

## **Communication Challenges between Teachers and Students that Trigger Indiscipline of Students. Case of Nyamira South District Secondary Schools**

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### **Abstract**

Indiscipline of students is a major problem affecting secondary schools in Kenya. Cases of indiscipline have taken many forms such as students walk out, destruction of school property, beating of teachers and in extreme cases leading to death of fellow students. The purpose of the study was to investigate communication challenges that triggered indiscipline of students of secondary schools in Nyamira South District. The study was guided by the following objective; to assess the kinds of channels of communication used by teachers and how they influence students' indiscipline. The study embraced the conceptual framework for communication. The study will add value to government policies on school governance. It will also reduce student indiscipline through adoption of study findings. The study utilized Ex-post facto research design with both qualitative and quantitative methods. Questionnaires were used as instruments of collecting data. The target population comprised of 10 Education Officers, 456 teachers and 9,685 students. Random, purposive and stratified sampling and the Nasiuma formulae were used to pick 82 teachers, 99 students and 10 Education Officers making a total of 191 respondents. The instruments used were piloted in four schools from the District. They were also given to experts and the supervisors to evaluate the relevance of each item. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The specific statistics used were percentages, frequencies, weighed averages, Pearson correlation coefficient, and chi-square. Graphical techniques such as pie charts, line graphs, bar graphs were used in data presentation. Poor channels of communication such as morning assembly and notice boards were used by teachers for communication to students. Regular class meetings should be used as main channels of communication between teachers and students. Regular class meetings and democratic interaction between teachers and students should be put in place to improve interaction, dialogue, confidence and initiate proper feedback.

**Keywords:** Communication, Channel, Indiscipline, Feedback.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Indiscipline refers to deviation from prescribed norms whether such norms are mere folkways, matters of etiquette or serious crimes (Etisi, 2010). Indiscipline is behavioral disorder that is classified as an act of delinquency, just like lying, stealing and playing truancy or running away from home (Chianu, 2007). Student indiscipline in schools is a reality in our society. It is a major problem affecting the learning institutions worldwide. Survey, reports and the wider media attested that school indiscipline is on the increase (Griffin, 1996). In France, school indiscipline became a real plague. In the United Kingdom, according to data from the University of Exeter, one out of every four students between ages 11 and 16 used to carry knife to school. Similar phenomena occurred in the United States (Imaguezor, 1998). In South Africa, indiscipline led to destruction of property (Rigby, 2002). Student's indiscipline seemed to be ubiquitous in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Nigerian secondary schools. In Tanzania, similar issues of deteriorating scale and nature of violence and indiscipline within schools was reported (Seifert and Vornberg, 2002). In Kenya, the number of learning institutions that has been hit by the disturbance is large. They include: primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and even universities. The indiscipline is manifested through class boycotts, strikes and arson. It had escalated to even roughing up of teachers and the non-teaching staff. Often the violence translated into riots which caused loss of life (MOEST 2001; MOEST, 2004). Disaster in schools including drug abuse, antisocial behaviour and student unrest were serious issues that need to be addressed. Mitigation measures went beyond drafting of policy papers to more effective strategies (Kiyiapi, 2010).

Indiscipline in secondary schools in Kenya is common; for example on 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1991, Saint Kizito Mixed secondary school in Meru, Kenya; boys went on rampage in the night raping and maiming female colleagues in a 1:00 am violent ordeal. 19 female students died and 71 were injured (Kindiki, 2004). In May 1997, 57 students at Bombolulu Girls secondary school perished in a dormitory as a result of fire started by other students. In 1999, four prefects were burnt in a dormitory in Nyeri High school (Onyango, 2003). In July 2001, students of Kyanguli Boys secondary school in Machakos doused a dorm with 20 litres of petrol and set it ablaze in the hours of the morning as boys slept. Sixty seven students were roasted alive because they wanted to force school administration to close school earlier than it was scheduled (Onyango, 2003).

