



## Influence of secondary school principals' information dissemination types on students' discipline in Kitui County, Kenya

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### Abstract

*Discipline is a significant element of human behaviour that can be defined as the restrictions of an individual or group of people. Ogweno (2016) defines students discipline as students exhibiting social acceptable behavior and agree with the regulations of the school. It is therefore a pivotal element in the smooth operation of an organization whether public or private. The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of principal's information sharing patterns on students' discipline. There are four information sharing types: - Strategic sharing, Paradigmatic sharing, directive sharing and social sharing. In this study the focus was on directive and social sharing. Directive sharing involves information sharing between teachers and students while social sharing involves information sharing as a relationship and a community building activity. The study was guided by the situational theory of leadership by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, (1969). Descriptive survey research design was used. From a target population of 369 principals, 369 deputy principals and 76071 students a sample of 110 principals, 110 deputy principals and 440 students were sampled through purposive sampling for principals and deputy principals, stratified proportional sampling for students. Questionnaires were used for students and deputy principals, an interview guide for principals and researchers observation schedule. The return rate was 100 per cent for principals, 72.7 per cent for deputy principals and 83.4 per cent students.*

*Independent T-test was used to compare means between principals' information sharing patterns and discipline variables with same continuous dependent variable (discipline) to determine whether the mean occurrences of student discipline differed based on principals information sharing patterns. Out of the total 101 (91.8%) of the schools indicated higher means on principals' information sharing pattern as compared to means in discipline. This implied that there could have been other factors that influenced discipline in schools. The study also revealed that 91.8 per cent of the students agreed that information sharing helps control students' behaviour hence improved discipline. About 91.0 per cent of the principals agreed that information sharing created an understanding of discipline issues. The study also revealed that 87.2 per cent of the students agreed that the school administration and students' leaders held meetings. A majority 91.8 per cent of the deputy principals concurred with those of the students that information sharing helps control students' behaviour hence improved discipline. The study concluded that information sharing patterns between the principal and students had no influence on student's discipline but rather there could have been other factors that influenced students' discipline. The study recommends that the principals should consider other information sharing processes which could help students to take control of their behaviour.*

**Key words:** Information sharing, Communication, Student discipline

## **Introduction**

Information sharing is an important aspect that influences students' discipline. The concept of information sharing is the receiving and giving information hence making an impact on the persons (Savolainene, 2017). Information sharing is characterized by exchange of information through the different types of information sharing; hence information sharing is a way of communicating with others. Communication is a dynamic process that takes place around us all the time. Communication can be defined as a means of passing information from one point to another (Cacciattolo, 2015, Katolo, 2015). There are different forms of communication channels which can be used to enhance interaction and discipline in the school. The school managers therefore can reduce indiscipline if they use communication channels or transfer of information through direct interpersonal communication, individual or at meetings effectively (Ndaita, 2016). Kolaci 2014) argues that lack of proper interactions and appropriate use of forms of communication, an institution can only be characterized by confusion among its employees.

A study by Wambua, Okoth and Kalai (2017) on the influence of principal's participatory management practices on student's discipline in secondary school in Machakos County, found out that a majority of the students who participated in decision making had reduced levels of indiscipline cases. This could have been occasioned by the students owning up decisions where the principal had involved them. The study also found out that communication was important in school especially on issues of discipline. Poor communication between the school management and the students led to indiscipline cases (Wambua, Okoth & Kalai, 2017)

Information sharing can be through different strategies such as holding classroom meetings, communication during assembly, use of guidance and counseling, use of rewards and incentives to enhance discipline among students. A study by Katolo, Gathumbi and Kamola (2016) on principals' leadership practices and their influence on students' discipline in public secondary

schools in Makindu Sub-County, Kenya found that the students wished the principal could set aside a day he would have a meeting with them to discuss issues that were affecting them. Katua (2019) noted that the principal could use different strategies to share information with students to help reduce indiscipline cases in schools. These strategies include school assemblies which can be an interactive meeting to communicate and improve students' interactions with the school principal leading to improved discipline. This study therefore, sought to establish how information sharing types by the principals influence students' discipline.

