism on individuals they are certain are cash cows (Cooper, 2014). Student leaders have also been blamed on their lack of action in facilitating student complaints when it comes to the issue of food as some institutions have been known to give student leaders special preferences. With such preference student leaders are blinded in noticing that their fellow students need to be represented and address the issue of inadequate and poor quality food.

4.9.5 Impact of Social Media

Other factors which arose during FGDs groups include impact of social/mass media. As learners get information of what has happened elsewhere, they are challenged to follow suit to make 'heroes' of their own. The learners learn of how their age mates in other

schools are hitting the news headline for committing crimes such as burning the dormitory. They do not want to be left behind. One student argued that.

> We wanted the nation to know that we are also strong. Our competitors burnt their dormitories and we could not afford to be left behind. We had to burn ours so that the neighboring girls' school will also believe we are not cowards too(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

A principal added that:

> Sometimes the students misbehave because of the influence of the social media. They want their school to be in the news and in the books of history that they also burned their school. It may look ridiculous but learners are inventing adolescents too(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

In today's society, students have access to phones, making them available to all social networks. Nyongesa (2019) agrees that social media impacts greatly on how students behave when faced with a situation at school. The author also adds that the access that students have towards social media networks rarely is monitored. So students share violent behaviors and neither parents, nor are teachers aware of what their children are up to. With accessibility to internet, students can share how they feel about their school, administration, and quality of life with other students. However, this has both positive and negative impacts on student reaction to a situation. Students, especially in secondary schools that are well equipped, have access to information from media such as television and computers where they get to know what is happening in other schools, according to research by the National Crime Research (2017). Social media as diagnosed by Nyongesa (2019) promotes student unrests in secondary schools because they feel compelled to create unrest to support their friends. Access to information on what is going on in the education sector has spark interest in students in recent years, with some secondary

schools in Kenya showing disagreements through riots. Institutions and parents are charged with the responsibility of monitoring the kind of content students are exposed to.

4.9.6 Societal Disturbances and Political Agitations

The results of the study indicated that societal disturbances and unrest, tensions in the community, or political agitations may cause unrest. According to the county director of education, during political seasons, learners tend to be destabilized from the learning atmosphere and want to be swayed by the environment. The interviewed board members argued that there was a lot of tension in the schools during the electioneering period. The environment dictated that, and the students were not left behind.

Student unrest in secondary schools is aggravated by a myriad of external factors. Cooper (2014) observes that students experience immense pressure from society to live according to its standards. The author illustrates how the students at Kyanguli High school thought they could beat the school system in place as they felt pressure to outperform their capabilities. The community also places high expectations on the students, especially if they went to high-performing secondary schools, which builds pressure in students and makes them react by creating chaos in school. Political unrest and agitations of the country, as well as the school as Cooper (2014) demonstrates largely contribute to student unrests. The administration should work to ensure students receive effective guidance and counseling sessions.

4.10 What Influences the Learners Misbehavior

The study sought to determine the individuals behind the learners' misbehavior. The broad areas assessed on influence of misbehavior include; friends at school, friends

outside school, parents, teachers, head teachers and politicians. The questionnaires developed for both teachers and learners had the outcome as illustrated in the table 4.9. and Table 4.10. The question was who influences the learner's misbehavior?

Table 4.9 Influence of student Misbehaviors (according to students)

Learners (n=384)

Influencers of misbehaving	Yes	No	I don't know
Friends at school	90%	10%	0%
Friends outside school	23%	64%	13%
Parents	15%	80%	5%
Teachers	38%	46%	16%
Head teachers	47%	52%	1%
Politicians	7%	70%	23%

Source: Field Data, 2018

Table 4.10 Influence of student Misbehaviors (according to teachers)

Teachers (n=120)

Influencers of misbehaving	Yes	No	I don't know
Friends at school	94%	6%	0%
Friends outside school	46%	54%	0%
Parents	46%	44%	10%
Teachers	14%	79%	7%
Head teachers	66%	34%	0%
Politicians	34%	60%	6%

Source: Field Data, 2018

This outcome demonstrates that all stakeholders in one way or another have an upper hand in influencing the misbehavior in learners. This narrows the influencing factors into three broad categories;

    (a)   The learner and the system

    (b)   The learner and their homes

    (c)   The society and politics

4.10.1 The Learner and the System

As argued by scholars, problems developing within individuals must have had a source. Peer pressure must build from one individual and thus spread to others. This singles some influencing factors bringing pressure in one individual, hence influencing others.

The eruption of misbehavior tends to occur during examination period which may be related to the examination oriented system (Mukiti, 2014). With the emphasis on good grades from teachers, parents and the system, the learners find themselves under pressure influencing others.

Lack of individual attention in class may be due to absentmindedness, large unmanageable classes; thus giving room to learners to disengage from education and start their internal politics. A respondent, during interviews, argued that:

> The system leaves the learners on their own to memorize facts, figures and information. We as teachers call for performance and all our assignments must be done. That is how unfair the system demands because we are gauged on the students' performance(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

According to Mwikali (2015), the Kenyan curriculum influences the behavior of student greatly. It focuses on passing of the examination without considering how the exam is passed. In fact, as Mukiti (2014) argues, the system has been extreme where the end of course results justifies the means. Even if the learners used the wrong method to pass the examinations, the fact that they have passed justifies the methods used to pass, irrespective of their illegalities. Fortunately, the ministry of education is currently putting measures in place to try and correct that mistake.

4.10.2 The Learner and their Homes

Due to influence on social media, mass media and home based duties, learners develop laziness to cope with the heavy syllabus. Uncontrolled learners in the home spend time with phones or sit in front of television or computers. The valuable time for academics

carelessly spent make the learner rush in homework and other assignments leading to stress.

According to Yuen & Leung, (2010), family frustration, worries and anxiety bring about internal changes in the learner building pressure which is mostly be extended to others. Some homes are conflict ridden, lack education related guidance or the parent has a negative attitude towards education.

The high costs of living make the parents to involve their children in activities that help raise money for family use. Some parents would like to let their children have ample time to study, but they cannot do so because of the need for more money for survival. Furthermore, in the African culture, a child should be taught how to work hard as the parents do (Mbiti, 2007). It is regarded as wrong to let the children "rest" in the name of reading while the parents work hard. Contributor during focus group discussion argued that:

> When not in school, some of us spend time looking after cattle,as the parents insist we have to look for school fees. Reading from home is considered as escaping from household chores(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

As a result of the environment that the students have at home, they tend to behave like their society. In some cases, the environment where the students work as they help their parents earn is not favorable for students. They interact with people who insist that education is not important. Most of the adults doing manual jobs insist that the students do have no value of education. They make the students believe that there is no need to work hard in school as they will not get any better jobs. Consequently, the students end up getting confused and lack focus in education.

The home environment influences the students conduct, behavior and perception while in school. The people the students interact with while at home contribute to the student's personality, preferences, interpretation of incidents and conflict mitigation. If the students grew up in families and home environments where conflict is resolved only through violence, their perception for settling differences in school will have unrest at the top of the list. Furthermore, the values the family and society hold and their regard for education influence the individuals' values and regard for school as well. For example, the idea that one gets respite by repaying wrongs with wrongs mirror the perpetual chain of bullying in schools. When the home environment instill in the children that they should pay back their assailants by assaulting them or gain respite by assaulting others if they cannot do that to their assailants explains some negative behavior in students. The home has a great grip on the students' growth and personality formation which dictates how they perceive, interpret and react to issues.

4.10.3 The Society and Politics

Members of the society are disorganized and cannot provide role modeling to students. Some of the colleagues in the society abuse substances such as miraa, alcohol or other drugs. The general talk from them is on how they went to school and nothing positive is realized. Some will emphasize on the no difference between the educated and the uneducated.

Politics, demonstrations, strikes and many social disturbances also influence the behavior of the students. Teachers' strikes, doctors' strike and many demonstrations by adults

create an influential picture which learners want to emulate too. Singing *haki yetu* (our rights) on the road could also become fun for adolescents. They will overdo it.

Money minded society not minding how the money is obtained without valuing education gives the teenagers something to emulate. The careless behavior of corruption, bribery and conmenship is not escaping the school going age. Some will be paid to act in a certain manner for other people's interest. The illiterate have bought their way in politics, justice and power. The learners will soon lose the academic test and get influenced otherwise.

Media influence cuts across all levels. Watching one school burning can easily motivate other learners to do the same. Idu & Olugbade (2011) argue that before 1990, the school unrest was not as rampant as after 2000. Growth of mass media has globalized the country creating a common atmosphere even in schools.

The teachers have constantly been charging money for extra tuition. In some cases, they do not even teach anything new to the students. They just give revision questions. Sometimes they are absent and give some assignments during the tuition hour. They want to out extra money in their pockets irrespective of the many teaching hours which are enough. The teachers have commercialized education, charging everything including what they are paid by the government to do. Abolishing of tuition by the government finds resistant because the money will no longer be available. The students observe all these things and learn to disobey even when they know they are disobeying.

The location of a school in a particular area influences the behavior of the students. They tend to adapt according to the surrounding since they observe what is happening and

implement them in their daily activities. The communication used is correspondent to the one they are surrounded with (Bassam, *et al*., 2018). Society plays a major role in the discipline of the student; it acts as a role model in nurturing the students' behavior. Students focus on what society does, resulting in the inhibition of certain characteristics which are transferred to the institution. An irresponsible society plays a bigger role in the intensification of indiscipline among the students. Increased factors such as corruption, bribery and the black market in the society have resulted in wrong cues among the students. This kind of impression gradually cultivated into their minds hence leading to increment of indiscipline among the students.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the results of the study from the first objective which was to examine the nature of student unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County.In a nutshell, the unrest in schools takes different forms such as strikes, bullying, fights, burning of the facilities, defying punishments, boycotting classes and stealing of school properties; and are a result of numerous contributing factors, the interaction of the learners and home, the system and the society. Students engage in strikes as an attempt to put across their grievances and dissenting opinions which previously have fallen to deaf ears of the teachers and administrators.

Although going on strikes is not the best option in conflict mitigation, the wide involvement by society including teachers in strikes encourages and sets precedence for the students to follow in the pursuit of solutions. Fights are uncommon in schools, considering the strict rules and punishment system, but in day schools where students are

not under teachers while commuting to school, they occur. Boycotting classes mostly occurs at personal levels, but at times, whole classes engage in case they consider a teacher to be incompetent or unfair in dealing with them. Defying punishments also occurs at personal level as students emulate teachers and the society in no adherence to laws or rules. Burning of school facilities is the gravest form of unrest which seems to originate from poor judgment as students "compete" with others that have done the same to prove their heroism and bravery to others, as paraded on the media. While the student council should aid the administration to alleviate the occurrence of unrests, it is unfortunate that they both (administration and student council) fail to rectify to reasons for conflict as well as note the indicators of unrest before it occurs. The next chapter presents results for the second objective.

CHAPTER FIVE

STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONS OF STUDENT COUNCILS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

5.1 Introduction

This chapter answers the second research question in line with the second objective of the study. The objective sought to assess the structure and functions of Student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The researcher gave questionnaires students and teachers from various secondary schools. Key informants such as school principals, deputy principals, county director of education, and sub-county directors were interviewed.

5.2 Formation of Student Council in Schools

According to the results from the questionnaires, the majority of the respondents agreed that the student council is elected by student with the input from the administration. In fact, 81% of the respondents in the questionnaires, both for the teachers and students, pointed out that there was the input of the administration in the election of the council. This indicates that the students are not allowed to select the students they want on their own.
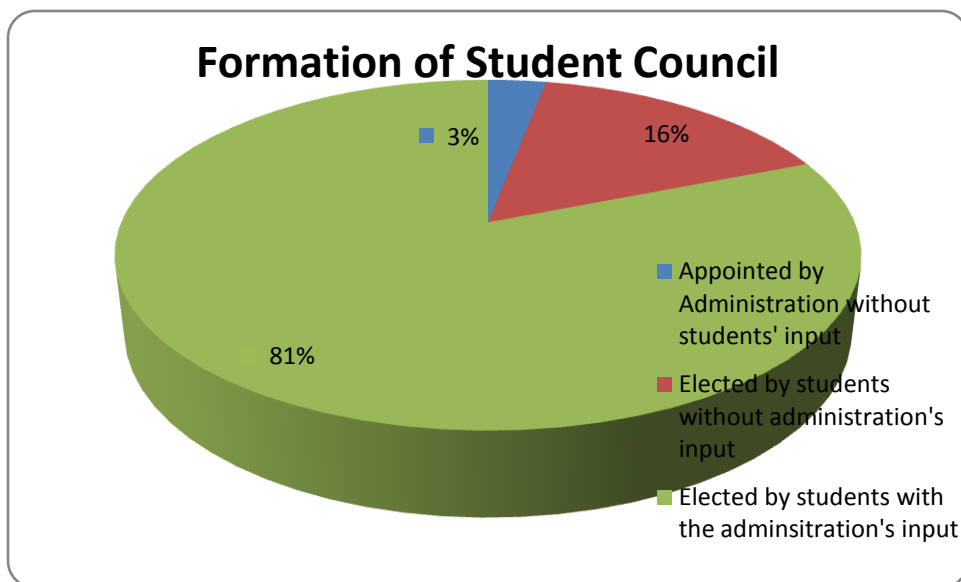
Figure 5.1: Formation of Student Council

Source: Field Data, 2018

During the focus group discussions with the students, the responds argued that they are not allowed to elect their leaders. It is the administration that determines who will be selected in the posts, especially the most powerful position such as the head-boy/school president. They feel that the administration selects the people they know will cooperate with them. They do not allow the student to democratically elect their own leaders.

