

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THEOLOGY

*Perception of the School Community (Teachers, Parents
and Sponsors) on The Causes of Students' Strikes in
Lugari District of Kenya Public Schools*

BY
SITATI GEORGE RAPONG'O

*A Thesis Submitted To The Graduate School in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Christian Education*

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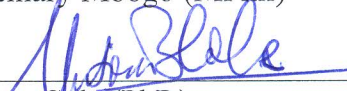
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July, 2008

Student's Declaration

PERCEPTION OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY (TEACHERS, PARENTS AND SPONSORS) ON THE CAUSES OF STUDENT STRIKES IN LUGARI DISTRICT OF KENYA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other College or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessarily those of the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)



George Sitati Rapong'o

July 2008

ABSTRACT

This study set out to discover, understand and explain the community's (teachers, parents, students and head teachers) perception of strikes in Lugari District of Kenya. The research paradigm was a qualitative study, grounded theory. Data was collected using face to face open interviews. It was then coded and analyzed.

The report revealed that, students' indiscipline is not as a result of students' role alone but a combination of factors such as poor parenting practices, poor work morale and motivation among teachers, poor relationship between teachers and school administration and overly centralized decision making in schools.

I concluded that the issue of strikes is continuing in secondary schools in Lugari District. This conclusion paved way for recommendation that appealed for measures that will minimize strikes in the District.

TO

My dear wife, Emily Mugasia Sitati and our loving children: Prisca Nalwenge and Isaac Namango for their care, prayers and time for me to work on the thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In 2005, there was a deputy head teacher named Simon Biketi who had been promoted and posted to head a mixed day boarding school in Lugari District. He declined to take over the school as head teacher. When asked by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology officials and Board of Governors, he commented that his new school had experienced a high turn-over of heads in the recent past due to student unrest. The school had experienced a strike every two years. He, therefore, wanted to be saved the agony of handling student indiscipline and unrest, which had reached an alarming rate in the school, Division, District and the country at large. The neighboring schools had equally experienced cases of student demonstrations with far reaching consequences such as vandalism, loss of life, loss of property, theft and many others. The District recorded at least two strikes in a term.

The importance of this study was to explore and discover the causes of strikes in a school setting. The study would eventually enable me to explain if school strikes were a product of students themselves, external influence or a combination of factors.

Problem Statement

Discipline had been cited as the key to success in academics and school development (Mbiti 1982, 80). Efforts have been made in Lugari District and elsewhere in Kenya by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology to find lasting solutions to school

indiscipline in secondary schools in Kenya (Wangai 2001). At the same time meetings had been organized to find out the causes and solutions of school strikes in Western Province.

Notwithstanding, a high incidence of student indiscipline had been witnessed in secondary schools. There had been massive destruction of property, maiming of other students and frequent school closures. The existing literature and the media revealed no clear understanding of the factors and forces contributing to student unrest. Hence the contributing factors remained unclear. Hence there was need to find out the causes of the persistent occurrence of strikes in Lugari secondary schools.

Ethical Consideration

The study was on perceptions of school community (teachers, parents and sponsors) of the causes of student strikes in Lugari District Public schools. The study aspired to give voice and a chance to educational stakeholders to come up with some possible causes leading to school strikes. The study was to provide information that would help the very people to come up with measures to minimize strikes and restore discipline to help students prepare adequately for their future lives while in school and to appreciate the value of school property.

The study intended to keep confidentiality of most of the vulnerable groups who partook in it. Some of them include teachers who might fear victimization by school managers, heads who may want to conceal their identity from the general public and former and current students who did not want to antagonize the school administration.

Hence, the transcribers, the primary researcher and secondary researchers are the ones who may access information beforehand. Fictitious names were used and

quotations paraphrased to conceal their identity. Participation was voluntary; therefore the participants were free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to discover, understand and explain the community's perception of strikes in Lugari District of Kenya.

Research Questions

1. What role did students play towards strikes in secondary schools?
2. What role did parents play towards strikes in secondary schools?
3. What role did teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?
4. What role did head teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?

Definitions

1. Strikes: Violence against other students, teachers, non-teaching staff, heads of schools, sit-in and walk-out, demonstrations and destruction of property
2. Community: Parents, Parents Teachers Associations, Religious Groups, District Education Boards, teachers and general public around the school
3. Vulnerable Group: Research respondents who fear victimization because of availing useful information.
4. Indiscipline: Disorder in learning institutions

Significance of the Study

The study would help heads of schools to understand the causes of student indiscipline and unrest in Lugari District. It would also help other stakeholders in the District to understand and appreciate their contribution towards cases of unrest in

schools. The study would help other Districts of Western Province to understand perceptions of students of the causes of student strikes in their respective Districts.

Delimitation

The study was not concentrated on all secondary schools in the District, but confined itself to interviewing one student, one teacher, one head of school and one member of the surrounding community served by the school.

Limitations

Financial and time constraints limited the interview to four schools. Some of the former heads of these institutions had retired or transferred to other schools. Hence, the interviews might have been done without involving old heads of the very institutions. Therefore, the few schools covered might not enable me to know perceptions of the key or significant students, teachers and other people on strikes. The teachers might not have given exact information concerning their role in strikes in secondary schools.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The related literature was reviewed under the following sub-themes:

1. The role of teachers.
2. The role of school community.
3. Students' behavior.
4. Heads of schools.

The Role of Teachers

There were several factors that cause unrest in secondary schools. Some include non-functional guiding and counseling departments, inefficient leadership and many others. Wangai (2001), reporting on the findings of the Task Force on Students' Discipline and unrest in secondary schools noted that lazy teachers and non-functional guiding and counseling departments in secondary schools were to blame for student unrest. The counseling teachers failed to understand the school going children. The children were grappling with overwhelming challenges that were not clear to those who handle them. Some of them have street and squatter backgrounds. They lived in situations where they do not have the "luxury" of moral growth. They are literally fighting for their lives, being abused and ignored by the world around them. As they grew into adulthood they would continue to function outside the norms of society, not having the moral knowledge necessary for civilized behaviour (Kilbourn 1997, 79). They might thus indulge in wayward behaviour and get punished for it (Wango and

Mungai 2007, 1). This was mainly due to the failure of the counseling teachers to have a holistic view of environmental circumstances both in school and home that affected student behaviour and identify the issues and problems to support the child to sort out their difficulty (Wango and Mungai 2007, 55). Instead of emphasizing on understanding of student's experiences and needs, teachers had seen withdrawn students as a problem equal to that of troublesome ones (Shafritz et al. 2005). Moreover they beat such students, told them to do other forms of punishment and sent them out of class. Consequently some students ended up feeling rejected; hardened and so they made all sorts of mistakes without minding the consequences.

Wango and Mungai (2007,1), however, acknowledge that for a long time, guidance and counseling services in schools had been uncoordinated and poorly bundled together, with no clear course of action. They had led to a sorry situation where the guidance and counseling program was entirely at the discretion of the teacher counselor. In effect this had tended to leave the program mixed up in several directions, depending on the school and ability and personal initiative of the teacher counselor. At the same time much stress had been laid on control of pupils and students to facilitate the gaining of knowledge. Guidance and counseling had also been viewed as a waste of time by some teachers and school administration (Wango and Mungai 2007, 2). When the program was neglected and students sidelined, indiscipline set in.

Likewise, some teachers were not committed (Wangai 2001). For instance this happened in institutions where there was "laissez faire" style of leadership. In such cases teachers do not carry out their duties effectively because of minimum supervision. However, non-commitment among teachers might arise when administration did not motivate the teachers and involve them in decision making

where their views were not sought for and appreciated. There was also low emphasis for academic excellence. Neither teachers nor students took academic life seriously. “In fact academically non-oriented students were ridiculed by their peers and viewed by their teachers as a threat” when they asked challenging questions (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2004, 100). At the same time there was low resource support where most institutional material “supplies and supplementary materials were not available when needed” (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2004). The teachers became demotivated and hostile towards the head teacher. Moreover some teachers were chronically absent (Wangai 2001). They were not available for students’ attention, do not attend to their classes and were very harsh to students when present. The situation might be worsened by failure of the school head to communicate to the learners about the absence of the teachers (Wango and Mungai 2007, 41). The students might complain to school administration without change on the side of the very teacher.

Alongside teachers, the non-teaching staff fueled strikes (Wangai 2001, 40). They went through students to defend their working rights. Some support staff officers have higher level of formal education than their counterparts. They also knew that they were in the organization because of their specialized knowledge. So they tended to resist administrative control, demanded autonomy to advance their ideas and determine what procedures to adopt in handling their work (Ukeje 1992, 176). Furthermore, most of them coming from the surrounding school communities were in constant contact with students as was the case of mixed-day Boarding schools. Besides that, teachers’ welfare might not be looked into and teachers were likely to work without regular pay in some schools which employ BOG teachers (Kombo 2005, 124). They were demoralized and such demoralization affected the way they manage school and student affairs. In boarding schools, for example, cooks

might prepare half-cooked food and toilets may not be cleaned. Hence this state of affairs caused dissatisfaction among students culminating into strikes.