In October, 2010, Endarasha boys high school in Nyeri went on rampage and burnt a dormitory, 2 boys burnt beyond recognition and properties worth thousands of shillings destroyed (Kinyua, 2010). Kinyui boys high school went on strike and one student was burnt to death and property destroyed in the Tuesday night attack (Manyimbo, 2012). Mwangeke girls, Moi Kisighau secondary school went on strike to express their dissatisfaction with school programmes and Kenyatta secondary school went on rampage because of poor diet and extension of term dates (Manyimbo, 2012) In Nyamira South District, secondary schools have had indiscipline cases, for example in 1991 students of Kebirigo High school beat up their head teacher till he died (Kindiki, 2004).

It's evident that a number of schools in Kenya have had indiscipline cases as shown in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1**

**Schools which experienced students' unrest by province in the year 2000 – 2001**

<b>Province</b>	<b>No. of schools</b>	<b>No. of schools that experience student unrest</b>	<b>% of students going on strike</b>	<b>Gravity</b>
Central	630	85	13.5	Violent destruction
Nyanza	680	07	1.0	Destruction of property
Eastern	626	76	12.4	Destruction of property and loss of human life
Rift valley	625	50	8.0	Loss of property
Western	408	19	4.7	Minor Destruction of School property.
Nairobi	93	02	0.02	Minor destruction school Property
N. Eastern	21	07	33.3	Destruction of school Property

**Source: (MOEST, 2001).Report of the task force on student indiscipline and unrest.**

Table 1.1 shows that indiscipline is rampant in all the provinces in Kenya. Two hundred and forty six secondary schools had cases of indiscipline between the years 2000 – 2001. Central province recorded the highest number of indiscipline cases.

Cases of student indiscipline have been attributed to mismatch in communication between teachers and students. This behavior of students that has invaded our educational system is a worrying trend to the government, churches, parents, politicians and even educationists. It's against this background that the study seeks to examine communication challenges that trigger indiscipline of students in secondary schools in Nyamira district with an objective of looking for ways of mitigating it.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The problem of student indiscipline is endemic in global perspective and many scholars have given multiple reasons for it. Kiyiapi(2010) attributes indiscipline to drug abuse, Etisi(2010) attributes it to ineffective teaching methods and Mendlar(1999) attributed it to tough rules and regulations in school. In spite of the interventions, the problem has remained persistent and little has been documented on communication challenges that trigger student indiscipline in secondary schools. This study therefore examined the communication challenges that led to student's indiscipline among secondary schools in Nyamira South District with a view to developing measures to mitigate it.

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

- i) Asses the kinds of channels of communication used by teachers and how they influence students' indiscipline.

## **1.4 Research Question**

- i) What kinds of communication channels used by teachers that influence students indiscipline?

## **1.4 Significance of the Study**

Communication between people in any institution is important (Mutai, 2000). Making use of clear channels of communication enabled students to get adequate and consistent information and achieve the expectation and comply with school rules, minimizing misunderstanding to achieve expected behavior. It's clear that effective communication system established the relationship between and among teachers and students within the school. This study will add

value to government policies on school governance. It will reduce and minimize cases of student indiscipline through adoption of study findings.

### **1.6 Assumptions of the Study**

This study was guided by the following assumptions:

- i) Poor teacher – student communication caused indiscipline of students.
- ii) All teachers know the significance of effective communication.
- iii) Effective communication between teachers and students led to discipline among students.

## **2. Research Methodology**

The study adopted *Ex-post facto* research design with qualitative and quantitative approach. In such a design, research inferences about relationships among variables are made systematically and empirically without direct control of independent variables because their manifestation have already occurred and also because they are inherently non-manipulatable (Oso&Onen, 2005). The research targeted teachers, students and education officers from Nyamira district. 82 teachers, 99 students and 10 education officers were sampled using purposive, stratified sampling and simple random sampling. The Nasiuma formulae was also used to get samples for the study.

### **2.1 Instrumentation**

Questionnaires were the main instruments used in this study. Different questionnaires were administered to students, teachers and the education officers. Various documents from the university library supplemented the questionnaires. The questionnaires were designed with a

series of closed ended questions that were used to gather information on communication challenges that influence indiscipline of students.