### **Objective of the study**

To establish the influence of Principals' information sharing types with students on their (students') discipline in Kitui County, Kenya.

### **Research Question**

To what extent do information sharing types used by Principals with students influence their (student's) discipline in Kitui County, Kenya?

### **Literature Review**

Effective communication is core for attainment of leadership activities. The Principals adeptness to communicate efficiently allows him/her to control the attitudes and actions of their colleagues and subordinates (Majumdar & Ray, 2011). Information sharing keeps students informed. There are different types of communication to students such as the notice boards, newsletters, announcements at school assemblies, personalized letters, person to person communication, telephone, daily announcements in classrooms and staffrooms among others (Ndaita, 2016).

According to Ozdemir and Getmez (2019) in their study on the relationship between school managers' communication skills and schools' atmosphere found out that the school managers' effects on school interactions, students and their perspectives on the purpose that work. The study established that the Principal's communication skills have an aspect of behaviour flexibility competency. This is seen as an important aspect that school Principals play on the role of improving the school environment as well as students' performance.

Students are expected to be informed of the school activities, facilitate the involvement of the student in operation of the school and promote the interest of the school hence reduced misunderstanding which would bring down indiscipline cases among students. Njami, A.W. (2018) argues that involving students through information sharing was an important strategy in reducing cases of indiscipline in schools.

A study by Katolo, Gathumbi and Kamola (2016) found out that students wished the Principals could set aside a day when he/she would have a meeting with them to discuss issues that were affecting them, this therefore would be one of the information sharing type. They noted that the students wished the class teacher could call for a consultative meeting with the principal together with the students to give their grievances. These meetings would entail directive information sharing, social information sharing, consultative information sharing and strategic information sharing which

would help in regulating, integrating, persuading and informing the students and therefore help in decision making on issues that were affecting students. Information sharing can take three modes of communication which include: oral communication, written communication and non-verbal communication. Fielding,(2006) asserts that oral mode of communication has advantages of being quick in sending of messages, providing immediate feedback as well as being less formal compared to other modes of communication for example written communication.

Written communication is a type of verbal communication that is expressed in form of writing. According to Andrzej & David (2001), written communication includes memos, letters, electronic mail, fax transmission institution periodicals, notices placed on notice boards among others. Written mode of communication has an advantage of fewer chances of being misunderstood and facts with doubts can be removed by reading it again.

Nonverbal communication is the process of conveying a message without speaking or writing. According to Fielding, (2006) more than verbal communication, non-verbal communication is the most common amongst people. It gathers from a wide range of human behaviors which include among others; facial expressions, body movements and gestures. However non-verbal communication does not only exist in unspoken or written words. Durbin (2008) maintains that while speaking is verbal communication, there are non- verbal elements involved which may send a different message from the words spoken depending on the speaker.

Oral communication usually occurs with the help of the spoken word mode of communication which can be effectively used to inform, satisfy, praise, criticize, please, inquire and many other purposes. Oral mode of communication has advantages of being quick in sending of the messages, providing immediate feedback as well as being less formal compared to other modes of communication used in information sharing.

Information sharing should motivate students to be self-disciplined and to improve school discipline. Mbaluka (2017) notes that students who have self-discipline involve themselves in activities that are helpful in attaining academic success such as completing school assignments on time, review their notes, listening to teachers in class and engage teachers with questions that are helpful to help them attain their goals. This can only be gained when the principal gives students information that would help them when they have inculcated self-discipline and how it will help them in their school life and life after school. According to Aberg (cited in Lisa and Christina, 2003) and Murithi (2013) communication in schools serves four roles namely, regulating, persuading, informing and integrating.