School Community

The external school environment also contributed towards school indiscipline (Wangai 2001). There were external forces like markets, people outside the school and their daily activities which impacted negatively or positively on school discipline. The school did not operate in exclusion of the environment where it was located. The immediate school environment could therefore, negatively or positively influence the behaviour and discipline of students in school with respect to students' discipline (Wangai 2001).

A school situated in an urban centre would be affected by noise, easy availability of hard drugs, alcohol and social places like discos, which may influence students to sneak from school to attend discos or even drink illicit brews. Moreover, drugs were sold to students with full knowledge of some parents. In Kisumu, the task force on students' unrest was informed that a substance by the trademark "kuber" was available in local kiosks and supermarkets within the municipality (Wangai 2001). On the contrary, parents and community members were expected to have intervened immediately if they cared about student discipline. Some parents assumed that school and student discipline was the concern of teachers and head teachers. Students who chewed "kuber" felt high and its effects were more instantaneous than the effects of bhang (Wangai 2001). Students under drug influence became rebellious and therefore end up burning schools on flimsy grounds.

On the other hand, some school communities had been quite supportive of school discipline. The school, local provincial administration and in other cases the

police were informed of the availability of illicit drugs and had reported such students to school administration.

Parents

Furthermore, there had been cases where newly posted head teachers had been rejected by parents who prevented such heads from taking over the school. Such rejection took various forms such as physical force against the head teacher, locking the office and classrooms as well as demonstrations by parents (Wangai 2001). Moreover, some parents' demonstrations had taken place in front of the students. Students in turn copied these examples hence any slight displeasure against the school administration resulted in demonstrations. (Domina 2005), writing on leveling the Home Advantage argued that parental influence in school activities tended to decline as students grew up and joined secondary schools (233-249). That was why most parents were not concerned with the behavior of youths at home leading to indiscipline right from home. Some parents even failed to inform the school administration of their children's behaviour at home. This was because both parents and students cared less about getting qualifications (Lunenburg and Ornstein 2004). Moreover, some acts of defiance in schools were done with parental knowledge and probably with fatherly encouragement (Norman 2001, 5). Other parents would never want to make a child ashamed of his home and perhaps their own parents (Sylvia 1984, 61). Likewise some students might also try to conceal their problems to avoid embarrassment before teachers and other students (Sylvia 1984). Wango and Mungai (2007) also blamed student strikes on irresponsible parenthood. Parents who were available at home and were ready to bring up children in an environment of love and care, especially during formative stages, lay a firm foundation that enabled them to relate to others in later life. Regrettably, cases of absentee parents who abdicated

their responsibilities to house helps were arising. Quite often the house helps were too young, inexperienced, poorly paid and still developing (Ingule et al 1996, 29). The burden of caring for young children was often too heavy for house helps. They were still children with needs to be met. Ultimately children's proper physical and psychological development might be affected (Ingule et al 1996)). Some parents denied their children love by taking them to day care centers. Some thought that money would substitute for parental love. Children with such parents often felt neglected and might turn to drugs. They in turn exhibited indiscipline in school (Wango and Mungai 2007, 73).

Some parents were too strict and rigid. Parents who had rigid rules could bring frustration to their children (Sylvia 1984). Children reared in hostile environments tended to be hardened against any school authority. Such children might suffer from stress, anxiety and depression. Eventually they would be involved in drug abuse and be rude to school authority (Lindgren and Newton 1985). There was also parental ambition contributing to stress among students. Some parents might pressurize their children to perform well in national exams creating anxiety (Wango and Mungai 2007).

Giving too much pocket money to children by some parents could lead to indiscipline in schools (Wango and Mungai 2007, 73). Heads of schools complained that students who were given too much pocket money without adequate parental guidance regarding its use, often misused the money and were difficult to control (Wangai 2001). In extreme cases, such students were "employing" students from families of poor background to wash their clothes and perform other chores that the rich students deemed demeaning. The very rich students started equating themselves with teachers. Concentration on academic work was affected. They become truants

and also demanded for what the school could not afford based on financial budget. They commit offences without minding the consequences (Wangai 2001). They influenced other students to demand for the same.

Home environment equally contributed to student unrest in schools (Wangai 2001). Parental norms and family units were changing, but society had not changed to accommodate these changes, like single parenthood and many others (Wangai 2001). Indeed, students whose parents were single were in identity crisis which was not being explained to them well by the parents and teachers. The study on children of single parent homes showed that the greater the instability of the family and its living arrangements, the greater the likelihood that children's emotional and behavioral problems would be aggravated (Lindgren and Newton 1985, 99). Thus such children from "broken homes" were more likely to have difficulties in school (Cowley 2001, 124). They turned into truants or project the same on other students, may be suspended, dropped out or be expelled from school (Lindgren and Newton 1985). Absence of fathers created special stress on children (Lindgren and Newton 1985). At the same time hostile home environment contributed to violent behavior in schools (Sylvia 1984). If parents administered smacks indiscriminately and frequently and the child's actions were never praised, this would without doubt make the child naughty because whatever he/she did seemed to be wrong and did not learn what was right. It would teach him/her that smacking behavior was normal and would be imitated (Sylvia 1984, 83). Likewise, parents who frequently used abusive language obviously placed higher value on verbal and physical aggressiveness towards their children (Lindgren and Newton 1985). On the other hand, students who found the school environment relaxed as compared to their homes would want to

express their freedom in school. In so doing, they became a problem to school administration, causing indiscipline.

Power centres

The power centers in the management of education had also played a major role in the maintaining of discipline in schools. These were the Board of Governors, Parents Teachers Association and many others (Wangai 2001). Parents Teachers Association for instance were a way of bringing parents into the school but the parents of some students that teachers really needed to talk to and advise their children never came (Domina 2005, 233-249). In an article titled "A Long History of Pupils' Discontent and Strikes" published in the Daily Nation, 17 February 2000, Akala equally blamed strikes on low interest of parents and politicians on how schools were run. They did not attend educational meetings so as to identify the real problems affecting the schools. Many absentee parents and politicians paved way for religious dominance of educational affairs of the school. Unpopular policies were sometimes passed. Oyaya (2007), while delivering a paper on causes of school indiscipline during the Heads of Departments' meeting said that some sponsors, mainly church organizations, interfered with smooth running of schools. They advised school heads and imposed their policies on school administration to the extent that school heads were not free to implement independent policies (Oyaya 2007). Eventually cases of unruly students were not attended to in advance, leading to bad behavior. On the contrary, the National Council of Churches of Kenya's memorandum to the Task Force on the Review and Harmonization of the laws Governing the Educational Sector, lamented over the exclusion of the Council by the Government over key educational matters of the country (2006, 15). On the other hand, much involvement of eager parents and other religious organizations diluted effectiveness of the school

(Domina 2005). The very parents and others put pressure on school administration to initiate and implement unpopular policies. Eventually they put a lot of demands on teachers in terms of better results and demoralized the very teachers.

The National Council of Churches of Kenya's memorandum identified conflicting roles of different stakeholders that lead to strikes in secondary schools. There were conflicts between the Parents Teachers Association and the Board of Governors over financial management of schools. Parents leaked information on issues raised in Annual General Meetings that had not been implemented for years (Domina 2005). They incited students to force the heads to implement them.

There was also a role conflict between the heads of schools and school managers, Boards of Governors and Sponsors. A school head might have recognized the institutional needs for qualitative academic performance and to provide facilities for both theoretical and practical work to give a balanced program. At the same time, he might realize that there was pressure from Board of Governors, sponsors and wider community for public performance in drama, music, football, Volley ball. Knowing, of course, that satisfying the cultural values for performance clashed with the demands for serious academic work, the head would have a role conflict of his values and neglect the outside forces. The external forces in turn incited the students to chase away the head teacher (Ukeje 1992, 207).

There were also conflicts between the heads and the ministry's guidelines. The Ministry of Education gave the Principal the responsibility of managing students and school discipline in school, and the Principal is expected to use his initiative and handle problems when they arose. A conflict would arise if the Principal uses his initiative and took action, for instance, expelling a troublesome student. The Ministry would turn around to tell him that he had no powers to take the action. The principal

would be so confused that in future he might refuse to take action for fear of acting contrary to the views of the boss (Ukeje 1992, 207). The unruly students took advantage of the confusion to be rude and even organize others to strike. Similarly, the school managers and the sponsors saw the principal as representing the interests of the school and so should strive to achieve their organizational goals. At the same time he/she is as much an employee and a teacher as other members of the school with similar needs and in fact, other members looked up to him/her for leadership. They expected him/her to protect their interests, and when he/she did not, trouble came (Ukeje 1992, 207). They might even organize committee members or even parents to demonstrate against him/her or even incite students to riot. The National Council of Churches Kenya's memorandum also cited inadequate and inefficient inspection and quality assurance systems as leading to strikes in schools (2006, 14). The quality assurance personnel were compromised by some influential heads of schools hence many ills in schools remained unearthed.