## **2.2 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

A test-re-test of the questionnaire was conducted in four secondary schools from the Nyamira district. The instruments were again administered to the same respondents after two and half weeks. The respondents were recorded and by the use of Pearson moment correlation, the correlation coefficient was 0.8. According to (Kothari 2004), coefficient of at least 0.8 is considered as valid and reliable.

## **2.3 Administration of Research Instruments**

The research instruments were administered to various schools and offices after seeking permission from graduate School of Kisii University and the district education officer, Nyamira South district. The researcher administered the instruments with assurance of confidentiality to the participants.

## **3. Results and Discussions**

The communication challenges that influence indiscipline of students were analyzed by the use of descriptive statistics. The frequency tables, weighted averages and the Pearson moment correlation coefficient were used in analysis. Mean of above 3.0 shows the challenges that influence indiscipline.

### **3.1 Findings of the study**

Data obtained from the study were analyzed and presented as follows

### What kinds of communication channels are used by teachers that influence students' indiscipline?

To answer this question, data were obtained from different categories of the sample using questionnaires. The findings are presented in figure 4.4, table4.5, table 4.7 and table4.8.

#### 3.2 Students' Views on Channels of Communication

The students gave their views on the channels of communication used by teachers to communicate to students. Figure 4.4 showed the response from the field.