Information sharing can also motivate students, teachers and support staff in an educational organization. Timely information sharing can also help the principal and students build trust, which is an important aspect in the success of the school in maintaining discipline and attaining school goals. Tschanne-Moran & Gareis (2017) noted that trust is looked at as a complex way of assessing many elements simultaneously when making judgment of trust. These may vary depending on the context of the information shared by the principal with the students. When the principal is not trusted by the students, this means the students are willing to be vulnerable to another party on the confidence that the other party is benevolent, honest, open, reliable and competent and vice versa

about the students to the principal.

Arslan & Polat (2016) notes that when the principal is willing to offer students help voluntarily, it means the students will perceive the principal as caring of their needs. Tschanne-Moran and Gareis (2017) notes that to cultivate a climate of trust in a school, the members of the school community must recognize the strengths and create the environment which curiosity and love are running aside. This means the students learning and discipline is facilitated when the principal and teachers are fully aware of their positive intension of the professional relationship which may result into a strong relationship of trust and students learning and discipline being enhanced. There are many studies that have been conducted on principals' information sharing however not focusing on influence of principals' information sharing types with students discipline. According to records held at Kitui County Education Office for the years 2012 -2018, Kitui County had experienced continued students' unrest in secondary schools which had been of concern. This study sought to establish how information sharing types by the principals' influences students discipline in Secondary schools in Kitui County.

### Theoretical framework

The study was guided by the situational theory of leadership by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard, (1969). The situational theory of leadership characterizes leadership in terms of task behaviour and affiliated conduct. Related to this study, the school principal is expected to carefully select the appropriate communication channels and use them where applicable.

### Conceptual framework

The following conceptual framework helps in understanding of the various variables of information sharing used in discipline management in schools.

**Figure 1:** Relationship between principals' information sharing types with students and student's discipline.

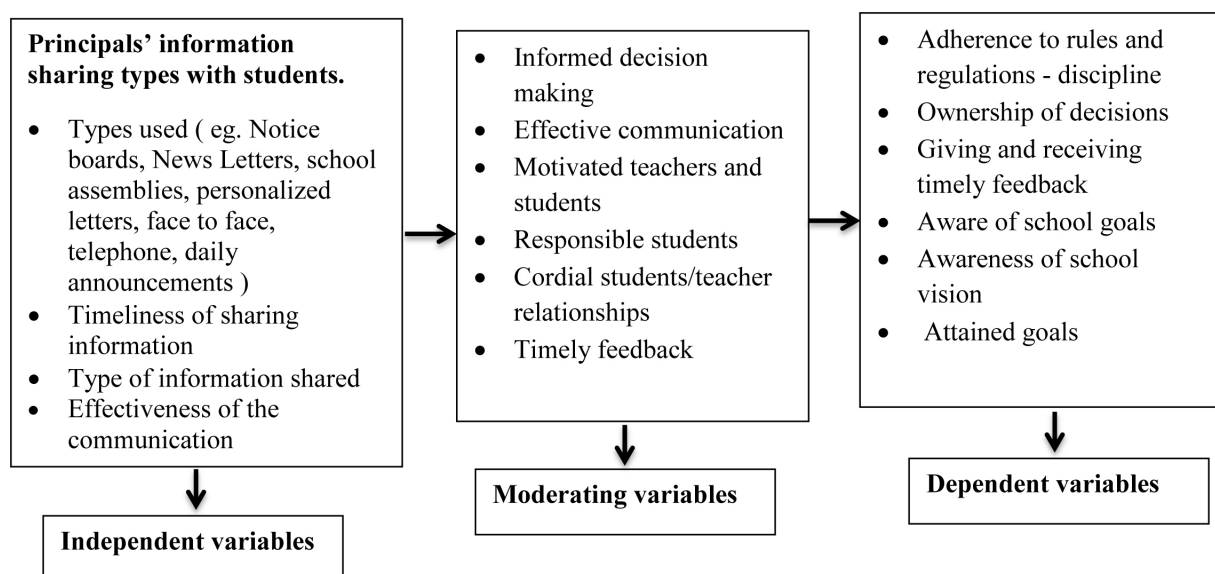


Figure 1 shows the principal's application of information sharing types and students' discipline. These



include methods/channels of communication used, type of information shared, and effectiveness of communication and timeliness of sharing /receiving information. The ideal leadership style is one that takes the input of all stakeholders into account. Bush, (2003). The effectiveness with which student's carry out their roles is dependent upon a number of variables as shown in figure1 above. When these factors are favourable, students perform effectively and this is reflected through school discipline (positive social norms). When the factors are not favourable the opposite is the case.