Student Behavior

Teachers blamed drug abuse, poor parenting, bad peer influence, socio-economic problems, mass media and frequent transfers of students for student unrest (Wangai 2001). In most cases the destructions were caused by students under drug influence or those captivated by external forces as a result of devil worship (Kombo 2005). Those on drugs tended to influence other students and were rude to school authority. Kombo (2005) asserted that students on drugs not only interfered with their own studies but disrupted learning for other students. They missed classes and engaged other students in other vices leading to school indiscipline. Some stole from others in order to have more money for drugs. They were violent and were bullies. They engaged in smoking and drinking as a way of expressing their rebellious

feelings. However, some teachers punished them severely without being guided or counseled. They became defensive because of their negative actions. Subsequently such vulnerable groups spent more time thinking about their security than thinking about their studies (Kombo 2005). Severe punishment only created a sense of rejection on the side of students (Downs 1997, 216). Eventually these students caused tension among others.

At the same time most students in secondary schools were adolescents. Adolescents are likely to be very turbulent, can strike on their own without teachers or external influence (Wango and Mungai 2007, 131). Adolescence was a time of vast changes in their physical, mental and emotional make up (Cowley 2001, 86). They longed for independence and self sufficiency. It was these feelings that led to gestures of deviance and rebelliousness. Adolescents engaged in activities contrary to the rules and mores of society (Lindgren and Newton 1985, 120)

The task force on student unrest and indiscipline also observed that transfers and admission of students from private academies were causes of student unrest (Wangai 2001). Children from affluent families raised in urban areas had a different outlook on school life compared to those from rural areas (Ingule et al 1996, 26). When students from private academies joined public secondary schools, their expectations in terms of quality service were not met. When this happens, they were likely to incite other students to demand for what a public school could not afford (Wangai 2001, 41-43). In addition, not only did they have to adapt to a totally unfamiliar environment, but very often such students did not know what to expect and whether they would be able to cope with demands of the new school. They were therefore bound to be very anxious in the school environment (Cowley 2001). The situation might be worsened if new students faced maltreatment from old students and

prefects or rigorous punishment for those who were unable to cope. To compensate for the short-fall the problematic students would organize their friends to resist such harsh treatment, which might take the form of strikes. Parents, at times, put pressure on school administration to raise fees and be lenient to them thus excluding children from disadvantaged homes. From this emerged a dichotomy of cultures especially that of “haves” and “have nots” which lead to discrepancy of peace and learning (Wangai 2001). The “haves” also tend to show off and undermined the prefects, teachers and entire school administration.

Some students were bored with school environment and hence had lost their motivation to learn. They did so because they found the work too difficult, perhaps because they had specific learning problems (Cowley 2001). Students at times lost the motivation due to poor academic performance of their schools in national examinations, especially where the schools’ mean scores ranged between C plain and D+ (Oyaya 2007). Some had not been taught that learning was important or they were not interested in subjects, might be because the subjects did not seem relevant to them and their world of experience. Ayot (1992) further noted that there were some students who did not want to do anything. They went to school because their parents wanted them to be there (p. 194). It was worse if parents took the child to a school they did not like simply because it posted good performance in national examinations. The child would not cope with school life because the child lacked vital ingredients of self discipline. Such students with an emotional or behavioral difficulty might cause problems by being overly confrontational and unable to control their anger or they might appear introverted and emotionally fragile (Cowley. 2001). Sometimes such students would have acquired problematic behaviour from others. On the other hand

some students might develop emotional behavioral difficulty because of medical complications (Cowley, 2001).

Cowley (2001) also attributed strikes to peer pressure. There was a great deal of pressure for young people to follow their friends, to win approval of those who work alongside them. “When we find ourselves in a large group of people, our natural inclination is to follow the herd and behave in a way in which we might not behave if we were on our own” (Cowley 2001). By misbehaving, students achieved a great deal of positive reinforcement from their peers. There was also fear that if they do not follow the crowd they would be outsiders and would consequently be open to abuse, such as bullying. It was also extremely difficult for anyone, let alone young people, to have courage to stand out from the rest (Cowley 2001). Hence many students struck under mob psychology or mass influence. In addition there was the influence of ring leaders. They were seen as popular members of the school, and being loud, daring and willing to challenge school leaders. They were adored by other students and few students would oppose their plans.

Most strikes were also a result of scanty investigations done after strikes in schools (Wango and Mungai 2007). A humanizing and less painful approach should be considered in an effort to reduce the frequency of strikes in Kenya. This sociological approach might be achieved by avoiding panicky decisions whenever strikes occurred. At times many culprits remained unknown due to scanty investigations done after such unrests.

Heads of Schools

Inefficiency in school administration had been noted as another cause of student unrest. Kombo (2005, 124), quoting Eshiwani explains that students from poorly managed schools displayed a lot of indiscipline. It was mainly because such

head teachers were hardly in the school compound, or if present, were out of touch with what was happening. Various mistakes would be committed by the students. In the same manner complaints would not be attended to. Furthermore, head teachers absented themselves from the school without informing anybody, including the deputy head teacher or master on duty. Instead they relied on informers when away, who would not provide them with accurate information on school progress (Wangai 2001). Thus there was lack of proper supervision of the syllabus coverage, which leads to non-completion of the syllabus. However, the National Council of Churches of Kenya's memorandum of Laws governing the Educational Sector attributed rampant cases of indiscipline in schools to the Teachers Service Commission (2006, 16). There was a tendency by the teachers who proved to be good in class to head schools without being accorded any training as administrators. They were incompetent and inexperienced in school administration. They had inadequate preparation for manager's responsibility by pre-service training.

In some cases, some heads of boarding schools resided outside the school, resulting in non-continuous supervision of students after school (Wangai 2001). Furthermore, they hardly did any practical teaching and at the same time did very little in interacting with pupils, parents and teachers. There was also poor time management. It also meant that teachers and students had nobody to turn to for consultation on issues that needed the head teacher's attention.

Most head teachers served in their home districts. Such localization had brought parochialism in the management of school affairs. Even more important was that it had encouraged head teachers to engage in the personal, clan, community affairs and business interests at the expense of the school (Wangai 2001). They had very little time to be in school, supervising school activities. Students' affairs went

un-attended to. They were likely to engage in anti-social activities and behavior. Quite often, head teachers who had done wrong got protected by their clan (Wangai 2001). As the head was protected, he/she could not realize or be worried of the consequences. He/she might not change and student indiscipline might worsen.

Poor leadership and mismanagement of funds and resources had been cited as causes of student unrest in schools (Kombo 2005). For example, some school heads had been known to charge students money for a school bus or laboratory for even ten years. At times students opted to strike in order to bring the issue in the open (Kombo 2005). They reacted as a way of putting pressure on the school administration to see the seriousness of the matter. In addition students lived in small, crowded, dull and cold dormitories and learnt in congested classrooms. They were uncomfortable and unwilling to learn and sleep in these rooms. They were likely to misbehave by rioting (Cowley 2001, 197). The National Council of Churches of Kenya's memorandum (2006) blamed school managers for failure to expand the facilities to match the increased enrolment. As a result, there was overcrowding in schools, overstretched facilities, high pupil-teacher ratio, thus lowering the standards of learning (14). In addition some Board of Governors did not know their limitations and roles. They did not know how to interrelate with the teachers, head teachers and the appointing authority.

Besides inefficiency and financial mismanagement, lack of communication in the school between the head teacher and other stakeholders contributed towards school unrest (Wangai 2001). There was only down-ward communication. Subordinates' ideas, for instance, were not sought and their contribution was therefore minimal. As a result head teachers adopted unpopular policies which were made single-handedly. Subordinates received them as directives to be obeyed without

question. However, non-programmed decisions were complex and involved a lot of risk taking and, therefore, enough time and resources must be allowed during the planning stage (Okumbe 1998, 147). There were instances where the Board of Governors was not consulted or informed of Board meetings and important circulars not communicated to relevant people (Wangai 2001). As a result proper decisions regarding school management and administration were not made. The input of stakeholders was minimal. Events might not be corrected in advance before they got out of hand. Likewise lack of clear established channels of communication in school and freedom of expression by the teachers, students and parents was curtailed resulting in mistrust between the administration and other stakeholders (Wangai 2001). However, such a scenario might be in situations where there was no ownership of the school by the stakeholders. They had formed an opinion that a school belonged to the head teacher. Whatever went wrong was the head teacher's business.

Inconsistence in application of school rules had also contributed to student riots (Okumbe 1998). Favoritism and inconsistent application of the disciplinary action might do more harm than good to an organization by inadvertently reinforcing an undesirable behaviour (Okumbe 1998, 12). Students and teachers and other subordinate staff might not perceive punishment as a corrective measure but hatred, should they notice inconsistency in the application of disciplinary actions. Moreover, punishing students in front of others humiliated them. Offenders were not helped by public embarrassment. Instead public embarrassment encouraged public retaliation (Norman 2001, 173). Such punishments would eventually lead to resentment by many in the school. Where there were no proper rules and regulations, there was

confusion and chaos (Musaazi 1985). People did what they feel was good for them hence deviance would be on the increase.