During the interviews, the principals agreed that they have a hand in the student leaders' election. They pointed out that they cannot allow the students to elect the leaders alone because they will give immature students who can easily be comprised by a group of students. In fact, one of the principals argued that they have the final say in the election results. After the students do their work in choosing, the teachers announce the final

results. The announced results comprise the list they are comfortable with, without considering the will of the students. The principal said that:

> We do not allow pure democracy when electing the student council. The disciplinary committee has the final say on who will be in the council. We fear allowing student leaders who will be compromised by students(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

According to Ojwang' (2012), the lack of democracy or fairness in the election of the student leaders is a cause of strife in schools. Although it is paramount for the administration to have students they can work comfortably with, they should also factor in the needs, and opinions of the students that the student council should be representing. If the student leaders only represent the needs and support the opinion of the administration, the schools will be running under tyranny, which does nothing to ease unrest. There should be balance between what the teachers want and who the students want, in the representation in the council. That is the only way the students' opinions and grievances will be aired to the administration. If the administration and students have a compromise in the student council, both parties will have faith in the operation of the council and the cooperation between them.

In all the schools that participated in the study, the student council positions were elective. The students are elected once every year. In most schools, there is vigorous vetting by the administration. The vetting committee comprises of the disciplinary committee which is chaired by the deputy principal, while others have the entire teaching staff and administration doing the vetting. The candidates who are interested in the positions fill the forms which are taken to the administration for vetting. Only the most qualified students are allowed to campaign. In most schools, the factors that are

considered include discipline, academic performance and ability to pay fees. During the interviews, one of the principal argued that discipline and academic performance were the key factors that they consider. They want leaders who can command the students knowing that they perform well in class. Those who do not perform well are not allowed to campaign because they should give all their time to academic work to try and improve their studies. On the same note, discipline is very crucial. Students who are in the council must be disciplined for them to help in enforcement of discipline. One of the principals pointed out that they demote any student who is found to be indiscipline. The student must maintain discipline for them to be role models to the rest of the students.

In most schools, discipline and academic performance were the main factors. However, in some schools, the ability to pay fees is a key factor. In this case, students who are frequently sent home for school fees are not allowed to hold positions in the student council. During the interviews, principals who had fee payment as a factor argued that they cannot have frequent absentees as leaders. One of the deputy principals in such schools said that:

> We know that it is not the fault of these students to be sent home. However, if they are absent every now and then, who will take their positions? There will be a vacuum every month, and that will give room for indiscipline in that area. Therefore, we must consider fees payment as a factor(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The results of the study indicated that most of the members of the council are in form three and four. The form ones and twos only have the class representatives. The other positions are in the upper forms to ensure there is command. It is hard for the students in the lower forms to rule those in the upper forms. Therefore, the form three and form four

students are given the chance to take the senior posts. The strong positions of school captain, the deputy, dorm captain and the deputies, dinning captain and academic counselor requires form four and form threes. In most schools, the captain was in form four while the deputy was a form three. However, some of the schools had changed that strategy. They discovered that the deputies automatically assumed the senior posts when the form four left school. Thus, the posts were only taken over by the deputies irrespective of their previous performances. Thus, they adjusted to adopt a strategy of having the captain and the deputy in form four. Consequently, the posts will be empty and open for any student. One of the deputy principals from such schools indicated that:

> We select a form four as the captain and the deputy to avoid confusion after the form four complete the course. We realized that when the deputy is not working, and is in form three, we were forced to make him the captain irrespective of his underperformance record. For now, every position is open for competition with no one from the previous council being considered(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

During the focus group discussions with the students, they cited a case of a school captain who was overshadowed by the deputy. The captain was elected because he was the deputy captain to the previous captain. However, he was weak and did not have the power to command the entire school. However, because of the previous culture in the school of making the deputies to be the captains, the mistake occurred. As a result, there was unrest in the school as the captain could not maintain law and order when the teachers were absent. The school ended up with a strike. The students are comfortable that the administration had considered the option of having the captain and the deputy in the same class so that they eliminate such cases.

The results of the study, as revealed during FGDs with students, indicated that the student council meets regularly with the administration after the election. They are given leadership tips on how to balance the leadership responsibilities with their academic work. During the interviews, 50% of the principals agreed that they take the student leaders through training that takes one day. The training is aimed at helping the students be effective leaders. They are trained on how to be students and leaders at the same time. Considering the huge responsibility the student leaders have ahead, the one day training is not enough. They cannot learn enough skills, unless the administration keeps on having refresher courses and reminder workshops to strengthen the leaders. Majority of the board of directors interviewed in this study emphasized on the importance of training the students. They are young students who are given the responsibility of leadership. They have their studies to handle while at the same time they have to take part in administrative duties. However, 50% of the principals said that their student council does not go through any formal type of training. The student leaders start to take their responsibilities immediately after the election.

5.3 Nature of Student Representation in the Student Council

The study sought to understand the nature of student presentation in the council. The results of the study indicated that every class is represented in the council. During focus group discussion with the students, the respondents agreed that there is enough representation at the council. During the interview with school heads, the results of the study indicated that most schools 9(47%) have 10-40 students leaders. Also, 5(26%) have 40-60 student leaders. Only 2(10%) have 1-20 leaders, and 3(16%) have more than 60 members of the council.

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Table 5.1 Number of students in the student Council

No of Students in the Student Council	Frequency	Percentage
1-20	2	10%
21-40	9	47%
41-60	5	26%
Above 60	3	16%

Source: Field Data, 2018

Every sector is represented fairly at the council. Most of the departments are similar. Even if there are some differences in the names and sections, the structure of the student council in Kericho County can be represented in the following Figure 5.2.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │  School Captain/President │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
                                 │
                                 ▼
                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │ Assistant/Deputy President │
                    └─────────────────────────┘
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Games Captain	Dinning Captain	Admin Captain	Boarding Captain	Academic Captain
Environmental captain	Dinning Section Leaders	Nursing Secretary	Dormitory Prefects	Class Monitors
Deputies	Table Leaders	Laboratory/ Library Prefect	Deputies	Deputy Monitors
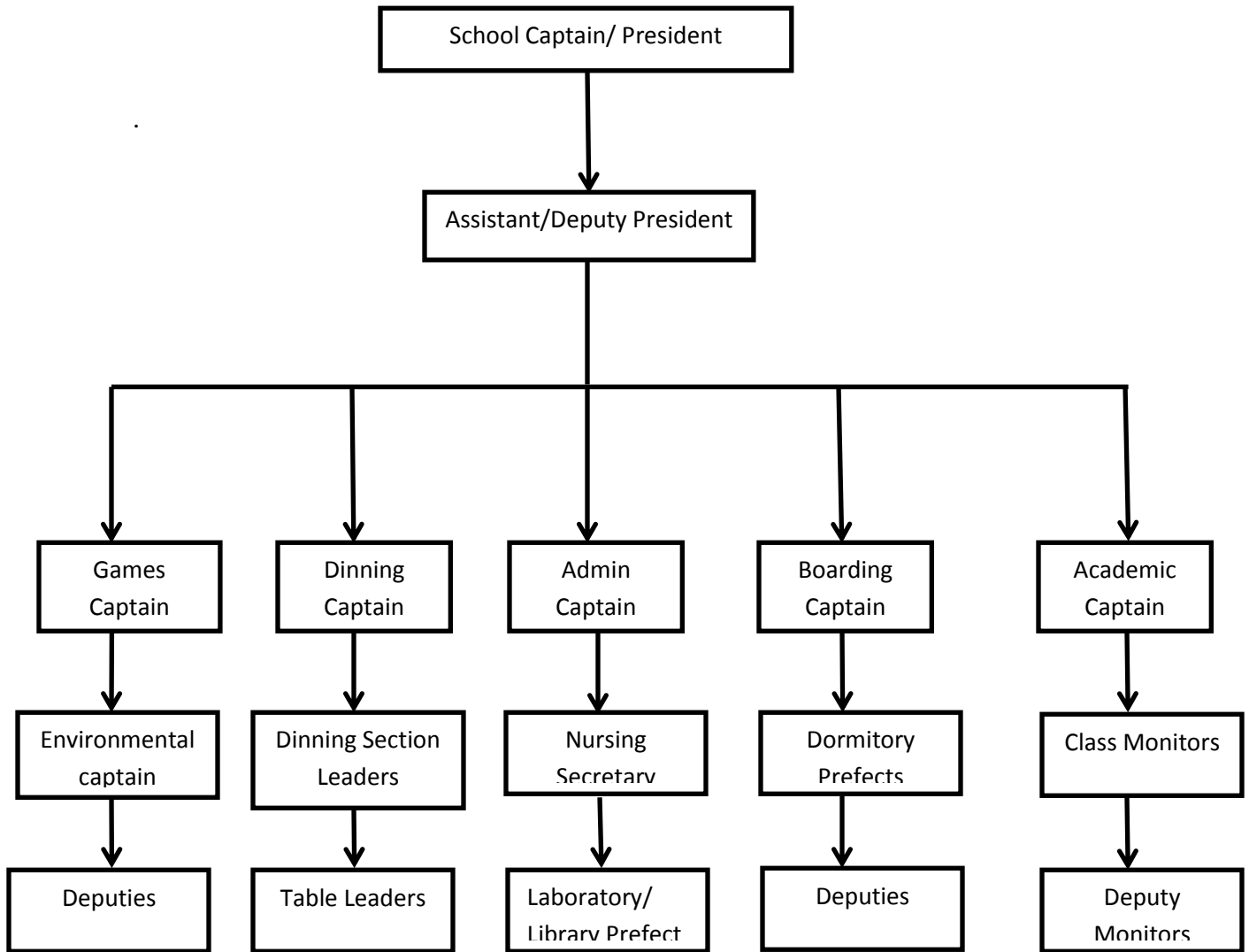
Figure 5.2 Structure of Student Council

Source: Field Data, 2018

There is the overall head of the student council with different names depending with the school. The most common names are: School captain, head boy/head girl, chair lady/chairman and school president. There are other schools with unique names such as counselors and secretaries of various departments.

The overall head is responsible of overseeing that every leader takes care of his department effectively. The study found out that the captain is respected by both the teaching and the non-teaching staff. During the focus group discussions with the students, the learners argued that they respect the school captain because he/she has authority. In fact, he/she can influence an indiscipline case. Some respondents cited cases where the captain saved them from being expelled from school, or contributed towards expulsion of some students. He/she reports to the principal's office frequently brief him on the behavior of the students.

During the interviews with school heads, the respondents pointed out similar departments that are headed by the student council. There are five major categories that appear in majority for the schools. They include: games, dinning, boarding, academics and administration. The games department is headed by the games captain who is responsible of the gaming activities in the field. According to one of the interviewed sub-county director of education, the games departments in some schools also have the environment prefect who works together with the games captain to ensure conservation of the environment. He oversees activities such as tree planting, flower watering and proper disposal of waste in the school.

The results of the study indicate that the dinning department is a major sector that is highly valued. According to the majority of the board members interviewed, most of the unrest cases in the school originate from this department. One member of the board said that:

> If the students are unsatisfied at school, they will not cooperate. These are teenagers who value food more than anything else. You must give them

enough food or they will not cooperate with you. They can cause chaos and burn the entire school if the tea has no sugar(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The importance of the dinning department makes the administration to be extremely keen in the selection of the dinning head. The administration desires to have a person who has the power to control the students and convince them that everything is working in their favor. During the interviews with head of schools, one of the deputy principal reported that the dinning captain must report to her every evening and brief her on the day's meals and the level of student satisfaction.