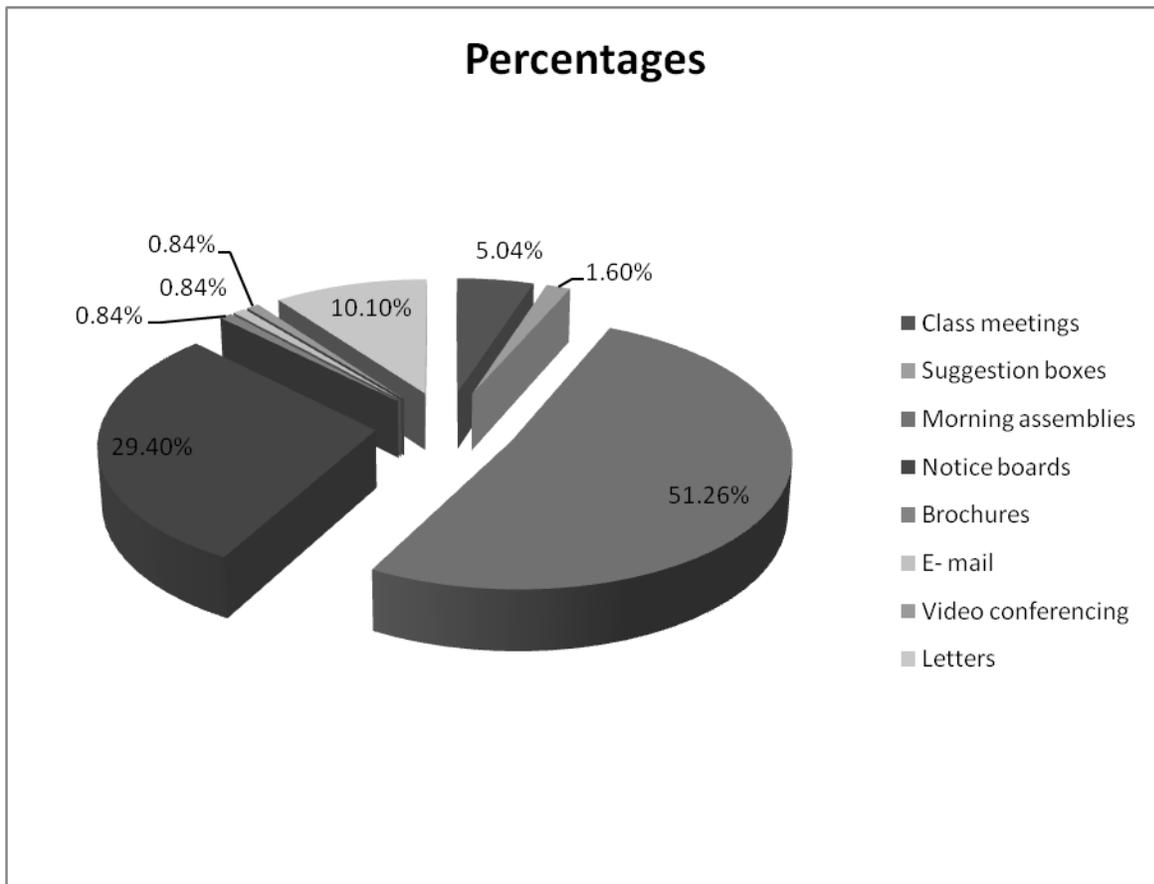


Figure 4.4 Student views on the channels of communication used

Source: Field data (2012)

Figure 4.4 showed that 51.26% of the teachers used morning assembly to communicate to students on indiscipline issues. 29.4% used notice boards for communication on indiscipline to students 10.1%, 1.6% and 5.04% of the teachers communicated using letters, suggestion boxes and E-mail. 0.84% of the teachers communicated using brochures, E-mail and video-conferencing. The study findings were that teachers communicated to students mostly using morning assembly. This implies that the students were more or less given direction without being given a chance to negotiate, question or seek clarification on the issues addressed and this meant that students did not comprehend or were not positively involved in the decision making.

**Table 4.4 Justification for choosing the channel**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No desire for feedback	2	2.0
Limited time for communication	12	12.1
Discourage questions from students	16	16.2
Fear of antagonisms	3	3.0
To avoid arguments	7	7.1
Students listen and follow instructions	59	59.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data (2012).**

Students gave various reasons for the popular use of morning assembly by teachers. Table 4.4 shows that 59.6% of the students exhibited that teachers used morning assembly for

communication because of the perception that students were meant to listen and follow instructions. 16.2% and 12.1% of the students noted that teachers used morning assembly for communication because it discouraged questions from students and that there was limited time for communication. 7.1%, 3.0% and 2.0% of the students indicated that teachers used morning assembly for communication to avoid arguments, fear of antagonism and no desire for feedback. This implies that the students were given directives without being given a chance to negotiate, question or seek clarification on issues addressed by teachers

### **3.3 Teachers Response on Channels of Communication.**

Table 4.5 shows the response rate by teachers on the kinds of channel of communication used by teachers to communicate students.

**Table 4.5 Teachers views on channels of communication.**

<b>Channel of Communication</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Class meetings	19	23.2
Suggestion boxes	4	4.9
Morning assemblies	46	56.2
Notice boards	9	10.9
Brochures	1	1.2
E-mail	1	1.2
Video-conferencing	1	1.2
Letters	1	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data (2012)**

In examining this objective, 56.2% of the teachers used morning assembly to communicate to students on issues of indiscipline among secondary schools in Nyamira South District. 23.2% and 10.9% of the teachers used class meetings and notice boards consecutively. 4.9% of the teachers used suggestion boxes for communication. 1.2% of the teachers used brochures, E-mail and video conferencing for communication to students. Majority of the teachers (Table 4.6) argue that morning assembly and notice boards enable them to communicate directly, saves time and discourage arguments. The implication of the study was that communication was on a linear channel and any contribution from students was discouraged.

**Table 4.6: Reasons given by teachers for the choice of the channel**

<b>Reasons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Save time and discourage arguments	49	59.7
Confers status	18	21.7
Students listens and follows instructions	3	3.7
Promotes loyalty	8	9.8
Students junior to contribute	4	4.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data (2012)**

Teachers gave various reasons for the choice of morning assembly as the main channel of communication. Table 4.6 shows 59.7% and 21.7% of the teachers exhibited that the channel of communication saved time and discouraged arguments from students and that it confers

status. 9.8%, 4.9% and 3.7% of the teachers indicated that the channel promoted loyalty; students were junior to contribute and made students to listen and follow instructions given. The revelation of the study was that communication was on one way process.