In the same manner authoritative heads usually created tense atmosphere (Kombo 2005). There was no freedom for students and teachers to express their opinions concerning the direction the school management and administration should take. Musaazi (1985) also noted that dictatorial action whether by the school head, teachers or students bred disregard for authority and lowered morale for all concerned. The working spirit of many would be low and hence most of the work would be done by the head. For instance, there were rules prohibiting female students from talking to a male teacher or male students (Wangai 2001). Such rules or practices curtailed students' freedom because they might have an issue they had not grasped well in class but forced to wait till out of class. It only created suspicion and tension within the school community. In fact, strikes or riots were the typical results when rules took away freedom that was justified (Musaazi 1985). The school administration could do nothing to create room where students and teachers could be free to express their opinions freely without victimization. There was also low institutional integrity. The head provided little direction or structure, and exhibited scant encouragement for teachers. Teachers acted aloof, suspicious and defensive, leading to low teacher affiliation (Cowley 2001, 100). The world has changed and demands that heads create room for dialogue and encourage students and teachers to cultivate habits of self discipline rather than use force to control behaviour (Musaazi 1985, 182).

Winston (2000) reported that strikes occurred due to poor measures used to stop or control school unrests. There was expulsion, suspension, corporal punishment and other harsh measures. There were situations where views of students were not

listened to, whether complaining about badly prepared food. Any slight mistake made by students was met with expulsion from the school. Harsh treatment with no room for dialogue bred discomfort and discontent among students. They lived in fear and uncertainty.

Likewise the task force on student unrest attributed frequent strikes on major changes in school regulations and routine by head teachers that took place without consultation and participation of relevant stakeholders (Wangai 2001). At the same time the concerned heads did not get some measures of co-operation from those affected by the decision to change. Normally many people were resistant to change (Ukeje 1992, 166).

On the same note Musaazi (1985, 182) blamed strikes on frequent changes by incoming heads. Such changes were introduced without putting into consideration the social environment and special problems in every school. Each school had its own unique culture (Cowley 2001, 85). The incoming heads failed to read the history and current conditions of the school. At the same time they did not understand deeper meanings embedded in the school before trying to reshape it. They failed to uncover and articulate core values, looking for those that reinforce what was best for students and that supported student-centered learning (Cowley 2001, 86). Neither did they honour and recognize those who have worked to serve students and the purpose of the school nor consider external enabling conditions, whether the school environment would be supportive of cultural change. There was no regard to internal permitting conditions i.e. whether members of the school community were ready to live with anxiety that comes with unanticipated uncertainty that was characteristic of change (Cowley 2001, 88). They did not even involve students in formulation of school rules. In the event that certain changes requiring time to be initiated had been abruptly

initiated, the result is resistance from students and teachers and the community served by the school. For instance when the heads changed the uniform without consulting students, it might displease the students and they riot (Ukeje 1992, 166). Some heads felt reluctant to consult staff officers and other subordinates. They felt it reduced their authority to control the school (Ukeje 1992, 177). Moreover, many new heads criticized their predecessors. They announced on parade of new drastic changes (Okinda and Owour 1995). Changes were announced after the incoming head criticizing the past administration by highlighting previous problems to bolster the new head's credibility (Doug 2002, 28). On the other hand, some head teachers feared for their past deeds. The outgoing head teachers incited pupils against their successors, soliciting community, church or political support (Oyaya 2001). Such behavior caused tension among students and teachers. Many would be out to oppose and frustrate new changes by use of many ways including strikes. Okinda and Owour (1995) added that people resisted changes brought overnight. It meant that they were not informed of the intended changes in advance to discuss which ones would be workable, which ones would be introduced and which ones would not. Democracy demands that there should be input from the students on the type of rules and regulations to adopt and govern them. Students would be bound to respect their rules rather than to be subjected to alien ones, which were formulated elsewhere (Kombo 2005). Students were more likely to conform to the rules that they had participated in formulating (Musaazi 1985, 183). Musaazi (1985) blamed strikes in schools on heads who created groups within the teaching and non-teaching staff. More often than not, strikes had been caused by informal cliques in the school, where the head teacher sidelined other teachers, including the deputy and worked with a small number of students, teachers and support staff, creating division within the school (Musaazi

1985). Indeed informal cliques in schools competed with each other for power and these influences negatively within the school system (Kombo 2005). Cliques left staff divided and not able to work as a team towards accomplishing school objectives. Those who felt disadvantaged either withdrew their support or incited students to strike against the school administration. They would let the head of institution do all and take care of the school with his supporters as best as he could (Musaazi 1985). They relaxed and did not solve or attend to students' complaints hence made them pile creating discomfort in school among student community.

Alongside formation of cliques there was a problem in decision making process in the schools. Transparency was limited, major decisions made by the head teachers and "kitchen cabinet" that were his/ her close friends and the head teacher's "eyes" and "ears" (Kombo 2005). At times teachers and even the deputy head teacher came to learn of major decisions such as one being transferred to neighboring school or decisions to expel some students through other teachers and prefects (Kombo 2005). Those excluded from decision making process withdrew their support for school matters. Students took advantage of lapses within the school administration and they went on strike. Indeed, some strikes were instigated by teachers in disagreement with the head teachers (Kombo 2005). Some students took advantage of lapses in administration and others were used by teachers, who incited them to strike to express their disappointment with the school administration.

In summary, the main factors contributing to school unrest on the side of the head teacher were lack of democracy in the school administration, non-involvement of other stake holders in decision making and abrupt changes initiated in the school, especially with incoming head teachers, without consulting those people on the ground including students. Therefore, all administrative decisions and procedures in

the school must be consistent with the philosophy of the school (Musaazi 1985). These decisions should all the time aim at achieving the set objectives and goals of the school. All the stakeholders must have a say and their input in all decisions of the school taken into account.

However there are corrective measures that could be put in place to minimize strikes in secondary schools. Head Teachers have to take the centre stage and co-ordinate all forces that deal with school system. Heads –Teachers being secretaries to the Parents-Teachers- Association (P.T.A) and in most cases secretaries to the Board of Governors (B.O.G.) as well as being teachers, they are in a better position to influence all these bodies and create wholesome atmosphere in a school (Musaazi 1985, 166). They have to motivate teachers and come up with strict policies to guide school operations. The Head Teachers have to link the school to outside forces and the entire general public where each appreciates one another.

Power centres in the management of education have to play a major role in maintaining discipline in the school. These are the P.T.A., B.O.G., and sponsors (Wangai 2001, 49). For example, the B.O.G. is appointed by the Minister of Education and is charged with the responsibility of managing the school on behalf of the Ministry.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Research Design and Rationale

I chose the qualitative research approach because there would be no hypothesis testing (Starcher 2003, 69). My study, therefore, would involve students and the community's perception of strikes in Lugari District of Kenya. I chose the grounded theory tradition because there appears to be no link between what had been written about the causes of strikes and what was on the ground in the respective schools. I, therefore, developed a theory that articulated participants' perceptions of causes of strikes (Creswell 2003). The qualitative research approach enabled me to explore the causes of strikes from the people themselves so as to gain an understanding of the available information. As a result it helped me to fill in the gaps of what had already been written as the causes of strikes in schools with emerging revelations from research participants.

Sampling and Research Participants

For the purpose of this research, I used purposive sampling (Orodho 2000). I picked one boys' boarding school, one girls' boarding school, one mixed day school and one mixed-boarding school. The study sample was one head teacher, one teacher, one student all from each of the four schools and one parent. The research therefore used sixteen participants drawn from the four schools. I decided to limit the research participants to 16 because grounded theorists assign to

the term sampling a meaning radically different from that of quantitative researchers (Starcher 2003, 65)

According to Creswell (2003, 65) the investigator chose participants based on ability to contribute to an evolving theory. According to Starcher (2003, 65), given its vigorous and time consuming data analysis procedures, a grounded theory rarely involved a large number of participants. The number of participants was not of primary importance because representatives of concepts, not of persons were crucial. The submissions gathered out of the four schools would be a representative of possible views of the perspective of the participants of Lugari District.

Data Collection Strategy and Procedures

Data was collected primarily through semi-structured interviews using the research questions as a guide. The time was a three-month period. I was the chief data collector. The questions were directed to students, parents, teachers and head teachers asking them about their perceptions causes of strikes.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The grounded theory study involved interviews with sixteen participants to find out their perceptions towards students strikes in Lugari District. I spent at least one hour with each participant. Each participant was interviewed directly. No audio recording was made but rather I took notes during the course of the discussion. The interviews were done over a period of three months. I began analyzing data by categorizing data as soon as it is collected. Then, I analyzed the first interview and observe with a line by line analysis, by coding sentences or paragraphs (Starcher 2003)

It involved reading through the recorded data, obtaining a general sense of the information and reflecting on its overall meaning and writing notes in the margins (Creswell 2003, 191).