The boarding department consists of all dormitories in the boarding schools. There are dormitory monitors and deputies in every dorm. During the focus groups discussions, the students agreed that it was important to have the dorm prefects as they act as a link between the matrons and the learners. According to one of the board members interviewed, the leadership in this department is greatly influenced by the matron and dorm masters/mistresses. They select the person they would like to work with, and the administration does not reject their choice. A deputy principal agreed with this argument during the interviews. She pointed out that the dormitory mothers in her school make the final decision on who will be the head of a particular dorm. Since the dormitory heads work hand in hand with the dorm masters, their say must be respected.

The Academic department is present in every school. Every class has a class monitor who keeps the records of everything that happens in class. They report to the class teachers and the dean of studies. They also report any indiscipline cases to the master on duty. In

most schools, the class monitors are elected by the students in that particular class. However, as reported by some respondents during the FGDs with students, sometimes the class-teachers influence the election. The class teachers have the power to accept or reject the elected class monitor. These leaders report directly to the class teacher, and he has to work with a person he is comfortable with.

The administration department deals with the daily running of the other sectors in the school. The department has leaders in the laboratory, library, nursing and religious leaders. These members of the council report to the deputy principal as well as the head of specific departments. These sections are important but do not require a lot of interference from the disciplinary committee. The prefects ensure that the school properties in their specific areas of duty are protected.

The constitution of Kenya 2010 gives individual of the country to practice their sovereign power. The education system in the country needed changes to ensure students were well advocated for. So the ministry of education developed sessional papers of the basic Act of 2013 number 14 to deal with the issue as illustrated by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2016). The law was instituted to ensure that students felt well represented, hence avoiding chaos and disruption of property in secondary schools. The student council law was born in the year 2008 with a common goal for the advocacy of student council. The ministry of education with other stakeholders, Children Education Fund, and Kenya Secondary School Heads Association sat together and realized that students need active inclusion in major school decisions.

The law established was designed to involve students in contributing to new ideas of developing the school system. According to Griebler & Nowak (2012) the law gives power to elected representatives to exercise sovereign power beneficial to the institutions they are in. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2016) stated that the law stipulated that students had an upper hand in contributing their ideas in the daily running of the school. The student council is allowed to sit in Board of Management meetings when important matters concerning the school and students are discussed. The student council must set an example to other students through involvement with all stakeholders, while offering strong leadership skills (Mukiti, 2014). The prefect system was pushed away because it was a way that the administration used to subdue the views of the students increasing tension that led to strikes in secondary schools. The student council law protected and gave ownership to students to own their school programs, while bridging a gap between the administration and students.

5.4 Size and Effectiveness of the Student Council

When asked about the size and effectiveness of the student council, the majority of the students (68%) who filled the questionnaires agreed that the student council is appropriate and effective. Some respondents (20%) felt that the student council was too big to be effective. A small percentage of 12% indicated that the student council was too small to be effective.
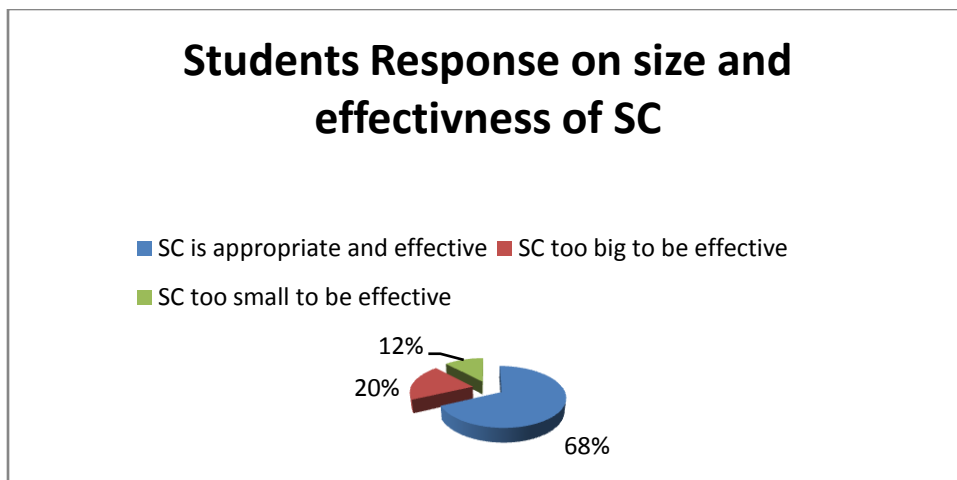
Fig 5.3 Student Response Size and effectiveness of student council

Source: Field data, 2018.

The questionnaires from the teachers also indicated a similar perception. Most of the teachers (60%) felt that the student council in their school was effective, 26 % believes that the SC is too big to be effective while 14% pointed out that the SC is too small to be effective.
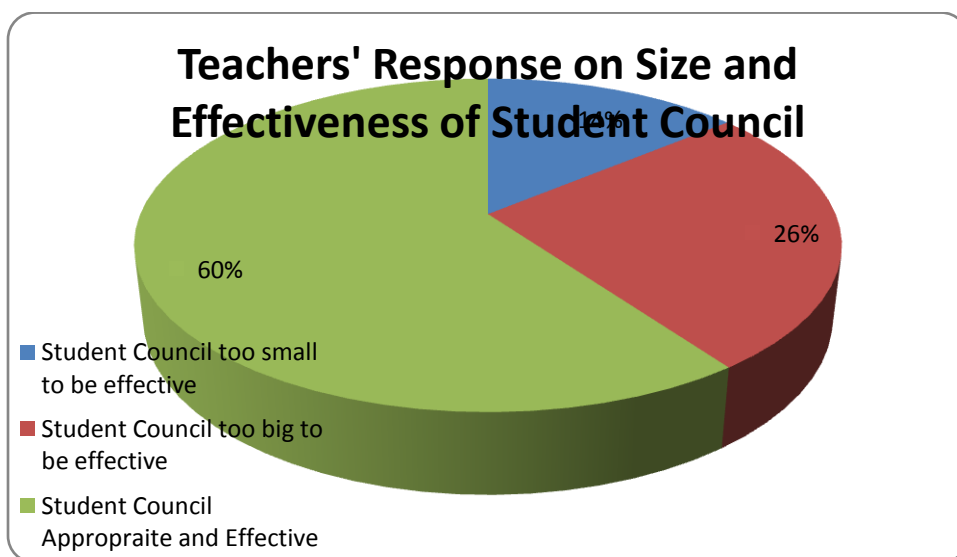
Fig 5.4 Teachers response on the effectiveness of SC

Source: Field Data, 2018

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Most of the respondents believe that the student council is appropriate and fairly represents the students. The schools that have a high population have more than 40 student leaders. During the interviews in one of the national school with more than 1500 students, the principal said that they have many leaders because the students are many. For the schools that have a low population, the size of the student council is smaller. In fact, some of the schools which had less than 300 students had less than twenty members of the council.

During FGDs with students, some respondent argued that the student council was too large to be effective. They felt that there is over-presentation in the council. The prefects are exempted from performing cleaning duties. The students felt that they have to do extra work which should be shared among more students, who are too many in the council. They claim that there should be fewer prefects as they only stand in for the teachers. In their views, some of the dockets should be eliminated. One of the students said that:

> Why should we have a captain and a deputy? A captain is enough. Further, we should not have the games captain, the deputy games captain and the environment leader. They all perform the same duty. This department should only have one prefect. Even the prefect on duty is enough to check how we play in the field. Furthermore, the Sports and Talent Patron is always present. There is no need to have all these leaders. It is a duplication of duties(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

According to the director of education in the county, some of the schools have so many members in the council. The administration allows for a big number because they want to man everything that the students do. Sometimes the over representation makes the student to be uncomfortable. They lack the freedom to do what they want to do even

during games or leisure time that they should be free every time there is a prefect passing nearby. Thus, they must act in a manner that will not annoy the prefect. However, the big size of student council is sometimes very useful, especially in the big schools. During the interviews with the board of directors, one of the respondent agreed that they require a big number because the teachers cannot be present everywhere. Thus, it is essential to have perfects everywhere as they are the "eyes" of the administration.

The student council members spend all their time with their colleagues. In this case, they give first-hand information to the administration. During the interviews, the school heads agreed that the student council has helped them learn of dissatisfaction among the students. In fact, most of the heads are pre-informed of a strike before it occurs. The members of the student council learn through their colleagues that there would be unrest because of various reasons. They have severally controlled the situation before its escalation to chaos. They are grateful that the student council has been very useful to the school. During the FGDs with students, the respondents pointed out that the student leaders relay information to the administration and help them communicate various issues. Thus, the students believe that the student council should remain. The student body acts a link between the students and the administration.

However, some of the students (12%) felt the student council was too small to be effective. They claimed that there were very few leaders. The few who are there are given a lot of responsibilities to the extent that they cannot be effective. During one of the FGDs with the students, the respondents pointed out that the administration only allows them to select class prefects and the head-boy. They are given responsibilities to offer

leadership roles in the dining hall, during games, in the laboratory and library. The roles are rotational. As a result, there is no specific role for a particular prefect. As a result, the respondents felt that they do not have a person to ask question pertaining a specific section such as the library. One of the respondents during the FGDs said:

> The person who was in the library last week goes to the laboratory. If you wanted a particular book and you had liaised with that particular prefect, you start the process again. Before the book is returned to the library and reserved for you, another prefect comesin. In this case, the student council becomes ineffective because it is too small(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

It is important to have a moderate student council that will be effective. The administration should avoid over-representation as it makes the students uncomfortable. They feel that there are so many idle prefects who should be sharing duties as normal students. Thus, a very big size creates enmity between the students and the student council. In addition, a small population is not effective, as it does not cover all the required sectors. A small student council leaves gaps in the administration.

When asked to rate the effectiveness of the student council, both the teachers and the students filling the questionnaires agreed that the student council was effective. A moderate number of students comprising of 28%believe that the student council was very effective, while 40% believe that it was effective. However, 32% have a different opinion that the student council is not effective.
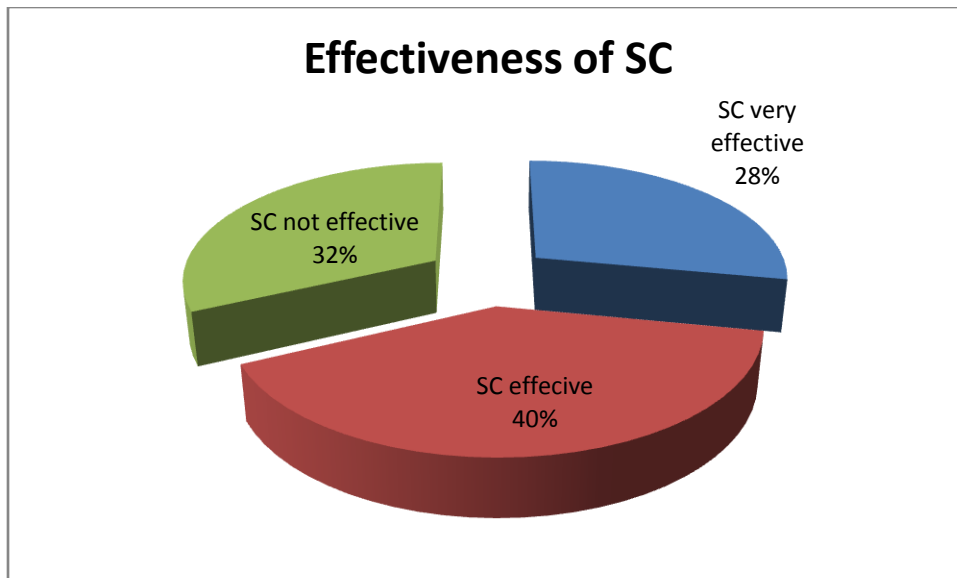
Figure 5.5 Effectiveness of SC

Source: Field Data, 2018

Most of the students from schools that have had serious unrests in the last two years believe that the student council has not been effective. During FGDs with the students, they argued that the interference of the administration during the formation of the student council is what makes them ineffective. In their views, the administration selects students who can easily be manipulated. One of the students said that:

> The student council in this school belongs to the teachers. They represent the interest of the teachers and not the students. All the leaders we elect are not announced. The administration announces a list that favors them. Therefore, we do not like the student council and it does not help us. It is ineffective to us, but effective for the administration(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

When the students feel that the administration is unfair and that there is no democracy, they reject the student council in place. In this case, the administration should make the election process appear as democratic as possible. Some of the school heads interviewed in this study pointed out that they do not allow the students to democratically elect the

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council. They "doctor" the results because they cannot allow the student to elect leaders who cannot cooperate with the administration. However, this should happen without the knowledge of the students. It is advisable to make the students believe that the candidate announced as the leader is the one who won the elections. Further, the administration, through the disciplinary committee, should only allow the most qualified candidates to vie for the seat. There should be vigorous vetting of the interest parties so that the administration is comfortable with any of the candidates who win after the campaign. Consequently, the student will only have a choice to elect their leaders from a clean list.