### 3.4 Correlation between views given by Teachers and Students Regarding Channels of Communication Used

The study established the correlation between channels used by teacher and students. Refer Table 4.7

**Table 4.7 Relationship between teachers and students on communication channels**

<b>Channel of communication</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>XY</b>	<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Y<sup>2</sup></b>
Class meetings	6	19	114	36	361
Suggestion boxes	2	4	8	4	16
Morning assembly	51	46	2346	2601	2116
Notice board	33	9	297	1089	81
Brochures	1	1	1	1	1
E-mail	1	1	1	1	1
Video- conferencing	1	1	1	1	1
Letters	4	1	1	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>2769</b>	<b>3737</b>	<b>2578</b>

**Source: Field data (2012)**

The formula for the calculation of Pearson's Correlation Coefficient is

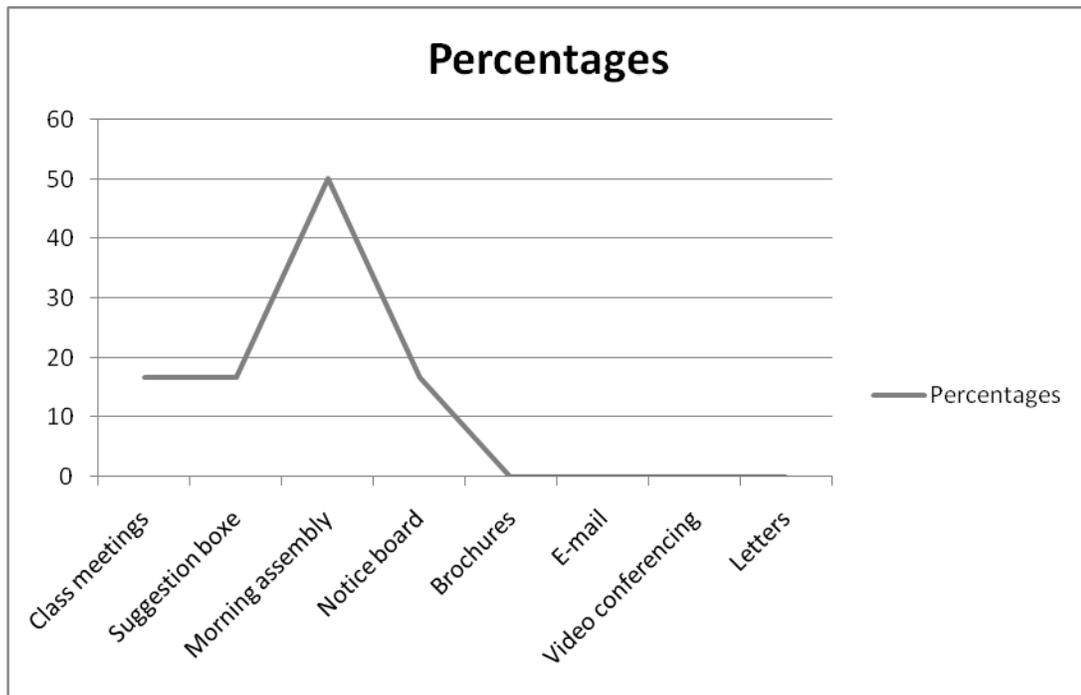
= 0.8

The correlation coefficient is between -1 and +1 .The result of 0.8 showed that there was a very strong relationship between the views given by teachers and students on

Channels of communication used.

### 3.5 Education Officers' Views on the Channels of Communication

Figure 4.5 showed the views of education officers regarding channels of communication used.



**Figure 4.5 Trends of channels of communication by D.E.O's office.**

**Source: Field data (2012)**

In Figure4.5, 50% of education officers indicated that teachers communicated to students using the morning assembly while 16.66% of education officers noted that teachers communicated using class meetings, suggestion Boxes and notice boards. To the perception of education

officers, none of the teachers communicated using brochures, E-mail, Video-conferencing and letters in Nyamira South District. This implied that teachers communicated to students without getting feedback.