According to Rossman and Rallies, quoted by Creswell (2003, 192), the next step was a detailed analysis using a coding process. It was the process of organizing the materials into “chunks” before bringing meaning to those chunks. Then it involved taking text data or paragraphs into categories and labeling those categories with a term, often based on the actual language of the participants called an “in vivo” term (Creswell 2003, 192). The codes were generalized from the description. Then I used the coding to generate a small number of themes or categories (Creswell 2003, 192). These were the major findings stated under separate headings and sections of the study. Sub-themes were consolidated into a few categories. Finally, I attempted to make sense from these large categories.

After making an interpretation or meaning of these large categories, similar themes emerged that enabled me arrive at appropriate conclusions of the causes of strikes in Lugari District and Kenya as a whole.

Validation and Verification Strategies

According to Creswell and Miller, quoted by Creswell (2003, 196) validation is the strength of qualitative research, determining whether the findings are accurate and credible from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants or the reader. The following strategies were employed in my study to ensure the accuracy and credibility of findings (Creswell 2003). First, I used triangulation, which involved collecting data across multiple and different data sources and employing constant comparative method throughout the collection, analysis and interpretation process (Starcher 2003, 69). I relied on the themes coming out of the available data. The participants were

not intimidated but rather gave their responses out of the open-ended semi-structured questions asked. The experienced researcher, Mr. Oriwo Tom tracked the trail of my evidence and ascertained its purity and integrity (Creswell 2003, 196). Finally, from these various responses, I came up with theories to explain the phenomenon surrounding school indiscipline and unrest (Creswell 2003, 196).

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In this chapter the results of the present investigations are presented. Data was also analyzed and presented. Findings of participants' perception; parent's role, teachers' roles, students' role and head teachers' role will be recorded separately. The researcher set out to discover, understand and explain the community's (teachers, parents, students and head teachers) perception of strikes in Lugari District of Kenya. The data to this study was collected through interviews that involved sixteen participants.

Analysis of the data collected was done using interview guides, with notes taken during the course of the discussion. Observations with line by line analysis, coding systems were used. Overall meanings were written in the margins. Coding was used to generate smaller number of themes. Sub-themes were consolidated into fewer categories. This study was qualitative in nature and a grounded theory method has been used to discover, understand and explain the community's perception of strikes in Lugari District of Kenya.

The qualitative research approach was to enable me explore the causes of strikes from the people themselves so as to gain an understanding of the available information. It helped me fill in the gaps of what had been already written as the causes of strikes in schools with emerging revelations from research participants.

In order to meet this purpose, the following questions were answered.

1. What role did students play towards strikes in secondary schools?
2. What role did parents play towards strikes in secondary schools?
3. What role did teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?
4. What role did head teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?

The researcher presented the following themes which were derived from the research questions and data collected.

Parents' Role

When the question of the role of parents towards strikes in school was explored, several concepts emerged from the respondents (see appendix C). Students reported indulgent parenting, neglectful parents and parents drinking with their children. Teachers reported poor parental discipline methods on students. Head-Teachers on the other hand reported poor relationship between parent with the wider school community, over-indulgent parents and over-protective parents. Parents cited neglectful parenting and household poverty.

Over-indulgent Parents

One head teacher lamented that some parents gave their children more money than they need. Students from affluent families organized strikes, demanding for services that the school cannot afford. In cases of indiscipline, students from wealthy homes would rather seek their parent's intervention than submit to school discipline. Others were rebellious towards school rules: for instance, they do not attend preps.

All the above concepts were merged to form one key concept; poor parenting practices.

Another head teacher reported that some parents transferred their children who had organized strikes in other schools, rather than deal with the behaviour that brought that about. Many parents were not open to school administration about their children's dysfunctional problems. Many cases of student unrest were led by students with a history of serious problem behaviour.

A student noted that some parents did not bother to scrutinize the truth or veracity of claims made by their children. Some students who had been suspended from school deceived their parents with incredulous stories yet their parents took such excuses as truth.

Poor Discipline Methods

One respondent noted that some parents over protect their children who need discipline. When called to attend to student's disciplinary case, some of them instead abused teachers before their children or threaten to withdraw them from the school altogether. Other parents had abdicated the duty to discipline children to teachers. Some of them were only concerned about the academic performance of their children, and tend to disregard issues of discipline.

Some fathers had left mothers to assume the bulk of the parenting role, lamented one female parent. They thought their only duty was to pay fees. However, single mothers had problems of controlling boys effectively beyond certain stages of development, especially if such boys had been exhibiting behavioral problems. Such students could refuse to go to school or deliberately misbehave in school so as to be sent home.

It was observed from one respondent that some parents go to socialize with their children, who observed them smoking and drinking. They thus lose moral authority to control their children's behaviour. Some parents had rejected some

school heads and their deputies on ethnic grounds. Others were aware of the illegal or improper conduct of their children but failed to take action or alert school authorities.

Neglectful Parents

A student reported that some parents were scarcely at home to assist their children develop proper academic attitudes and goals. Some of them spare little time for their children. They do not monitor their children do homework or apply discipline. One student disclosed that many day-scholars in the District stay alone or with their relatives. They were not exposed to parental monitoring. But some parents had transferred their children who had discipline problems from boarding school to rural day schools in Lugari to better monitor their behaviour. Such students ended up inciting day-scholars into participating in student unrest, by demanding things that the school cannot afford, a student remarked.

Students' Role

When the question of the role of students towards strikes in schools was explored several concepts emerged from the respondents (see appendix D). Most students reported influence by peers, unresolved grievances, harsh discipline methods, neglectful parents and allegiance to religious cults and secret societies.

Parents noted that students were provoked by their teachers, harsh discipline methods by the school administration and unresolved students' grievances.

Teachers noted that strikes were as a result of provocation of students by teachers and school workers and neglectful parents. However, some teachers felt that strikes were healthy in a school setting.

All the above concepts were merged to form five concepts namely, harsh discipline practices in schools, community influence allegiance to religious societies,

unresolved school grievances and poor conflict resolution mechanisms.

Community Influences

One parent reported that many of the schools in Lugari District were built through community initiatives. Some parents even donated land on which some schools were built. Such parents had such high expectations from schools that they were prepared to instigate student unrest to have their way, regarding school tenders, being exempt from paying school fees, being allowed to graze their animals on the school compound, and so on. That is why students' grievances were sometimes "voices of powerful people," one parent remarked. When head teachers were unwilling to meet these expectations, they had tended to incite students to strike.

A parent explained that head teachers also ran into trouble with parents when the former fail to participate in community events, such as "Barazas", funerals. The heads were aloof and detached from the community. They plan to have their own son and daughter who will participate in community affairs. One respondent reported that community members sit outside the school and discuss the school, its teachers and performance in National Examinations. They monitor the time teachers arrive and depart from school.

One head teacher remarked that discipline was hard to maintain in mixed-day-boarding schools. Parents were generally slack in applying discipline at home. And teachers struggle in applying discipline in school. Students feel free to take alcohol, take drugs, to cite but a few antisocial behaviour. They were easily liable to negative peer influence.

One respondent lamented that many parents threatened to withdraw their children from school to pressure head teachers to either make an unfavorable decision

or quit the school. In this vein, they even lobby members of the community to withdraw their children or refrain from taking them to particular schools.

Allegiance to Religious Cults and Secret Societies

One student gave revelation of some unique cases of students' unrest in addition to drug abuse. There was a strike culture that was driven by shadowy cultic groups, the student remarked. Some students refer to these cults as "Ebola" due to rapid pace at which they 'infect' schools. These movements had rules and guidelines for behaviour. Membership includes former students and others in neighbouring schools. The junior students take an oath to conceal the operations of the groups. Part of the initiation into such group was, taking part in strikes or using drugs. Whenever a strike occurred in one school, the event was likely to be replicated in another school. The student further revealed that cult members communicate through mobile phones. The members had an emblem of skull and cross bones, symbols that were exposed during sports days, music and drama festival. Students take drugs to numb their consciousness during strikes.

Poor Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

A student expressed that strikes occur when students are stressed, when they are provoked to anger through severe punishment or when their grievances, even reasonable and legitimate ones, are disregarded. Students use excuses such as poor results, bad food and unclean toilets to spark off protest. But they will also strike against the head teacher if influenced by an external force. However, students tend to lodge complaints with school authorities before striking.

Teachers had materialized education so that education was seen in terms of books and better KCSE results. The socialization of children was ignored. Students

sometimes observe school authorities and workers arguing and even fighting over issues. They tend to mimic such behaviour, dealing with disagreements, not through discussion, but through conflict.

Unscreened School Transfers

One respondent revealed that many students with serious discipline problems were admitted to schools without scrutiny. That has contributed to a culture of impunity, with students challenging the authority of the school. A student remarked that “You can punch a Prefect and get away with it. After all you cannot fail to get admission in any school any term of the year”. A teacher further reported that students with dubious histories were also admitted to school as late as the second and even third terms. Many incidents of student unrest were caused by such students soon after they joined another school. One respondent remarked that indeed, “strikes had been organized by new students who had organized similar strikes in their former school and were expelled”.