5.5 Student Councils' Role in Management of Discipline

The respondents were asked to state the effectiveness of the student council in the management of discipline. The results of the filled questionnaires were as follows:

Table 5.2 Effectiveness of SC in discipline management

Role of Student Council in Management of Discipline	Agree	Disagree
Student councils take part in school governing body activities	52%	48%
Policies are formed after rigorous deliberations including students	8%	92%
Student councils ensure enforcement of school rules and regulations to the latter	79%	11%
Student councils participate freely in disciplinary meetings with school authority	32%	68%
Student councils are equal partners in decision making about discipline	8%	92%
Decisions about discipline are transparent and open	15%	85%
Student councils cultivate a culture of positive behavior amongst students	51%	49%
Student councils encourage fellow learners to participate and are responsible for the sound functioning of school	64%	36%
Student councils promote positive communication with educators and school management	57%	43%
Student councils are involved in anti-bullying	72%	28%
Student councils promote good discipline by holding regular learners meetings and discussions	48%	52%
Student councils use communication channels to discuss learners fears and frustrations	79%	21%
Student councils create clubs and special projects to promote learners involvement	26%	74%
Student councils act as ambassadors in the school and community	65%	35%
Student councils develop and promote a positive learner spirit and culture within the school	54%	46%

Source: Field Data, 2018

According to the result of the study (52%), the student council is actively involved in the management of discipline. The student council is given the responsibilities of ensuring that the school rules are implemented. During the FGDs with students, they agreed that the prefect body plays a crucial role in ensuring that the students follow the set rules. In most schools, as revealed during the FGDs, the prefects are allowed to give punishments to the students who do not follow the rules. The respondents said that the punishments which the prefects give are fair. They tell them to sweep the compound or redo their

duties if they are not done properly. In most cases, the members of the student council report the student found with indiscipline cases to the Master on Duty or to the deputy principal. Class monitors report cases to the class teachers, while the dormitory representatives report to the matron or the boarding patrons.

In some cases, the members of the student council participate in the disciplinary meetings with the authority. Most of the schools heads agreed that they involve students in the disciplinary meeting if the case being discussed was reported by a member of the council. They involve the prefect so that they can get first-hand information and a witness in the committee. However, the member of the council is not allowed to make any decision. He/she comes to the committee for a short time to give relevant information, and then he is allowed to go back to class. During the interviews, some board members pointed out that the student council should be allowed in the disciplinary meeting if the council will have a positive contribution. However, most of the sub-county directors of education were against that idea. During the interviews, one of the sub-county directors pointed out that:

> Students should not be allowed into the disciplinary meetings at all. These are students and should not be given such privileges. In fact, the student who misbehaved should not even know who reported him. Such instances create enmity between the student and the Student Council. The students might decide to take vengeance on the student leader who reported him to the authority(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

Majority of the students (85%) felt that decisions about discipline were not transparent and open. Students are hardly given a chance to give their views in matters of discipline. During FGDs with students, the respondents argued that the authority makes decisions

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without listening to them. Even their representatives from the council are not given a chance to give their views. According to the school principals interviewed, matters of discipline are administrative. Allowing students to give their views would compromise the discipline of the school. Thus, the disciplinary committee makes the final decision without involving the students.

Majority of the students (92%) disagree that the student council is involved in policy formulation. Only a small percentage of 8% agrees that there are vigorous deliberations before the formulation of the policies. During the FGDs with students, the participants argued that they are not informed of any policies being formulated the administration only reports of new policies and expect the students to obey without objection. When the researcher asked the principals during interviews on whether they involve the student council in the formulation of the policies, the respondents pointed out that is a purely administrative role. Therefore, they do not involve students. The students are young and have no knowledge of how policies are formulated. Therefore, they should follow the school rules because the stakeholders in policy formulation make policies that are mature. However, some board members have a different view. When interviewing some of the board members, they pointed out that it would be important to involve the students because the policies directly affect them. One of the board members said that:

> Even if the students are young, they should have a say in the new rules and regulations set. We are in the 21[st]century, and we should let the students air their views. They might have some information that we do not have. Giving them a chance will make the policies friendlier(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

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In as far as the management believes that the student council should not be involved in the policy, research indicates that participation of students in their rules bears positive fruits. The students will feel that their ideas are valued. As a result, they will obey the rules and cooperate knowing that the policies are for their benefits.

Student leaders have a role in cultivating a culture of positive behavior amongst student. They remind the students of the importance of doing the right thing at the right time. During FGDs with students, they agreed that they learn a lot from the Student Council. Most of the student leaders are disciplined and good performers in academics. Therefore, they listen to them and emulate them in many ways. The student council encourages fellow learners to participate in different activities. The SC makes the school function smoothly as they promote communication between the educators and the management.

The results of the study indicate that the student council is involved in management of discipline. However, there is little participation of students in administrative decisions. The student council concentrates more on the implementation of the policies. During the interviews, one of the principals pointed out that they allow students to participate in some administrative issues such as the choice of school uniforms. They allow the students, through the student council to give the colors they would prefer. The other administration decision that students have a say in is planning of co-curricular activities. The games captain represents the students when deciding which sports the students should be playing.

The results of the study agree with the view of Basaam (2018) that the students 'council is concerned with minor issues within the institution such as conflicts among the students, misunderstandings, allocation of duties and even personal issues of students. Every student has to participate to attain success since the higher the level of participation the higher the probability of good performance which is inversely proportional to the level of discipline (Basaam, 2018). The students' body establishes policies that facilitate the promotion of good behaviors among students since they clearly understand the specific roles that they ought to play. The policies guide the relationship among students in eradicating indiscipline cases such as bullying. Policies also validate that the students are agents of the inevitable change of behaviors.

According to Kennedey (2018), involvement of the students' council in the formulation of rules and regulation within the school premise includes the students' views and negotiations in decision making that are done through a collective dialogue between the students' council and administration. However, as revealed in the study, the extent to which the students' council is involved in the formulation of policies is undermined by the administration because the student leaders are seen as immature and lack the know-how on how to run a schooling institution. It is viewed that the students are to remain passive since they receive instructions from the teachers, parents and the administrators for them to follow, therefore the policymaking process is undertaken by the administration (Kennedey 2018). In this case, the student council fails to work as expected.

In the views of Anderson & Ritter (2017), the students' council involvement in the formulation of rules and regulation is significance in the management of the school

concerning issues such as students' welfare. The administration lacks a clear understanding to illustrate various issues that affect student thus the administration to manage discipline within the institution (Anderson & Ritter, 2017). Nonetheless, as revealed during the study, the student leaders' involvement in making decisions is limited because they are only restricted to addressing issues that affect them directly. The induction process is the technique that the student uses to become involved fully hence the student council should be involved in major areas such as planning the development of the school and discipline.

The results of the study agree with the views of Blank & Shivit (2016) that keeping time facilitates the smooth running of the school; the students' council have the responsibility to ensure that time is managed. They ensure that all activities are done on time hence play a vital role in the management of students' discipline (Blank & Shivit, 2016). During the interviews, school principals confirmed that for the efficacy of the students' council in keeping time, the student council is divided into various categories including those in charge of managing time. To ensure that that the students observe time, the student leaders command respect for their voices to be heard, by doing this their studies conclude on time hence the management of the school's discipline.

The results of the study indicate that the students' council plays an important role in offering instructions to students thus, responsible for managing the pace at which various activities are conducted to achieve the objectives given by the administration. Nekesa (2018) agrees that the SC provides an environment in which the students work and motivate them to enhance greater performance in their school activities (Nekesa 2018). However, Nekesa (2018) further warns that this is only effective if the administration

provides a democratic election to acquire a forum of student leaders who are willing to carry out their roles without being forced, and also helping them in achieving good school performance holistically. They alert the administration informing them, of any misconduct within the students

During the interviews, the county director of education in Kericho county pointed out that punctuality is achieved since the students' council are on their duties at all time in all places during their stay in school, by keeping time order is attain within the school premises, students take their lunch and break the right time. This enhances the enforcement of rules regulation within the institution. This is in agreement with Kennedy (2018) that the student council is capable of ensuring the rules and regulations are followed, including punctuality that is crucial in a learning environment. Involvement of the students' council in the day to day running of the institution ensures that the students are disciplined for they are found at the right time at the right place, this shows their adherence to the school's rules and regulations.

Majority of the school principals interviewed indicated that they no longer allow the student leaders to give punishment to their fellow students. They pointed out that such privileges were previously available, but they were eliminated as they created unnecessary gap between the student council and the other student. In the views of Mboyonga (2018), allowing the student leaders to administer punishment creates enmity between the student and their leaders. The traditional prefect body that was given such responsibilities failed terribly as the students feared and hated them. In fact, Mboyonga (2018) concludes that when student leaders are involved in punishment administration for the management of the school, school unrest increases. Despite the fact that it can be

valuable since it tends to make sure there are limited chances of indiscipline and students conduct themselves responsibly when teachers are absent, it creates animosity that can lead to worse situations when the students decide to strike against their leaders. As indicated in the literature review, such cases have in the past caused painful deaths when students targeted their own leaders in a wave of violence in Nyeri High school in 1999 when four prefects were burnt by their fellow students in their cubicles as they were sleeping.

BoM members pointed out that the SC plays a very important role in reporting cases of student having phones and laptops illegally. The student leaders can easily learn who has such gadgets as they live with their fellow students. Damiani (2016) points out that the advancement of science and technology has increased rapidly; it is a major factor influencing student's behaviour. Students are hooked to social media platforms to acquire psychological satisfactions. The mannerisms observed are transferred to the school premises and a couple of time adopted within the institution (Damiani, 2016). Students purchase electric gadgets such as mobile phones for entertainment and carry them to school illegally, hence violating the school's rules. The role carried by the student's council is to keep the administration body aware to search possession of gadgets. Deputy Principals agreed during interviews that students found guilty are expelled or severely punished to act as a good example to others and reduce such cases.

The principals and deputy principals also pointed out that the student council is involved in the indication process. The students' council ensures that the students understand the need for them to observe discipline within the institution from the time they join. According to Mboyonga (2018), student leaders help the new comers especially the first

years to quickly adapt to the new environment. They guide them on how to do their daily activities in school. In some schools, the student leaders are given the role of mentors. Each leader has a group that he/she mentors for one whole term. The mentorship program has helped many students adapt to the environment and easily acquire a sense of identity. It sometimes continues until the leaders' complete school, and it has proved to be effective in many schools.

The results of the study agree with Kibui, Kibera & Bradshaw (2014) that the students' council acts as an avenue that connects the administration with the students' body. Issues affecting students are addressed to the administration through the student's council then discussed and resolved amicably (Kibui, Kibera & Bradshaw, 2014). This prevents the students from presenting themselves to the administration at a personal level since the ratio of student to administrators is high. Feedback is given out through the students' council to the rest of the students who are involved in the decision making processes. The students' council has enhanced the welfare, development of good leadership qualities and career choice among the students. The following are just but a few demonstrations of the role of the student's council.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter presents the results of the second objective of the study which was to evaluate the structure and functions of student councils in secondary schools in Kericho County.The student council in different schools takes different structures, in size and formulation, but mostly serves the same functions. The number of members of the council is largely determined by the total number of students in the school. For schools

with less than 300 students, the council comprises of less than 20 members. For bigger schools, then council members range between twenty and forty while schools with students over a thousand in numbers they council members are between forty and sixty. For students that feel the numbers of council members are too many, they feel over-represented and as if the administration is overdoing in surveillance them while neglecting the need to share cleaning duties. Under-representation in the council results in complains that students do not receive the appropriate help in different departments and their grievances cannot be aired properly to the administration. While it is understandable, the interference of the administration in the election results of the elective positions of the council should be reasonable. The students should not perceive the council members as the administrations choice because they are likely to antagonize them. The council members hardly get involved in disciple meetings although they are responsible for discipline management by either punishing errant or reports misconduct. The council members are hardly involved in administrative decisions and policy formulation which means students are completely left out in the making of decisions and policies concerning them. Although students may be young, their involvement or representation in administrative decisions and policy-making is crucial to make them embrace the decisions and policies as they will have a sense of ownership. The student council is the bridge between the students and the administration and it should be treated and function as such to minimize and alleviate unrest in high schools in Kericho County.

CHAPTER SIX

SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES OF THE STUDENT COUNCILS IN MITIGATING STUDENT CONFLICTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data answering the third research question in relation to the third objective of the study. The objective sought to evaluate the successes and challenges of student council in mitigating students' conflicts in secondary schools within Kericho County. Data was obtained from questionnaires distributed to sampled teachers and students. Also, the researcher conducted focus group discussions with students. School principals, deputy principals, board members, the county director of education and sub-county directors of education were interviewed.