### 3.6 Summary by all Respondents on Channels of Communication used:

Table 4.8 shows the response rate by all the respondents on channels of communication used by teachers to communicate to students on issues of indiscipline

**Table 4.8 Summary on channels of communication used to communicate to students.**

<b>Channel of Communication</b>	<b>Students</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Officers</b>	<b>Average</b>
	%	%	%	%
Class meetings	5.04	23.4	16.7	15.04
Suggestion boxes	1.60	4.9	0	2.17
Morning assembly	51.3	56.2	50.0	52.49
Notice boards	29.4	10.9	16.7	19.0
Brochures	0.84	1.2	0	0.68
E-mail	0.84	1.2	0	0.68
Video-conferencing	0.84	1.2	0	0.68
Letters	10.1	1.2	16.7	9.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field data (2012)**

From Table 4.8, 52.49% of the respondents indicated that teachers communicated to students using morning assembly. 15.04% of the respondents noted that teachers communicated to students using class meetings. 19.0% and 9.33% of the respondents exhibited that teachers communicate using Notice boards and letters. 2.17% of the respondents indicated that teachers communicated using suggestion boxes and 0.68% of the respondents noted that teachers communicated using brochures, E-mail and video conferencing. The implication of the study was that morning assembly and notice boards were mainly used by teachers for communication. The channels were only favoured by the teachers and not the students. This showed that communication was one way and gave no room for a discussion or response. The study was consistent with the findings of Miller (2003) which indicated that there was a clear cut beginning and an end to communication. Students were also seen as tools that should listen and follow instructions. This system of communication led to arguments between teachers and students hence triggered indiscipline.

#### **4. Discussion**

This objective assessed the channels of communication used by teachers and their influence on indiscipline of students. The data collected revealed that teachers had a wide choice of several channels to communicate to students on indiscipline problems. The channels considered were class meetings, suggestion boxes, morning assemblies, notice boards, brochure, e-mail, video-conferencing and letters. The channel of communication chosen and used determined how well information on indiscipline was passed and received by the students. Majority of the respondents (52.5%) and (19.0%) cited that teachers used morning assembly and notice boards as main channels of communication (Table 4.8). The two channels of communication were monologue (facilitated one way communication) where students listened and complied with

what they were told. The students were given directives without given a chance to negotiate, question, or seek clarification on issues addressed (Table 4.4). Majority of the teachers (59.7%) used morning assembly for communication because it saved time and discouraged arguments (Table 4.6). This system/ mode of communication led to arguments, conflicts between teachers and students hence indiscipline. The study was consistent with the findings of Miller (2003) who cited that there was a clear cut beginning and an end to communication, the parties concerned differed. The study findings revealed that there was a very close relationship between the views of the teachers and those of students regarding the channels used by teachers to communicate to students on issues of indiscipline. The correlation coefficient between the two was +0.8 (Table4.7).

## **5. Conclusion**

There is mismatch in communication between teachers and students which leads to indiscipline in secondary schools in Nyamira South District. The kinds of channels of communication used by teachers to students were not satisfactory and as a result indiscipline in Nyamira South District is common. The kinds of channels of communication used by teachers to communicate to students have led to communication breakdown and that is why students have chosen other destruction ways of expressing their grievances. Study findings also indicated that overprotective parents and labeling of students by teachers hinder communication in Nyamira South District. However if regular class meetings, democratic interaction are put in place, then communication between the teachers and the students will greatly improve and in turn curb indiscipline. It's clear that teachers need to look into more friendly ways of dealing with indiscipline of students. Proper communication is essential for peace, harmony and unity in schools.

## **5.1 Recommendation:**

Based on this study, the following recommendations were made.

### **5.1.1 Channels of communication:**

Class meetings should be used in secondary schools as main channels of communication as they improved interaction and relationship between teachers and students hence leading to unity, peace and harmony in the school.

## **6. Recommendations for further research**

From the findings of this study the researcher made the following recommendations;

- a) Similar study in other parts of the country to be done for comparison purposes
- b) A study in the influence of ICT on indiscipline should be conducted.

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