Unresolved Grievances

Another dimension of unresolved grievances refers to cases of indiscipline that are caused by academically bright students. A parent reported that some students who scored high marks in KCPE and were eligible to join National Schools and Provincial Schools fail to do so because of lack of fees. They thus join mixed day schools or mixed-day-boarding schools, hoping to transfer to the national and provincial schools after a year or two. When their parents are unable to effect the transfers, they become angry and frustrated.

Some student believed that, students strike when other avenues of addressing their issues had been blocked. Worse still, the school administration has been heavy

handed. They reported that students who raise complaints were threatened with suspension. Students feel that there is no room for expressing their feelings. Hence any slight provocation can lead to violent protests. And whenever school property has been damaged in previous strikes, all students, whether they participated in the unrest or not, were forced to bear the cost of the damages. Some students reckon that they might as well destroy property then; after all, they will be forced to pay for it anyway.

Teachers' Role

When the question of the role of teachers towards strikes in schools was explored, several concepts emerged from their individual responses (see appendix E)

Students reported careless remarks made by teachers in school, non-commitment among some teachers and discrepancy in punishment by some teachers. Teachers noted careless remarks made by some teachers before students, poor work morale and motivation and poor communication with school administration. Heads of schools indicated non-commitment to work among some teachers and divisions on staff. Some parents also reported careless remarks made by some teachers and unprofessional conduct.

The above concepts were merged to come up with three common concepts concerning the role of teachers towards strikes in secondary schools. They included work morale and motivation, unprofessional conduct and poor relationship with school administration.

Poor work morale and motivation

One respondent lamented that teachers were demoralized mainly due to scant prospects for promotions. Besides, even when promotions do occur, they were done unfairly, without regard to merit, for instance, the seniority of teachers, he remarked. Teachers were not concerned with school affairs outside the classroom. One teacher remarked, "Our role is to teach and go away, let the head teacher and his clique run the school the way they want. It is she who is answerable for school affairs."

Unprofessional Conduct

A head teacher expressed that there was a problem of poor class attendance by teachers. They arrive late and leave early; hence there was poor syllabus coverage. School work and assignment are not graded. The level of contact between teacher and students was unsatisfactory. When students complain about the same, no action was taken, leading to grievances that can occasion strikes.

A student lamented that some teachers were harsh when applying discipline. For instance, students were ordered to kneel with their hands raised for a full twenty minutes in full view of other students. Such humiliating forms of discipline had tended to injure relationships with students. The student further noted that students sometimes bar such teachers from entering classes. At the same time a head teacher noted that since teachers tend to be absent at class and dormitory meetings, conflicts are not handled soon enough and soon get out of control.

Students sometimes striked to show teachers that they were also tough. Similarly, a student remarked that some teachers show favouritism when applying discipline, stirring discontent among students. Even worse, some teachers discipline students yet other teachers do not. Students wonder whether teachers even had the authority to apply discipline. Some teachers incite students to unrest. They tell

students that the head teacher has misused school funds to buy himself a posh car and yet the school lacks the money to fund extra curriculum activities, like academic trips, game and science congress.

A student remarked that teachers use lessons in history, government, and English literature, to illustrate cases of poor governance in the school. They use statements like your school Principal only knows to..... “This school of yours will soon collapse like the Mwene Mutapa kingdom under the current head. Something must be done to save it. Just mobilize yourself and throw him out.” On the same note one parent observed that other teachers use social settings, such as bars, to discuss sensitive issues about the school. The community was thus exposed to information, sometimes half truths, to which it ought not to have. Similarly, a student remarked that non-teaching staff also complain to the students about their work-related hardships. The community thus creates pressure for the head teacher to be transferred. They sometimes incite students to riot so that their grievances can be heard and rectified.

A head teacher observed that some teachers had overstayed in some schools. Some of them had purchased land and even had investments around the school. They had become influential members of the community and therefore, they were never ready for transfers or interdictions. Disputes between these teachers and head teachers thus become a community affair. The respondent further reported that some community members had mobilized students and villagers to attack the deputy head teacher or even the head teacher.

One respondent specifically linked strikes to unprofessional conduct among some teachers that encouraged student unrest and strikes. Some teachers had love affairs with students, which lowers student's respect for teachers. Some teachers are

alcoholics. They socialize in pubs with students. Students can be seen drunk in public during school hours. In the course of drinking with students, teachers reveal confidential information about the school which increased the grievances of students. He further remarked that teachers use students to settle scores with head teachers. Some teachers undermine the head teacher in front of other teachers. Friction was generated, which undermined the capacity of the administration to deal with cases of discipline. A student reported cases where some teachers who were due for transfers asked students to demand that such transfers be overturned. In this regard, a teacher sometimes incites students to march to the District Education Officers, "I used to defend your rights and now I have been transferred or sacked."

Students had complained that teachers seduce girl students. Some female teachers seduce male students. The student believed that some male teachers maliciously punish 'rival' male students. Such behaviour by teachers creates not a little discontent.

A head teacher lamented that some workers were not committed to the school. They steal food meant for students, delay in preparing food, and sneak in illicit brew for students. Some gate keepers even allow students to sneak out of the school for favors, for example, cash and cigarette. One student startlingly revealed that he and his colleagues had brought in petrol into a certain school with full knowledge of the watchmen. The watchmen belatedly raised an alarm when damage was being done. The student stated that some workers incite students to make unreasonable demands.

Poor Relationship Within School Administration

A respondent, a head teacher, lamented that there was much conflict between heads of school and the teaching staff. Some deputy head teachers undermined the authority of head teachers by supporting teachers who had failed to perform their

duties. Such practices occurred when the head teacher was away. Some deputy head teachers attempt to shield such errant teachers from disciplinary action, the head teacher remarked. The head teacher was therefore unable to have control over the teachers. Two things tend to occur. Students' grievances tend to remain unresolved and errant teachers plot against the head teacher, demanding for his or her removal.

One respondent reported that when students visit the staff room, they tend to overhear their teachers bad mouthing the head teachers. Students can use such information to cause unrest.

Heads of Schools' Role

When the question of the role of head teachers towards strikes in schools was explored, a number of concepts emerged from their individual responses (see appendix F). Teachers reported premature promotions of some heads, non-involvement of stakeholders in decision making and overnight changes. Parents on the other hand reported poor recruitment of some heads, sacking of workers, poor communication with stakeholders and non completion of projects. Heads noted power centralization among some heads, poor academic supervision and poor recruitment practices. Most students blamed heads on not balancing curriculum and non-curriculum activities.

The above concepts were merged to come up with four main concepts. These included, poor administration, overly centralized decision making, poor communication with stakeholders and unprofessional conduct.

Poor Administration

A respondent observed that head teachers conspicuously absent themselves when a school was facing crisis, such as student indiscipline. They do little to contain

such problems and instead blame the deputy head teachers and other teaching staff. A parent further observed that incoming heads sack most of the old non-teaching staff and replace them with their own relatives. The workers who had been sacked spread defamatory information about such head teachers.

Another respondent noted that some head teachers show bias in handling workers' issues, are harsh with some teachers and staff, and overly lenient with others. The head gives advances to some teachers and declines to do the same for others. Some teachers were allowed to be out of school and others were not.

A parent lamented about poor management of school levies. Some head teachers levy huge sums of money for PTA projects, yet the same projects had stalled for many years. The head teacher frequently sends students home for fees including money for stalled PTA projects. The parent further complained that the school charges a huge amount of money for teachers' welfare yet the academic performance of students is poor, with no student qualifying for university admission. Students press for better results. Some head teachers attend to their private work at the expense of their administrative work at school. Some were alleged to have embezzled school funds. But one head teacher reported that they were also unable to collect fees from parents and therefore unable to take students for academic trips, games and science congress. They were also unable to provide quality service for students in the school.

A teacher expressed concern that some head teachers were not qualified or experienced to run senior schools. Some of them were promoted to such schools prematurely. Others had never even been deputy head teacher or even managed a single streamed school. Head teachers fail to supervise the due completion of the syllabus leading to poor academic performance.

High Handedness and Unilateral Decision Making

One respondent remarked that some head teachers seem to idolize Teachers Service Commission Act that grants them authority to run schools without reference to teachers. They initiate changes in schools without considering the feelings of teachers, students, and the community. They make policies that they expect to implement without question. Furthermore, they disregard the counsel or advice of important department heads in schools, such as counseling, regarding students with problem behaviour. A teacher further noted that some head teachers do not take time to appreciate the history and culture of existing cultures. They transfer teachers maliciously and haphazardly. They picked on teachers who were critical of their management practices. Students strike when their demands for the reinstatement of such teachers do not occur. In some schools, head teachers keep teachers, workers, and students in the dark regarding the financial position of schools, even when this position has arisen due to normal financial deficits. When students noticed that some of their teachers, especially those hired by the board of governors, were no longer reporting to work, they suspect that the head teachers had misused school funds. Some headmasters were punitive in their approach to discipline. Tension arises when there was disagreement over tuition fees payments. When other teachers realized that their colleague has been mistreated, they tend to get angry, leading to tension in the school. Some head teachers accept students from other schools with dubious records, even those with serious discipline problems.