6.2 Involvement of the Student Council in Conflict Mitigation

Through the questionnaires, the students and teachers were asked whether the student councils in their schools help in mitigating disputes involving the students. The results of the study indicated that 64% of the students agree that the student council helps mitigate conflicts in the school. On the other hand, 26% of the students pointed out that the student council is not actively involved in conflict mitigation, while the remaining 10% said they are not sure.

Involvement of SC in Conflict Mitigation

- Not Sure, 10%,
- SC involved in Conflict Mitigation, 64%,
- SC not involved in Conflict Mitigation, 26%
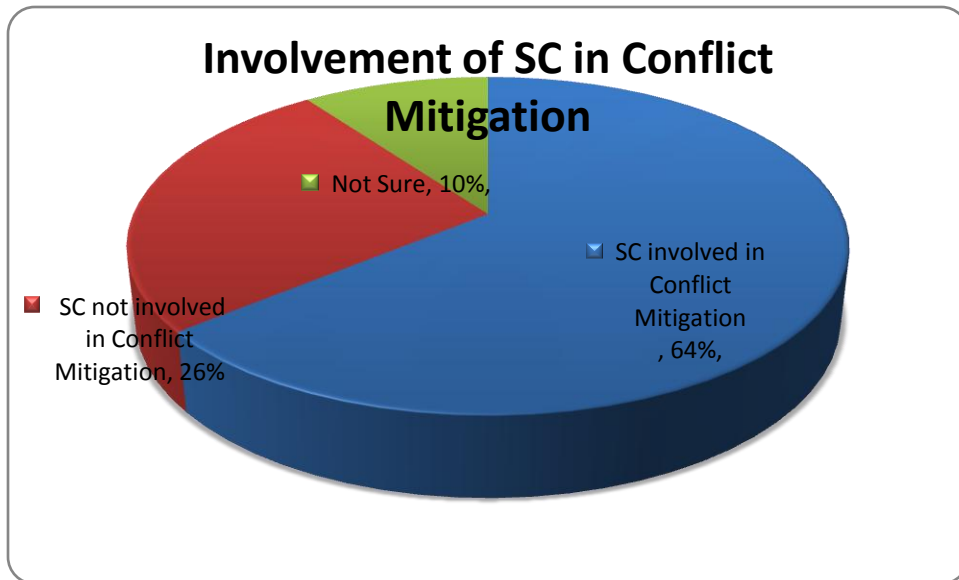
Fig 6.1 Involvement of SC in Conflict Mitigation

Source: Field Data, 2018

The results of the questionnaires show that majority of the students believe that the student council helps mitigate disputes. Thus, they have either been involved in a conflict that was resolved by a member of the student council or have witnessed such a scenario. From the results, 26% perceives that the student council is never involved in conflict mitigation. Considering that there are students who are totally against the student council because of how it is formed, they can perceive that as they do not involve the SC in such matters.

During the Focus Group Discussions with students, the majority agreed that the student council is actively involved in conflict mitigation. They argued that in several occasions, they have witnessed a member of the council help resolve the dispute between disagreeing students. In fact, there were many respondents who had once or severally been assisted by a student leader. The student leaders in the FGDs also agreed that they

have been helping students mitigate disputes. One respondent, who is a school captain, said that:

> I am called upon almost every day to help students mitigate disputes. Most of the small arguments among the students do not reach the administration. They call us and we help them come up with amicable solutions instead of reporting the case to the teachers(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

However, during one of the FGDs with students, a different perspective was revealed. The respondents argued that they do not share any information with the members of the student council, especially the captain and other major prefects. These positions are taken by students who are very loyal to the administration. In this case, they report to the principal or the deputy principal everything that happens. The students feel that they cannot tell these leaders to help them because they will take the matter to the administration even if it was not a matter requiring such actions. The students appeared to be very uncomfortable with the administration for not allowing them to democratically elect their leaders.

The interviewed principals agreed that the student council helps resolve many conflicts without even involving the school administration. The principals argued that whenever they have a strong student council with good leaders, they do not keep on solving small matters. The student council assists resolve the minor disputes. The student council leaders usually stand on the gap and help maintain sanity even when the teachers are absent. One of the deputy principals pointed out that:

> Whenever I have a strong school captain/president leading a strong team, I do not have to deal with gossip and stolen water issues. They handle them without involving even the matron. The student council really helps us and gives us space to handle major indiscipline cases such as sneaking, major

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theft and drug trafficking among others(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

However, one sub-county director of education had a different opinion during the interview. The respondent argued that the student council has nothing special to help in mitigating conflicts. In his view, the student leaders are trained on how to become good leaders. They do not undergo any training on how to deal with conflicts. In this case, therefore, they cannot be said to be mitigating disputes among students.

Conflict mitigation is either done by those who have learned the skills, or those who have a call to do so (Sheila, 2007). According to Schertzer & Stone (2016), there are people who have intrinsic arbitration call that makes them go out of their way to help people resolve their disagreements. These people do not have to be leaders. Sometimes they are only commoners who have no special positions in the society. In this case, the student leaders might not have that call. They can only become conflict managers if they are trained on the same. Being selected as a dining hall captain or dormitory counselor, for instance, has nothing to make a young student a peacekeeper. These responsibilities can only be perfected if the leaders are equipped with the right skills on how to help conflicting parties to come up with a solution amicably.

6.3 Successes of Student Council in Mitigation Conflicts

The teachers were asked to indicate whether they agree with the success of the student councils in mitigatingstudent conflicts. The results of the study are indicated in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1: Success of Student Council in Mitigating Conflicts

Success of student Council	Agree	Disagree
Student Council relates well with the students, administration, teaching and non-teaching staff.	57%	43%
Student Council channels the grievances of the students to the administration.	61%	39%
Student Council acts as a role model to the other students.	72%	28%
Student Council members are friendly to other students including newcomers	47%	53%
Student Council has effective conflict mitigation skills	12%	82%
Student Council spends time with students and detects whenever there is tension or unresolved issue.	54%	46%
Student Council has effective communication skills which make it act like a bridge.	53%	47%

Source: Field Data, 2018

6.3.1 Student Council relationship with the students, administration, teaching and non-teaching staff

Majority of the teachers (57%) agreed that the student leaders relate well with their fellow students, the teaching and non-teaching staff. They know the language to use whenever they are talking to the other stakeholders in the school. As a result, they have a conducive environment to resolve any dispute that arise and is within their capacity to do so. During the FGDs with students, most of them agreed that the student council has a good relationship with the students, the teachers and the non-teaching staff. The leaders

said that they agreed with the watchmen, cooks, gardeners and other members of the staff working in the school. They understand that they need the assistance of these adults. Therefore, they must ensure that they maintain good rapport with them so that they will be easily assisted when the time comes. Furthermore, the student leaders agreed during the FGDs that they trained to treat the other members of the staff properly. One student leader said:

> It is compulsory for us to greet the non-teaching staff. During the training that we had after winning the elections, the deputy principal announced that we must be doing that so that we can have the courage to approach these members of the staff whenever the need arises.

During the interviews with the principals, they argued that the student leaders know how to maintain a good relationship with their colleagues as well as the other members of the staff. Furthermore, the student leaders are among the bright students and the most disciplined. In this case, they relate with other people well. The principals cited that they rarely have rudeness cases involving the student leaders, especially with the members of staff.

The student council of Kenya is mandated to provide excellent leadership skills and act as a bridge between the administration and students as it helps reduce tension because student views are aired. The relationship between the student council, students, teaching and non-teaching staff is vital in proving the effectiveness of the student council law when it well embraced by an institution. Murage (2014) has proven that for a student council to be effective, they must have positive relationships with students and the school staff. Leaders elected to represent a school are a good example to other students on what action to take in case of conflict and what not to do. For a student council to be effective

it must listen to students and engage them in solution-related conversations that will reduce or eliminate anticipated unrests. Subordinates are also vital in a school setting and the student council must link the two reducing any conflict-related issues.

6.3.2 Student Council channels the Grievances of the Students to the Administration

The results of the study indicate that 61% of the teachers believe that the student council is the one that channels the grievances of the students to the administration. One of the roles of the student council is to bridge the gap between the administration and the student. They take the complaints the students have to the administration. They also give the suggestions that the students have regarding conflicting matters.

During the focus group discussions with the students, they argued that they channel their grievances to the administration through the student leaders. The leaders report to the deputy on a weekly or daily basis. The frequently report to the administration, and can even go prior to the meeting to report an urgent matter. Therefore, the students can easily pass the information they want to the administration any time of the day.

The results of the study agree with the views of Nyaga (2019) that the student council is a channel that airs out student grievances to the administration. The council acts as a bridge for students as they are constantly involved in decision-making of the institution. Nyaga (2018) notes that the students' council offers opportunities for the easy access to what is happening in secondary schools for the administration as well as its stakeholders. The author also recognizes that the student council makes it easier for the administration to understand the students and have their needs catered to. The students' council acts as a bridge as not all issues can be taken to the head teacher by individual students.

6.3.3 Student Council Acts as Role Model to the Other Students

The results of the study indicate that 72% of the teachers believe that the student leaders act as a role model to the students. This helps in mitigating conflicts because the students will emulate the leaders. According to the majority of the interviewed principals, it is wrong to have any student leader fighting with their colleagues. Indiscipline among the student leaders leads to demotion. There is no student leader who likes being demoted. Therefore, they try their best to behave properly to avoid such cases. They do not fight with their colleagues. They try to resolve their disagreements amicably so that they will not lead to indiscipline. One deputy principal said that:

> The student council must show the other students how to behave. If you want to have discipline, start with the leaders. Our leaders do anything they can to avoid being in trouble since the outcome is fatal. Sometimes they even compromise their interests to avoid conflicts. The other students learn from them that fighting is unnecessary. Conflicts can be resolved peacefully, and as such leads to less indiscipline cases(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The student leaders are trained on the worth of decency as this marks the basis of emulation by the subjects. Whenever the leaders are hardly involved in the conflict, the cases of serious disputes reduce. Further, the leaders help the others resolve their disputes whenever any arises.

The results of the study agree that the elected representatives have high moral standards as they represent the whole institution. Students, according to the student council law, are provided with more autonomy by providing alternate leadership. Mukiti (2014) observes that student council leaders actively participate in making major decisions for the school, providing alternate leadership, and admiration from other students. Being looked up to helps give the student leaders a form of responsibility over other student. The leaders

raise funds for school activities beneficial to the students as well as creating awareness of issues affecting the minority of the students. The leaders must ensure they promote justice and fairness to ensure that each student gets treated properly and receives the same time and resources as the other students, despite their background.

6.3.4 Detecting Tension among Students

According to 54% of the teachers, the student leaders spend time with the other students and are able to detect any tension and report it to the authority. The leaders are the eyes of the administration. During the interviews with the school heads, they argued that the student leaders have helped the administration many times prevent strikes as they detect the problems and report them. They have close friends who reveal to them what the students are planning. During the training that the leaders acquire, they are taught how to analyze the students' mood and detect a change in behavior. Therefore, they are always on the lookout for any suspicious behavior.

During the FGDs with student leaders, they pointed out that they have been taught how to check the moods of the students. Whenever they realize there is a different mood, they consult some of their friends and learn if there is something cooking in the minds of the students. They are supposed to report to the school administration anytime they notice a change in behavior. One student leader said that:

> We report any suspicion. We do not have to wait to confirm that there will be unrest. Any behavioral change means there is a problem, and we must tell the principal immediately. If we notice abnormal behavior at night, we communicate with the watchman and he reports to the administration immediately(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

Those student leaders who are friendly to their colleagues easily get information whenever there is a problem. The students tell them or they learn from the behavior. During the interviews with a board member, he said that most of the strikes that abort do so because the student leaders learn of the plan before its implementation. The board member cited several cases where the student councills reported very serious cases. One of BoM members pointed out that:

> The most recent case was last term when a group of form three students had planned to burn a dormitory. The school was saved by a student leader who learned of the malicious plot and secretly reported to the administration a few minutes before the plan was implemented. The student council has successfully assisted resolve conflicts that would otherwise escalate into chaos, strikes, and destruction(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

In agreement with Murage (2014), the results of the study confirm that student council has helped detect unrests early, and thus has prevent major disruption in secondary schools. Students' unrest arises when students feel that their issues are not properly handled by the school administration. The elected representatives mingle with their fellow students on a daily basis and can easily detect issues. Being friendly and creating open channels of communication enable students to detect tension among students (Murage, 2014). The position of influence mandated to the student representatives makes them ensure that once they detect tension, it does not escalate to cases of student strikes in secondary schools. Indiscipline cases in secondary schools are a result of various issues such as drug abuse, bad parenting, community, and government influences. Student's council have the responsibility of following up on changes in student's patterns of behavior. This is vital icon in ensuring early detection of tension among students. With

early crisis detection the administration has an opportunity to correct the issues present whilst avoiding wanton destruction of property and class time.