Head teachers were harsh and show no concern for students and teachers. They use harsh and abusive language against workers and students, making the latter dejected. Most teachers do not deal with issues of conflict intensively. Even when they promise solutions, they do not follow them up to ensure implementation. Heads

and their deputies do not admit responsibility for issues of conflict. They instead heap the blame on students and their parents. Hence the real cause of students' strikes remains unresolved.

A teacher expressed concern that many head teachers do little to boost the morale and motivation of teachers and staff. Since they do not delegate authority, school activities tend to come to a stand still when the heads were not in school. Some of them run schools simply by calling and making orders, without involving other teachers in the administration of the school. Since head teachers run schools the way they wish, teachers are nonchalant about school problems. Some teachers were happy to see head teachers fail or the school face a crisis.

Poor Relationship with Stakeholders

One parent specifically linked school strikes to poor relationship between school heads and stakeholder in education. The relationship between the school heads and students, teachers, parents, and the community, was poor. Some heads of schools are snobbish toward community members. Hence parents and community are detached from the school. Whenever a problem occurs in school, the community too assumes a detached stance, merely watching events unfold. Another parent complained that school heads do not bother to interact meaningfully with them. Some heads are disrespectful to parents and shout at them in front of pupils. Others sometimes order parents to take their children from school, even when the children had committed minor mistakes.

A respondent believed that Education officers and sponsoring churches also contribute to strikes. They scarcely take time to participate in resolving issues of conflict in schools. Instead, they seem to major on apportioning blame on students, teachers, and head teachers. Another respondent further remarked that sponsoring

churches influenced staffing of schools that they sponsor sometimes in ways that were not consistent with best recruitment practices. They seem keen on hiring persons from their denomination and sometimes disregard the competence and record of such a person. Some churches had even taken on the role of the executive of the school from the school head, contrary to the express provisions of the law. Sponsors intervene in many other ways, in ways that undermine the established management arrangement in schools. In addition, one respondent noted that some head teachers posted to Lugari District, though gifted in the classroom setting, had deficiencies in management and administration.

A teacher lamented that many teachers in the District had remained static in their career development. Angry and frustrated, they vent their anger on students and parents. The practice of deploying nearly all heads of school to head Lugari schools from outside the District has made the deputies and other teachers hostile towards incoming head teachers. Teachers become uncooperative to head teachers.

A respondent observed that some head teachers were not appointed on merit but on the basis of their ethnic group, religious or denominational affiliation. Teachers who feel that they had been unfairly passed over for promotions tend to undermine such head teachers. Students, teachers and non-teaching staff had no avenue of resolving grievances through head teachers.

Various key concepts emerged from the respondents on the role of students, teachers, parents and school heads towards strikes in Lugari District. The discerning pattern from the above respondents showed several common concepts such as provocation by teachers, unresolved grievances as well as influence by peers and community.

On the role of teachers towards strikes, three main common concepts emerged.

They were careless remarks, unprofessional conduct and non-commitment of head teachers. With the above concepts, key themes were non communication among stakeholders and unprofessional conduct of heads and teachers which included careless remarks made by teachers and power centralization among the school heads.

Discussion

The discussion of the findings of the present research was based on the major research questions directing the study.

Concerning research question one, which sought to find the students' role in strikes, there were a number of factors that emerged. It ranged from unresolved grievances by school administration, drug taking, to transfers of unscreened students. Interview with students confirmed that they took drugs only to numb their consciousness during strikes. There were further revelations from the study of students' allegiance to religious cults and secret societies. Students were driven by shadowy cultic groups that had spread across schools. This explains why strikes are on the increase. The study support the findings of Kombo (2005) that in some cases destruction was caused by students under drug influence or those captivated by external forms as a result of devil worship.

The findings also in the previous chapters showed that there were frequent transfers of students from academies to public schools in Kenya. The students from the academies influenced others in public schools negatively. The results from the study indicated that there were unscreened transfers of students. Some students with serious discipline problems were admitted to schools without scrutiny. Some students with dubious histories were also admitted to schools as late as second term and even worse, third term. They organized strikes later.

The study went on to establish that students were influenced by their peers and community members to strike. They were influenced by some parents whose expectations were not met by the school administration. The study findings were in line with the findings of Cowley (2001) that students were under fear that if they did not follow the crowd, they would be open to abuse such as bullying.

The study further revealed that some violent protests were due to poor means of resolving conflicts after strikes. Whenever school property had been destroyed in previous strikes, all students, whether they had participated in the unrest or not, were forced to bear the cost of damages. The finding was in line with those of Wango and Mungai (2007) that strikes were a result of scanty investigations done after strike in schools.

The research findings also indicated that students strike due to harsh discipline methods. Interviews with students showed that students struck when other avenues of addressing their issues had been blocked. Students who raised their complaints were threatened with suspension, hence any slightest provocation could lead to violent behaviour. The study further established that there were unresolved grievances among bright students. They had been taken to day schools after being promised to be transferred to other provincial or national schools later. They became angry when the promise was not fulfilled.

On the contrary, some teachers reported that strikes were healthy in school situations. Through strikes the needs of the aggrieved party, mainly the students were sometimes met, remarked one teacher. The strikes made school management aware of what was happening in the schools, as well as the feeling of the students. The administration could correct the situation and even advise students. A head teacher also noted that strikes corrected wrong impressions made on school heads by parents,

teachers and students. For instance, when parents, teachers and students saw a head teacher driving a new vehicle, they imagine that he/she had used school funds to purchase it. Strikes created time for such heads of schools to explain the information to other stakeholders. In addition, strikes gave the heads of schools chance to re-examine their styles of leadership and personal relationship with other stakeholders.

The second question which sought to find out the role of parents towards strikes in Lugari schools established that some parents played poor parenting role of their children. It was therefore realized that there was poor modeling of parents, giving students too much money, which made students misuse the money and demanded for services the school could not afford. This confirms the study of Wangai (2001) which observed that parents give too much money to students. They support the findings of Ingule et al (1996) that children from affluent families raised in urban areas had a different outlook on school life compared to those from rural areas.

The study found out that some parents protected their children who needed discipline. The study also established cases of neglectful parents who were unavailable at home to help students to develop proper academic attitudes and goals.

In the third question, in which the study sought out to establish the role of teachers towards strikes in schools, it was affirmed that there was poor morale and motivation among teachers. Teachers were demoralized due to scant prospects of promotions. It made them not to be concerned with school affairs outside classes. The findings confirm those of Wangai (2001) that teachers were not committed to their work, hence minimal supervision of students.

The findings also in chapter two of literature review showed that there were cases of unprofessional conduct among the teaching and non-teaching staff. The

study findings from the interviews revealed that there were many cases of unprofessional conduct among the teachers. Some arrived late and departed from the school early, leading to poor coverage of the syllabus, causing anxiety among the students. The study further established that some teachers had love affairs with students which undermined their integrity.

The study further established that some teachers were divided on the staff. Some deputy head teachers undermined the authority of the head teachers by taking side with teachers who the head teacher considered troublesome. Friction was created which undermined the capacity of the administration to deal with cases of discipline.

Interviews with head teachers revealed that some teachers in the District had overstayed in schools, owned property around the school and thus, had become influential members of the community. They incited students and community members against the school administration.

The last question, which sought to establish the extent of head teacher's role in secondary schools in Lugari District, revealed that there was poor administration of the schools in the District. Some head teachers were absent from school when a crisis occurred. The heads showed bias in handling workers' issues and were harsh to teachers, workers and students. The findings of the study were in line with findings of the literature review which showed that there were cases of inefficiency in school administration by some heads of school.

This explains why problems of many schools had been unattended to. The literature review had also cited cases of lack of communication in the school between the head teacher and other stakeholders, which contributed to school unrests. The study established that there was poor relationship between head teachers and the

stakeholders from the school. There was mutual distrust and suspicion between head teachers and their deputy head teachers. The angry and frustrated teachers therefore vented their anger on students and parents. It was specifically established by teachers that those teachers who felt unfairly passed over during promotions undermined the newly posted deputies and head teachers.

The findings of the study supports those of Wangai (2001) that besides inefficiency and financial mismanagement, lack of communication in the school between the head teacher and other stakeholders contributed towards unrest. The research findings from the study showed that there were many cases of only downward communications. Subordinates' ideas were not sought and bought.

At the end it emerged that there were two main theories that came up from the study namely non-communication and unprofessional conduct among the stakeholders.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The study set out to explore, understand and explain the parents', teachers', sponsors', students' and community's perception of school strikes in Lugari District of Kenya. In this chapter conclusions are made, recommendations given and suggestions for further studies cited.