6.4 Challenges of Student Council in Conflict Mitigation

The results of the study show the following challenges that the student council faces as it tries to mitigate conflicts in the schools in the county. The results are indicated in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Challenges of Student Council in Conflict Mitigation

Challenges of Student Council to Conflict Mitigation	Percentage
Lack of Proper Training	24%
Interference from the administration	23%
Students disrespect and fear the Student Council	19%
Lack of power to command	6%
Students overwhelmed by administrative duties	4%
Lack of call to be peace keepers	10%
Fear of being victimized by students	14%

Source: Field Data, 2018

6.4.1 Lack of Proper Training

Majority of the respondents (24%) pointed out that the challenge of the student council in mitigating conflicts is that they do not get the required training to handle such tasks. In most of the schools that participate in the study, the student leaders go through one-day training, or they are not trained at all. For the single training, the school heads pointed out that they give them the basic skills of being a good leader. They do not have enough time to train the leaders on the conflict management skills. In this case, therefore, the students are expected to resolve the conflicts without the know-how to conduct such responsibilities.

During the FGDs with student leaders, they pointed out that they have never been taught how to resolve disputes. They only resolve disputes the way they think is appropriate. The student leaders cited cases that they did not know what to advise the conflicting parties. One student leader gave this example:

> There is a time a form two student came to me claiming that a form three student had snatched her boyfriend during the game festivals. She was very bitter and vowed to revenge. I called upon the other student who said that the boyfriend had approached her, and she did not know that he already had a girlfriend. However, she was not ready to let the boyfriend go as she had already fallen in love with him. It was very hard for me to deal with such a case. I personally do not have a boyfriend and no one has ever taught us how to handle such cases.

The county director of education also agreed with the majority of the respondents that there is no proper training for the student leaders. The director pointed out that the school curriculum does not give the learners a chance to have detailed training that can equip them with the appropriate knowledge. The administration, however, can equip the leaders

with basic knowledge of conflict mitigation through seminars and workshops that can be conducted on monthly basis.

According to Murage (2009) student council, play a very important role in the management of conflict in schools. In this case, therefore, it is crucial to have a democratic appointment that will facilitate the formation of the right students' crew. It is important to ensure that they are inducted into their work via training. Also, the council should be encouraged and continuously trained on how to handle issues maturely.

Voting is the only way to elect a favorable candidate by the students. The elected leaders are not well trained for the roles in which they are given. Griebler & Nowak (2012), highlight that student leaders are elected by their fellow students to be used as an instrument to channel their grievances to the school administration. Once elected, the representatives are expected to perform without rigorous training from the administration. This becomes a grave issue as student leaders must be given basic training to deal with student issues and provide alternative solutions for them. The Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2016) observes that student leaders must have certain qualities to ensure they are able to properly represent other students and have several solutions towards their problems.

6.4.2 Interference from the Administration

The results of the study indicate that 23% of the respondents believe that the student council is unable to effectively mitigate conflicts because of the interference of the administration. During the FGDs with Students, they pointed out that the administration interferes with the formation of the student council. In their view, most of the people they

would like to be their leaders are eliminated from the group that would campaign. Further, the administration has the final decision on who becomes the student leader. In this case, their colleagues who they believe could help them mitigate conflicts are not in the council. The members of the council are loyal to the administration and cannot effectively help the students.

Additionally, the students during the FGDs pointed out that the administration demands that the student council reports everything that happens without leaving anything behind. In this case, the student leaders are forced to report the cases they have solved between conflicting parties. In some cases, the administration calls the involved persons and even punishes those citing cases of indiscipline. Thus, the students decide never to share anything with the student leaders because they will ultimately report the case to the administration.

However, the school heads have a different opinion. When asked whether the interference with the formation of the council challenges conflictmitigation role in the student council, the principals said it helps. In their view, they interfere with the formation because they must help the students make the right decision. They ensure that the leaders who get to the office are good and can deal with conflicts effectively. They believe that they have the best selection for the school. Nonetheless, the students have a different opinion as they feel that the administration forces them to be led by leaders who they do not want.

The idea is paternalistic and authoritarian instead of democratic. It assumes that students have a legitimate concern in issues that regard learners, as well as assuming that the students possesses no right in making personal decisions pertaining what they want to be

involved in and those they should not. This reason explains why commentators have suggested that student participation opportunities should be stepped above student-related issues, extending to wider school-life aspects as well as to the community the outside school environment.

Learners perceive prefects as the administrations' sell-outs, traitors and puppets. They are assumed to be part and parcel of the school system autocratic that are used in suppressing them; they, therefore loathe and despise them. The attitude has taken root because of a number of reasons such as the method of SC selection. The prefects get special privileges that the ordinary students do not acquire, such eating better food and sleeping in selected areas. They also get better meals. In addition, members of the SC bear the power to scare, report, and discipline other students. There are instances where they have much authority than the tutors (Republic of Kenya, 2001). This explains the basis for learners failing to share their conflicting issues or problems with the prefects. They have the faith that the leaders will betray that rather than helping.

Nasibi (2003) claims that negative outlook towards the student-leaders can get altered by having the administrators do the following: The administration should form learners' councils having elected representatives by the student body. The councils must have their loyalty to the students instead of the teacher. The move will offer learners a voice on those in power, ensure that teachers play their role rather than transfer responsibilities to students and be clear regarding the council duties in writing. Encourage the councils to stand firm in guiding fellow learners rather than being law enforcers. The councils must see that respect is extended to learners to create a basis for trust and in return get revered. They should also get perceived as the link existing between the administration and the

learners' body, thus, an effective tool that creates comprehension administration and the administration.

The elected representatives liaise with the school administration and students. According to (Murage, 2014), the grievances raised by students sometimes are not considered when the administration interferes and considers their issues invalid. The interference by the administration aggravates the issues of unrest in secondary schools because students feel that their representation is hindered by the administration. Disputes and conflicts cannot be solved if the administration interferes with the channel of communication. The administration may act as a barrier between what students are saying and their elected representative creating chaos and confusion that lead to student unrests.

6.4.3 Fear of Being Treated as Social Outcasts

The results of the study indicated that student leaders fail to resolve disputes properly and refuse to channel them to the administration because they fear being victimized. During the focus group discussions, the student leaders argued that they sometimes have to cooperate with the students as they do not want to be treated as traitors. Sometimes they have the information that there will be a strike, or something heinous such burning the dormitories or harassing another student is planned. However, they argued that they cannot afford to be treated as social outcasts. They are threatened that something bad will happen to them if they dare report the matter to the administration. With fear, they keep quiet and wait for the students to implement their evil plans. One student leader said:

> Last term I knew they had planned a strike. In fact, one of my best friends was a ringleader. I overheard them discuss it, and when they learned that I already know it, they told me to dare report and I will face it rough. I

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could not betray them as I will remain with them in the dorms. Thus, I decided to keep quiet(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

During the interviews with the school heads, the majority agreed that the student leaders are unable to resolve disputes because they fear to be labeled as traitors. There is a small group or clique of students in every school that is feared by everyone including the student council. No one dares to go against the clique. Thus, sometimes the student council fails to resolve disputes where one party belongs to that clique for fear of victimization. Sometimes the groups have no recent history of doing anything bad, but they are feared. The clique gets new embers every year after admission. Thus, it does not end. It carries a history of years back that it harassed a student leader who was against its members. The history makes the current leaders cooperate as they do not want to make the new history of being harassed.

Student leaders are in constant fear of being treated as social outcast. The student leaders must ensure the support the straight and narrow path that student may likely oppose. Strong leadership skills by elected leaders are portrayed in such circumstances where they must support what is right despite what the students want. Some decisions made by the school administration may not favor what students wants land may lead to a strike. However, the school's student's council must ensure they do the right thing by supporting the solution that provides the most good. Student leaders are an easy target, especially when a school decides to strike. Being treated as social outcasts can have devastating effects on a student leader and they may not be interested in having such a position (Nyaga, 2018). The school administration has the work to encourage student leaders to perform even in desperate situations. The challenge occurs when a student leader quits or

fails to perform their stated duties because they fear their remedies will not be favored, by their fellow students.

6.4.4 Students Fear or Disrespect the Student Council

The results of the study indicated that sometimes the student council is unable to resolve disputes because the students do not want to share with them their problems. During one of the interviews, the principal indicated that they are very uncomfortable with the term "President" which refers to the previously called head boy. The term president makes the head of the student council to seem to have more power than everyone in the school. He is referred to as the "President of Secondary School A". Thus, the term makes him be above everyone else. It intimidates the teachers and the students.

During the FGDs, students argued that they fear the student council leaders especially those ones at the top. They are very much respected and adored by the administration. The administration keeps reminding them that they must respect the student leaders. Consequently, the students fear them as they do not want to make a mistake and be on the wrong side of the law. Accordingly, the students are unable to share their conflicts with the student leaders.

On the same note, sometimes the student council is unable to resolve disputes among the student because they are not given that platform by the students. When the administration interferes with the formation of the student council, the students do not respect the council. They feel that the council is a puppet of the administration. They do not allow them to help them solve their disputes. During the FGDs, the students argued that they do

not trust the student leaders with their personal matters as they will report to the administration.

The prefect system has existed for a long time in most schools. The students have despised effects and termed them as an enemy to the institution. Additionally, several cases of student unrests have been caused by students hating on student leaders as they said they received special treatment from teachers and the administration. Mukiti (2014) agrees that students disrespect the student council, with Murage (2014) also supporting the author. The student council replaced the prefect system where the elected representatives engage and participate in major school decisions. However, students do not show much support for them as they feel they are puppets for the school administration. This causes fear and disrespect to the elected student leaders.

6.4.5 Lack of Call to MitigateConflicts

Conflict management skills should either be learned through training or long time experience. On the other hand, some people are intrinsic born to be peacekeepers. They easily convince conflicting parties to stop fighting and give working suggestions. However, as the results of the study indicate, not everyone in the student council has a call to resolve disputes. In fact, as one of the deputy principals interviewed argues, some students do not even have any leadership values within them. Some of the students desire to join the student council because of the privileges attached to the post. For instance, they are given free shirts.They do not queue when going for meals or have a personal room for sleeping, separate from the other students. The privileges attract the students to

the post. Instead of having the intrinsic motivation to leadership, most follow the extrinsic motivation. Consequently, they cannot even make two fighting parties talk.

During the Focus Group Discussion, the respondents argued that some members of the student council do not qualify to be conflict managers. They cited several cases where the student leaders took sides. They supported their friends or those in their class even if they were on the wrong side of the bargain. One student gave this example:

> I remember one time a form four took my bathing water. The head girl was there and she witnessed it. When I asked the student to give me my water back, the head girl said that I am just a form two, and I should queue again and get water afresh. It was very unfair. As a leader, she should have ordered her classmate to return my water(Respondent, Kericho County, 2018).

The principals agreed that there have been problems with the student leaders who do not have the natural call to solve disputes. If they do not get the required training as leaders to resolve disputes, it becomes very hard for them to handle conflicting parties. In fact, they end up worsening the situation as the party that is unfairly treated during the wrong mitigation methods retains a grudge.

The student council law gives student leaders the mandate to participate in school board meetings so as to contribute and highlight the needs of the students. Also, they should promote dialogue between staff and students as well as promoting peace within the school environment (Ministry of Education Science and Technology, 2016). Equally, several factors may inhibit how they address issues to the administration resulting to conflict among students and the school management. Student leaders are a bridge between the school administration and the student, and if that bridge is broken down by relevant authorities, disputes are not aired according to Griebler & Nowak (2012. So

students will result to strikes to create awareness on their grievances. Occasionally, his results to destruction of school property, learning time wasted, and in worse cases loss of student lives.

6.5 Solutions to Enhance the Effectiveness of the Student Council in Conflict Mitigation

The respondents were asked to suggest how the student council can be strengthened for it to mitigate conflicts effectively. Most the respondents agreed with the following solutions.

6.5.1 Involving Students in Decision Making

Increasing the rate of students' involvement in decision making is an effective way of reducing the challenges of mitigating conflicts among the student council. Student councils can increase students' participation in decision-making by improving the dialogue between students and the staff (Gogos, 2019). In this case, the student councils act as the mediator between students and the staff (Bubb & Jones, 2020). According to Kosgei *et al*. (2017), students' participation in schools' running is linked to fewer riots and better academic performance in schools (Kosgei,*et al*., 2017). This means that involving students in school management reduces students' unrest as they participate in schools' daily running. Kosgei *et al*. (2017) further claim that students are co-interested parties in improving their academic programs. The introduction of the student council in schools has led to an increased involvement of students in decision making. However, it there is need to strengthen student involvement so that they can feel air their views effectively.