The study was based on grounded theory and confined itself to four schools (one boy's boarding school, one girls' boarding school, one mixed day school and one mixed boarding school). The sample included one head teacher, one teacher, one student, one parent from each school, bringing the research participants to 16, to obtain in-depth information from the District.

Interview guides were used, notes taken from the participants in the course of discussion. Data was analyzed by use of codings.

The research was to establish the extent of teachers, parents, students, head-teachers' role in strikes and to provide solution to enhance interrelationships in schools and provide a conducive atmosphere for learning.

Summary

The study set to explore, understand and explain the parents, teachers, sponsors, and students' perception of strikes in Lugari District of Kenya. The research questions included the following:

1. What role did students play towards strikes in Secondary schools?
2. What role did parents play towards strikes in secondary schools?
3. What role did teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?
4. What role did head teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?

From the findings of the study, the following emerged as the main factors contributing to strikes in Lugari District:

1. Heads of schools' role such as poor recruitment practices, sacking of workers, pre-mature promotions, poor communication with stake holders, power centralization, non-involvement of stakeholders, poor academic supervision, abrupt changes, not balancing curriculum activities with co-curriculum activities as well as non-completion of projects.
2. Teachers' role in this concern include careless remarks, not committed to work, poor work morale and motivation, unprofessional conduct, poor communication with school administration, divisions on staff as well as alcoholism.
3. Parents' role includes poor relationship with school administration, neglectful parenting, and indulgent parenting, drinking with children, over protective, household poverty and poor parental discipline methods.
4. Students' role include influence by peers and community, provocation by teachers and workers, unresolved grievances, allegiance to religious cults and secret societies, poor communication with school administration, and neglectful parents.

Conclusion

This study therefore achieved the purpose of the study by bringing out the various roles of students, parents, teachers, heads of schools, on strikes and also obtained suggestions.

It was evident from the study that students' indiscipline was as a result of various factors such as poor parenting practices, poor work morale and motivation among teachers, unprofessional conduct among some teachers, poor relationship between teachers and school administration among some school heads, overly centralized decision making and poor communication with stakeholders on the side of school heads. It emerged from the study that strikes in the District were still common.

Contribution to be Made From the Study

The study findings shed light on interpersonal life of members of a school. It could be used as a basis for formulating policies on how to handle parents, students, teachers and non-teaching staff. Head teachers particularly will benefit from the study as it was an eye opener on strengths and weaknesses of relationships among various stakeholders.

The study was necessary due to scanty information on causes of strikes in Lugari District. The research has provided further information and facts that fill the gap on this subject in Lugari District. The stakeholders may be enlightened on the need to collaborate.

Recommendations

Based on the main findings, this study recommends the following:

1. The heads of schools to involve all stake holders on major decisions of the school. The head teacher should encourage and build confidence in

workers. Consult them before making changes. It will encourage them to own and implement those changes.

2. Teachers to understand the world view of the students. Understand their language and set channels of communication and procedures for effectively dealing with conflicts. It should be through regular meetings with students.
3. For secret movements the head teacher should be strict on students' conduct. The head should ensure that parents of new students provide students' history, including performance and character to the new school.
4. The school heads should have systems in which students with problematic behaviour are helped by authorities.
5. The head teachers should consult the community members where necessary and seek for their opinions, feelings through Parents Teachers Association and Board of Governors representative in the school.
6. The Board of Governors should be considerate when laying off its school workers.
7. The heads to ensure regular meetings with parents and students. During discussion with children, parents should talk about acceptable behaviour from their children.
8. Parents and influential members of school communities should be more involved in counseling services and career talks in schools.
9. The Board of Governors and education personnel to ensure that non-performing head teachers are identified retrained, counseled and deployed appropriately.

10. In-servicing course for teachers should be organized by the Ministry of Education to update teachers on their professional conduct and performance.
11. Professional teacher promotions programs be made available and qualification for given responsibilities be progressively made a requirement for teacher's promotion.

Suggestions for Further Research

- This study was conducted in only four schools in the District and its environs. Further researchers could extend it to other schools of the District.
- A similar study could be extended to compare causes of strikes in Lugari District and other Districts of Western Province.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER

SITATI GEORGE RAPONG'O,
FRIENDS SCH. KONGONI,
P.O BOX 340,
MATUNDA.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a master's student at the Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology (NEGST). I would like to request you to take part in responding to this interview in order to enable me gather information for research in Christian education.

The purpose of this interview is to find out the perception of the school community (Teachers, Parents and Sponsors) of the causes of student strikes in Lugari district of Kenya public schools. The information provided is meant for the purpose of the study as such will be treated with uttermost confidentiality.

Thank you in advance for participating.

Yours researcher,

GEORGE SITATI.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Based on the research topic the following research questions guide this study:

Main Questions

1. What role did students play towards strikes in Secondary schools?
2. What role did parents play towards strikes in secondary schools?
3. What role did teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?
4. What role did head teachers play towards strikes in secondary schools?

Head teacher's interview guide

1. Have you ever had any strike in your tenure of office as a head teacher?
2. If yes, what were some of the grievances raised by the students?
3. What is the role of students in school strikes?
4. What is the role of teachers in school strikes?
5. What is the role of parents in school strikes?
6. In your view what is the role of head teachers towards strikes in schools?

Students' interview guide

1. State reasons why students strike?
2. What do students try to attain by striking?
3. What is the students' role in strikes?
4. What is the role of parents towards strikes in school?
5. What is the role of teachers towards strikes in schools?
6. What is the role of head teachers towards strikes in schools?

Teachers' interview guide

1. What is the role of students towards strikes in schools?
2. How do you think students' grievances should be handled?
3. How can teachers avert students' strikes?
4. What is the role of teachers towards strikes?
5. What is the role of parents towards strikes?
6. What is the role of head teachers towards strikes?

Parents' interview guide

1. What is the role of students towards strikes in schools?
2. What is the role of teachers towards strikes in schools?
3. What is the role of head teachers towards strikes in schools?
4. In your view what is the role of parents towards strikes in schools?
5. What role do parents think they have about averting students' unrest?

APPENDIX C

PARENTS' ROLE

When the question of the role of parents towards strikes in school was explored, seven concepts emerged from their individual responses after axial coding.

- Poor relationship with school administration
- Neglectful parenting
- Indulgent parenting
- Drinking with students/children
- Over protective
- Household poverty
- Poor parental discipline methods

APPENDIX D

STUDENTS' ROLE

When the question of the role students towards strikes in schools was explored eight themes emerged from the respondents.

- Influence by peers
- Influence from community
- Provocation by teachers and workers
- Unresolved grievances
- Allegiance to religious cults and secret societies
- Poor communication with school administration
- Harsh discipline methods
- Neglectful parents

Common Themes among Students' Role

Through selective coding five themes emerged concerning the role of students towards strikes in secondary schools, namely

- Harsh discipline practises in school
- Community influence
- Allegiance to religious cults and secret societies
- Unresolved school transfers
- Poor conflict resolution mechanisms

APPENDIX E

TEACHERS' ROLE

When the question of the role of teachers towards strikes in schools was explored, eight themes emerged from their individual responses.

- Careless remarks
- Not committed to work
- Poor work morale and motivation
- Unprofessional conduct
- Poor communication with school administration
- Division on staff
- Discrepancy in punishment
- Alcoholism

Common Themes among Teachers' Role

Through selective coding three themes emerged concerning the role of teachers towards strikes in secondary schools, namely

- Poor work morale and motivation
- Unprofessional conduct
- Poor relationship with school administration

APPENDIX F

HEADS' OF SCHOOLS ROLE

When the question of the role of head teachers towards strikes in schools was explored, eleven themes emerged from their individual responses.

- Poor recruitment practices
- Sacking some workers
- Pre-mature promotions
- Poor communication with stakeholders
- Power centralization
- Non-involvement of stakeholders
- Non communication to major stakeholders
- Poor academic supervision
- Changes overnight
- Not balancing curriculum and co curriculum activities
- Non completion of projects

Common Themes on Role of Heads of School

Through selective coding four themes emerged concerning the role of heads of schools towards strikes in secondary schools in Lugari District, namely

- Poor administration
- Overly centralised decision making
- Poor communication with stakeholders
- Unprofessional conduct

APPENDIX G

RESEARCH TIME TABLE

“QUALITATIVE PARADIGM” 2007 / 2008

| DATE | WORK ITEM |
|------------|--|
| 17-03-2008 | COLLECTION OF DATA AND ITS ANALYSIS SIMULTANEOUSLY |
| 24-03-2008 | TO CONTINUE WITH FINAL RESEARCH ANALYSIS |
| 31-03-2008 | FINALIZE WRITING OF EXAMINATION |
| 20-04-2008 | SUBMISSION OF THE COPY TO SECOND READER |
| 09-05-2008 | SUBMISSION OF THE COPY TO AN EXTERNAL READER |
| 05-06-2008 | SUBMISSION OF CORRECTED COPY TO THE ACADEMIC OFFICE |