The student council should create a stronger bond with other students to ensure all students, if not most, participate in decision making. From the leadership perspective, students' participation in schools' life contributes to the orderly and efficient operation in secondary institutions (Gogos, 2019). Therefore, when the teachers and student council improve student involvement in the daily process, it can lead to co-operation, communication, and better understanding, helping resolve personal and social indifferences among students between students and teachers (Kosgei,*et al*., 2017). This is why most schools embrace the student's council system, enabling most students to participate in decision making (Bubb & Jones, 2020). A democratic and open approach and freedom to decide who they want in the council is crucial. This will be one of the best methods for students' council to increase their effectiveness in mitigating conflicts and reducing students' unrest.

6.5.2 Training the Students' Council with the Necessary Leadership and Conflict Mitigation Skills

The respondents pointed out that the student council body's efficiency can improve by training the student leaders to resolve conflict. These skills include mutual respect, commitment to diversity, co-operation within an institution, justice, and equity. The training should allow both the trainers from internal and external, especially from the institutions that promote democracy (Nyaga, 2018). According to Muthui,*et al*. (2019), the impact of leadership training, particularly on nurturing leadership skills, helps the students' council acquire the skills to promote order and discipline in their daily operations (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Training also strengthens the school council by empowering them to become other students' role models in action and conflict

mitigation. The student council maintains discipline. Therefore, the main elements of leadership skills and conflict management will be acquired through training.

The training that comprises promotion of order and discipline in schools' daily operations, nurturing leadership skills, and conflict management skills improve the student's council effectiveness in improving discipline, which leads to decreased chances of student unrest and demonstrations. Muthui *et al*. (2019) found a positive relationship between student council training and a decrease in the students' unrest, which leads to better academic performance. These skills help leaders to know how to deal with and prevent truancy, alcohol abuse, and other indiscipline cases, which reduces conflict among the students or teachers. Leadership training should promote diplomacy and morality among students and encourage the students to participate in community service.

Additionally, the respondents agreed that the students' council should also acquire conflict mitigation skills, such as mediation in conflict management. Thiswillhelp them to develop an understanding of disagreement in various contexts and learn approaches to resolving them in a non-violent means (Muthui *et al*., 2019). Through these skills, the council will be able to reduce the rate of fights between students. The untrained school council ignores the importance of their relationships with other students (Bubb & Jones, 2020).

6.5.3 Development of a Constitution that Explains the Role and Responsibilities of the Student Council

The respondents agreed that there is need to adjust the existing law governing the student council. The policy makers should develop a formal constitution that explains each

leader's roles and responsibilities within the student council. Consequently, student council leaders will be empowered (Muthui *et al.*, 2019). Students should make the constitution with the administration's help to increase student council effectiveness. The student council helps school administration better the school climate, which helps create an excellent learning environment. They also help the school maintain stability and general work and achieve good results (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Although there was a formation of the student council, their capacity to perform supervision roles is unclear (Bubb & Jones, 2020). The areas in which the school council is needed to help the school administration in supervision, and the methods and manners through which the management should be carried out, is not emphasized.

School leaders' typical role is to supervise both the administration and student council. A constitution that explains the student council's functions can help build teamwork (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Consequently, the creation of co-operation increases their effectiveness as they will identify and strengthen their strength and weaknesses (Muthui *et al.*, 2019). Division of student leadership roles and team building in the learning institutes show the students to play their roles better without straining (Muthui *et al.*, 2019). When the student council understands their responsibilities, their productivity, and work efficiency increase per student leader (Bubb & Jones, 2020). Thus, understanding each student council's role may increase their productivity, leading to decreased indiscipline cases and unrest.

6.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter presents results of the third objective which was to evaluate the successes and challenges of student councils in mitigating student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya.To wrap it up, most respondents concur that the student councils aid to resolve disputes, serve as a channel between the teachers and students, set a pace in discipline and academics for the others to follow and identify problems before unrest escalates. Student leaders handle most minor disputes between students, leaving only the major indiscipline cases, such as drug abuse and sneaking out for the administrators and discipline committee to handle. Nevertheless, considering the leaders' connection with the administration, some students point out that they avoid sharing or leaking information, fearing the details will get to the administration.

Despite their involvement in conflict mitigation, it is imperative to understand that they are young and untrained in dispute mitigation skills; but that should only necessitate further training and not isolating them from the tasks. The student council relates well with all the stakeholders, bridging the differences between adults' interests and expectations and students' interests and preferences. The leaders need to work with teachers, and non-teaching staff to facilitate discipline management as well as ensure the welfare of the students. The administrators try to ensure that student leaders are also academic performers and highly disciplined so that they can be role models for the rest of the student body. Besides, the council serves as the communication channel for students' grievances. By living among other students the council members interact with them and can detect changes in behavior and any dissatisfaction they have and report to the administration in time to avoid the onset of unrest.

With an effective council, there is no need for the students to engage in any form of defiance because they would understand the changes in the air and seek solutions, from the administration before the matters escalate to unrest. Although reporting indiscipline cases could be considered snitching by the undisciplined lot, it is paramount if the schools have any chance of avoiding unrest. The ability of a school to have an effective student council is the school's strength in dealing with and avoiding unrest. The next chapter provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study, and suggestion for further study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary of the Research Findings

This chapter presents the summary, overall conclusions and recommendations. It gives the conclusions that the study makes after answering the three research questions.

This study was investigating the role of student council in conflict mitigation in Kericho County, Kenya. The overall objective of this study was to examine the role of student councils in mitigation of student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The Specific objectives will be to; examine the nature of student unrest in secondary schools in Kericho County; assess the structure and functions of student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County and; evaluate the successes and challenges of student councils in mitigating student conflicts in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya.

The study was guided by the participative leadership theory and the functionalism theory. It utilized the descriptive research design. The respondents of the study included; students, teachers, school principals or head teachers, deputy principals, school boards of management, County director of education and Sub-county directors of education in Kericho county. To obtain results from the respondents, both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used. The study sampled 568 respondents comprising of 384 students, 120 teachers, 19 school heads or principals, 19 deputy principals, 19 members of the school boards of management, 1 County director of education and 6 sub-county directors of education. The methods of date collection

included Questionnaires, Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented through frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Qualitative data analysis utilized data coding and narrative analysis. It was presented in form of graphs, charts and tables.

In line with the first objective of the study, the study found out that secondary schools in Kericho County, like many other parts of the county, has had several unrests in the recent past. The most serious indiscipline case that has caused serious disruption of studies was burning of dormitories. Other cases included theft, boycotting classes, bullying and drug taking. The results indicate that most schools have not experienced unrest in the recent past. However, those schools that have experienced unrests have and serious negative impacts. Misbehaving in school is mostly caused by peer influence and policies that the students are uncomfortable with. Lack of proper means of mitigating conflicts and channeling grievances to the administration proved to be a key factor in controlling the unrests. The presence of the student council that is selected by the principal, or elected by the students while the administration has the final say is not acceptable in the minds of the students, though the principals, teachers and the board members prefer it. In fact, this type of student council blocks the measures put in place by the government to ensure that there is a formal link between the students and the administration.

As far as the second objective is concerned, the results of the study indicated that the student council is elected by the students with great interference/input from the administration. The respondents feel that there is enough representation in the council. Thus, the student council fairly represents the interest of the students. The student council is effective in implementing the rules and regulations of the school. It also assists in

passing the grievances of the students to the administration. However, the students are uncomfortable because the student council is not democratically elected. The fact that the policies are passed without consulting the students, who are direct stakeholders in the student council makes the student council to be ineffective. The students are forced to follow the rules and regulations of administrative policies, without their suggestions being considered.

The third objective assessed the successes and challenges of student council in conflict mitigation in secondary schools in Kericho County. The results of the study indicated that the student council is successful in linking the administration with the students. It represents the interest of the students and prevents occurrence of many conflicts. The Student council assists students in resolving minor conflicts without necessarily involving the teachers, the dormitory masters and the administration. The main challenge of the council in mitigating conflicts is interference of the administration which makes the students to lack trust in their leaders. Lack of proper training denies the leaders a chance to learn crucial skills in conflict mitigation. Also, lack of the intrinsic call to help others in mitigating conflict is also a major challenge. Students also fear or disrespect the student leaders as they see them as puppets to the administration, and will not help them resolve disputes without reporting the matter.

7.3 Conclusions

In line with the first objective, the study concluded that most serious indiscipline cases that cause unrest, chaos and strike in Kericho County arise from policies that the students do not like. The students resist the policies as they directly affect them, yet, they are not

consulted when putting them in place. The administration uses the student council to enforce the policies, rules and regulations. The force fails and there is unrest in schools.

In line with the second objective, the study concludes that the student council is structured in way that it can effectively help in management of discipline and mitigating conflict. However, the administration does not allow the students to democratically elect their leaders. Instead, the administration has a great input in the formation of the student council. Thus, the students feel that the student council is loyal to the administration, and this hinders its efficacy.

For the third objective, the study concluded that the student council has assisted many schools in Kericho County to remain stable as the leaders help in mitigating conflicts and reporting the grievances to the administration. However, the councils are not as effective as they should because the leaders are not trained on skills of conflict mitigation. The student council which is formed with great influence from the administration has failed to assist in conflict mitigation because the students do not trust it.

The overall conclusion of the study is that the student council has not been effective in mitigating conflicts between the students and the administration. Even though the student council was put in place to act as a bridge between the administration and the student, it has not managed to effectively mitigate conflicts. In this case, there is need for the administration and the policy makers to strengthen it to enhance efficacy in conflict mitigation. There is need to put more strategies in place, as no single strategy can effectively mitigate conflicts caused by students in secondary schools.

7.3 Recommendations

In line with the first objective, the study recommends that it is important for the government to ensure thorough and enough participation of all stakeholders in the education sector, including students, to avoid unrest in schools.The results of the study indicate that cases of unrest have continued to increase even with the presence of the student council. Further, the unrest manifest in extreme and undesirable ways. Thus, this study urges the government to enhance participation of all stakeholders, and more so focus on the participation of the students who are key stakeholders, just like the participative leadership theory that guided the study indicated.

In line with the second objective, the study recommends that the government should restrict the interference of the administration in the formation of the student council. As indicated in the results, the administrationinterferes with the formation of the student council. Thus, students have a prefect body that is not their choice. In this case, it becomes hard for the students to relate properly with a student body that was put in place by the administration. Such a student body cannot act as a bridge between the student and the administration. Therefore, the government should make it clear that the student council should purely be elected by the students so as it can achieve the desired goals.

In line with the third objective of the study, the study recommends that the administration in every school should ensure they offer proper training to the student council on conflict mitigation tactics. The results of the study indicate that the student council fails to resolve conflicts effectively as it does not have the necessary skills to do so. Conflict mitigation skills are not covered in the school syllabus. Therefore, the schooladministration should ensure that it facilitates the student council so that it can acquire the necessary skills.

There should be a refresher course every term to remind the student council on how to mitigate conflicts.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

This research focused on the role of student council in conflict mitigation in Kericho County. There is need for a further study to investigate why the administration interferes with the structure and formation of the student council in secondary schools despite the existing law that students should elect their leaders.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Introductory Letter

My name is Betty Chemutai Koech. I am a master's student at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. I am conducting a research with the title: The Role of Student Council in Mitigation of Conflicts Caused by Secondary School Students in Kericho County.

I request for your participation in the study. Your views, opinions and genuine response will be highly appreciated. The study is conducted for academic purposes only. All information shared will be treated with ultimate privacy.

Participation in the study is voluntary. Every respondent has the right to participate, and halt the participation any time. Please feel free to take part in the study.

I appreciate your contribution.

Yours faithfully,

Betty Chemutai

Appendix 2: Students' Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions as accurately as possible, without any fear. This is not a test. These questions are intended for an educational research. Whatever you write will be used for intended purpose only. Do not write your name on this questionnaire. This questionnaire consists of three sections. Please attempt all questions.

SECTION ONE: Demographic Information

Answer appropriately either by putting a tick in the brackets or write briefly in the space provided.

1. Gender 1. Male ( ) 2. Female ( )
2. Indicate your age bracket

		Tick Appropriately
1	9-12 Years	
2	13-15 Years	
3	16-19 Years	
4	20 Years and Above	

3. Indicate your form:
i)   Form One ( )
ii)   Form two ( )
iii)   Form three ( )
iv)   Form four ( )

SECTION TWO: Nature of Student Unrest in Schools in Kericho County

4. Some secondary schools experience many serious students' indiscipline problems, some of which have led to unrests. Below is a list of such problems. As honestly as possible tick against each problem as applicable to your school.
   Key: 1-common, 2-very common 3-fairly common, 4-not common, 5- I don't know

Burning of dormitory	1	2	3	4	5
Fighting amongst students					
Boycotting classes					
Theft of school property					
Refusing punishment from teachers					
Being shabby					
Playing when the lesson is on					
Dozing in class when lesson is in progress					
Striking against school administration					
Bullying of fellow students					
Drug taking e.g. smoking bang					

5. Have you experienced Student Unrest before in your school
    i) Yes………….. ii) No………….
6. Based on the cases of Unrest listed in (4) above, select one that you consider the worst case of indiscipline that you have experienced in your school.
    ……………………………………………………………………………..
7. In your opinion, who among the following groups of influences students to be involved in misbehavior in your school

	Tick Appropriately		
	Yes	No	I don't Know
Friends at school			
Friends outside school			
Parents			
Teachers			
Head teachers			
Politicians			

8. In your opinion what is the cause of Students Unrest in your school. Tick appropriately.

	Agree	Disagree
School mismanagement by Head teacher		
Transfer of effective teachers		
Drug abuse, smoking and bhang		
Drunkenness, consumption of alcohol		
Acute shortage of teaching learning resources e.g. books		
Harsh school rules and regulations.		
Unclear defined procedures in the administration of students' discipline.		
Laxity of teachers due to lack of professional commitment		
Poor working relations between students and teachers and head teachers		
Insensitivity among head teachers who do not recognize students		
Inadequate, poor quality food		
Poor performance in national examination		
Unclear and ineffective channels of communication between head teachers, teachers and students		
Harsh unofficial rules introduced and enforced onto the students by prefects.		
Congestion in dormitories		

SECTION THREE: Structure and functions of student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

9. How was the student council formed in your school? (Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in yours school).
    i.   [ ] appointed by the principal without students input
    ii.   [ ] elected by students without principals input
    iii.   [ ] elected by students with principals input
    iv.   Any other specify--
10. What is the nature of student representation in the councils in your school. (Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in yours school).
    i.   [ ] every class is represented in the council
    ii.   [ ] every Form is represented in the council
11. How many student leaders form the student council in your school?

………………………….

12. Comment on the size and effectiveness of student councils in your school. (Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in your school).
    i.   [ ] the student council is too small to be effective
    ii.   [ ] the student council is too large to be effective
    iii.   [ ] the student council is appropriate and effective
13. To what extent do you agree with the effectiveness of Student councils' role in the management of discipline (Tick appropriately)

	Agree	Disagree
Student councils take part in school governing body activities		
Policies are formed after rigorous deliberations including students		
Student councils ensure enforcement of school rules and regulations to the latter		
Student councils participate freely in disciplinary meetings with school authority		
Student councils are equal partners in decision making about discipline		
Decisions about discipline are transparent and open		
Student councils cultivate a culture of positive behavior amongst students		
Student councils encourage fellow learners to participate and are responsible for the sound functioning of school		
Student councils promote positive communication with educators and school management		
Student councils are involved in anti-bullying		

Student councils promote good discipline by holding regular learners meetings and discussions		
Student councils use communication channels to discuss learners fears and frustrations		
Student councils create clubs and special projects to promote learners involvement		
Student councils act as ambassadors in the school and community		
Student councils develop and promote a positive learner spirit and culture within the school		

14. How often do student participate in the following administrative decisions through the student councils

	More often	Less often	Not at all
Planning of co-curricular activities			
Preparations of School budget			
Choice of school uniforms			
Extra tuitions			
Planning of School Menu			
Formulating School rules and regulations			
Decision on teaching methods			
Discipline of staff			
Interview of staff			
Planning and developing physical facilities			
Managing Free Secondary Education funds			
Decision on the nature of punishment			

15. How do you rate the effectiveness of the student council in your school?

[ ] Very effective [ ] effective [ ] not effective

SECTION FOUR: Successes and Challenges of Student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

16. To what extent do you agree with the following as success areas of student councils Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in your school).

Students councils fairly represent student interest		
Students council have helped in nurturing leadership skills among students		
Student councils have provided link between students and the school management		
Students have been involved in the selection of their		

councils.		
Through Councils Students have been involved in designing school programmes.		
Student councils have had regular meetings with the administration regarding the school activities		
Students councils relate quite well with the administration, teaching and non-teaching staff.		
Student councils provide directions and motivation to other students in the school.		
Student councils should never differ with the administration on matters regarding to their roles		
Grievances of the students are always be channeled to the school administration by the student councils without fail		
No decision making processes has been undertaken in the school without students councils involvement		
The council is often democratically elected by all the students		
The student leaders elected are fluent in English and Kiswahili		

17. To What extent do you agree or disagree with the following challenges faced by student councils in discipline management in your school?

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Being reported to school authorities			
Parents interference			
Community interference			
Media interference			
Students refusing to take orders from us			
Being victimized			
Being treated as social outcasts			
Being target of violence			
Being sued for infringing students' rights			
Political interference			

18. Give possible solutions to the challenges the student council face in mitigating conflicts in secondary schools.

Appendix 3: Teachers' Questionnaire

19. Write the name of your school---

20. State your highest level of education and training-------------------------------

21. For how long have you been a teacher? ---

l-5yrs [ ] 6-10yrs [ ] 11 -15yrs [ ] l5-20yrs[ ] Over20yrs[ ]

22. For how long have you been a teacher in your current school? -------------

l-5 yrs [ ] 10yrs [ ] 11-15yrs [ ] 15-20yrs[ ] Over20 yrs [ ]

23. Some secondary schools experience many serious students' indiscipline problems, some of which have led to unrests. Below is a list of such problems. As honestly as possible tick against each problem as applicable to your school.

   Key: 1-common, 2-very common 3-fairly common, 4-not common, 5- I don't know

	1	2	3	4	5
Burning of dormitory					
Fighting amongst students					
Boycotting classes					
Theft of school property					
Refusing punishment from teachers					
Being shabby					
Playing when the lesson is on					
Dozing in class when lesson is in progress					
Striking against school administration					
Bullying of fellow students					
Drug taking e.g. smoking bang					

24. Based on the cases of Unrest listed in (4) above, select one that you consider the worst case of indiscipline that you have experienced in your teaching career
………………………………………………………………………………..

25. In your opinion, who among the following groups of influences students to be involved in misbehavior in your school

	Tick Appropriately		
	Yes	No	I don't Know
Friends at school			
Friends outside school			
Parents			
Teachers			
Head teachers			

	Politicians				

26. In your opinion what is the cause of Students Unrest in your school. Tick appropriately.

	Agree	Disagree
School mismanagement by Head teacher		
Transfer of effective teachers		
Drug abuse, smoking and bhang		
Drunkenness, consumption of alcohol		
Acute shortage of teaching learning resources e.g. books		
Harsh school rules and regulations.		
Unclear defined procedures in the administration of students' discipline.		
Laxity of teachers due to lack of professional commitment		
Poor working relations between students and teachers and head teachers		
Insensitivity among head teachers who do not recognize students		
Inadequate, poor quality food		
Poor performance in national examination		
Unclear and ineffective channels of communication between head teachers, teachers and students		
Harsh unofficial rules introduced and enforced onto the students by prefects.		
Congestion in dormitories		

SECTION THREE: Structure and functions of student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

27. How was the student council formed in your school? (Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in yours school).
    v.   [ ] appointed by the principal without students input
    vi.   [ ] elected by students without principals input
    vii. [ ] elected by students with principals input
    viii. Any other specify--
28. What is the nature of student representation in the councils in your school. (Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in yours school).
    iii. [ ] every class is represented in the council
    iv.   [ ] every Form is represented in the council
29. How many student leaders form the student council in your school?

……………………………….

30. Comment on the size and effectiveness of student councils in your school. (Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in your school).
iv.   [ ] the student council is too small to be effective
v.   [ ] the student council is too large to be effective
vi.   [ ] the student council is appropriate and effective

31. To what extent do you agree with the effectiveness of Student councils' role in the management of discipline (Tick appropriately)

	Agree	Disagree
Student councils take part in school governing body activities		
Policies are formed after rigorous deliberations including students		
Student councils ensure enforcement of school rules and regulations to the latter		
Student councils participate freely in disciplinary meetings with school authority		
Student councils are equal partners in decision making about discipline		
Decisions about discipline are transparent and open		
Student councils cultivate a culture of positive behavior amongst students		
Student councils encourage fellow learners to participate and are responsible for the sound functioning of school		
Student councils promote positive communication with educators and school management		
Student councils are involved in anti-bullying		
Student councils promote good discipline by holding regular learners meetings and discussions		
Student councils use communication channels to discuss learners fears and frustrations		
Student councils create clubs and special projects to promote learners involvement		
Student councils act as ambassadors in the school and community		
Student councils develop and promote a positive learner spirit and culture within the school		

32. How often do student participate in the following administrative decisions through the student councils

	More often	Less often	Not at all
Planning of co-curricular activities			
Preparations of School budget			
Choice of school uniforms			
Extra tuitions			
Planning of School Menu			
Formulating School rules and regulations			
Decision on teaching methods			
Discipline of staff			
Interview of staff			
Planning and developing physical facilities			
Managing Free Secondary Education funds			
Decision on the nature of punishment			

33. How do you rate the effectiveness of the student council inyour school?

[ ] Very effective[ ] effective [ ] not effective

SECTION FOUR: Successes and Challenges of Student Councils in secondary schools in Kericho County, Kenya

34. To what extent do you agree with the following as success areas of student councils Tick (√) where appropriate about the student council in your school).

Students councils fairly represent student interest		
Students council have helped in nurturing leadership skills among students		
Student councils have provided link between students and the school management		
Students have been involved in the selection of their councils.		
Through Councils Students have been involved in designing school programmes.		
Student councils have had regular meetings with the administration regarding the school activities		
Students councils relate quite well with the administration, teaching and non-teaching staff.		
Student councils provide directions and motivation to other students in the school.		
Student councils should never differ with the administration on matters regarding to their roles		

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Grievances of the students are always be channeled to the school administration by the student councils without fail		
No decision making processes has been undertaken in the school without students councils involvement		
The council is often democratically elected by all the students		
The student leaders elected are fluent in English and Kiswahili		

35. To What extent do you agree or disagree with the following challenges faced by student councils in discipline management in your school?

	Agree	Disagree	Not Sure
Being reported to school authorities			
Parents interference			
Community interference			
Media interference			
Students refusing to take orders from us			
Being victimized			
Being treated as social outcasts			
Being target of violence			
Being sued for infringing students' rights			
Political interference			

36. Give possible solutions to the challenges the student council face in mitigating conflicts in secondary schools.

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………………………………………….

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Appendix 4: Interview Schedule for School Heads

1. Which serious student indiscipline problems which lead to unrest have you encountered recently?

2. What is that major cause of unrest in this school?

3. Who influences the students in this school to misbehave?

4. How is the student council in this school formed?

5. How many members does the student council have?

6. Kindly describe the structure of the student council.

7. How is the SC involved in administration of discipline?

8. Does the student help in mitigating conflicts?

9. What challenges does the student council have in mitigating student conflicts?

10. What do you think should be done to enhance the effectiveness of the student council especially in mitigating student conflicts?

Appendix 5: Interview schedule for county and sub county directors of education.

1. Do you think many schools have experienced unrest in the last 3 years in Kericho County?

2. How does student unrest manifest in Kericho County?

3. What are the major causes of student unrest in Kericho County?

4. Who is the main influencer of student misbehavior?

5. How is the student council formed?

6. What are the roles of the student council in representing student affairs?

7. Does the size of the student council affect its effectiveness?

8. How is the council involved in conflict mitigation?

9. What are the challenges of the council in conflict mitigation?

10. What solutions do you suggest for enhancing efficacy of the council in conflict mitigation?

Appendix 6: Focus Group Discussion Guide for Students

1. Discuss the incidences of unrest that have occurred in your school for the last 3 years.

2. Explain the major cases of indiscipline witnessed during student unrest in secondary schools.

3. Explain the main reasons there are student unrest in secondary schools.

4. Explain the main influencers of student unrest.

5. Explain the formation of the student council in your school.

6. Discuss the nature of student representation in the student council.

7. Explain whether the size of the student council makes it to be effective or not.

8. Discuss the role of the student council in conflict mitigation.

9. Highlight the success of the student council in mitigating conflicts.

10. Discuss the challenges of the student council in mitigating conflicts.

11. Suggest possible solutions to the challenges the student council face in mitigating conflicts.

Appendix 5: NACOSTI Research Authorization Letter