### **Research Methodology**

The study was guided by descriptive survey design which determines the consequences that arise as a result of influence of principals' information sharing types on students' discipline in Kitui County, Kenya. According to Kasomo,(2006) a target population consists of all items or people under consideration in any field of enquiry for which the researcher wants to determine some characteristics. At the time of the study Kitui County had 369 Public secondary schools and therefore 369 principals, 369 deputy principals and 76071 students (County Director's office, Kitui County).

### **Sample size and sampling procedure**

A sample is a representative proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). A sample of 30 per cent or more is to be considered a large sample (Best & Kahn, 2011) and sizeable enough to detect a notable effect (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). From a target population 369 Principals, 369 Deputy Principals and 76071 students, a sample of 110 principals, 110 deputy principals and 440 students were sampled through purposive sampling for principals and deputy principals while stratified sampling based on proportional sampling was used to sample the students. To determine the sample for students the researcher adopted the formula for Krejcie & Morgan, (1970) which helps determine sample size for a given population.

### **Data collection techniques**

Two questionnaires and an observation schedule were used to collect data from deputy principals and students while an interview guide was used to collect data from the principals. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2018) notes that a questionnaire is beneficial since it maintains standardized and open responses to range of topics from large population. Orodho & Kombo (2003) argue that questionnaires are usually filled in answers in written form and the researchers collect the questionnaires with the complete information. The questionnaires were divided into parts A and B. Part A dealt with the background information. Part B dealt with influence of principals' information sharing patterns on students' discipline. The observation schedules were used for rating the school discipline.

### **Validity and Reliability of instruments**

Validity was checked through pre-testing of the instruments. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) noted that pre-testing helps to weed out any potential problems with the tool and rectify the difficulties. The pre testing allowed the researcher to gain feedback, identify areas of redundant questions so as to remove or restructure them. Kwale County was used for pre-testing because it had similar characteristics in terms of students' discipline management.

The reliability results showed that correlation for the students' questionnaire was 0.75 and that of the deputies was 0.8. The results concur with those of Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) a correlation coefficient ( $r$ ), of 0.7 is considered appropriate and hence reliable for collecting data. The correlation was computed to determine correlation coefficient which showed questionnaires were reliable to be used in the study.

### **Data analysis techniques**

Data cleaning of both quantitative and qualitative data obtained from questionnaires were done after collection of data and the filling of the interview guide. Data cleaning helps to establish questions that were answered and those that were not answered as well as those with little or no responses. Quantitative data obtained from closed-ended questionnaire items were coded, entered and computed using the Statistical package for social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse data. The findings were represented in tables. Qualitative data from principals were put in thematic categories while others were used in narrative form.

### **Instrument return rate**

From a total of 110 questionnaires administered to secondary school principals there was a 100% return rate, while out of the 110 questionnaires administered to deputy principals 80 questionnaires were returned which translated to 72.7% and out of 440 questionnaires administered to students 367 were returned translating to 83.4 % return rate. This is in line with the assertion by Bailey, (2008) that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. Based on these recommendations, the response rates of 100% 72.7% and 83.4 % respectively were rated as very good. The data collected was therefore capable of enabling the researcher to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion about the study.

### **Results and Discussion**

The study objective was to establish the influence of principals' information sharing types with students on their discipline in Kitui County. The findings indicate means for each of the 110 schools sampled for the study. The average mean on discipline was 2.96 and the average mean on information sharing was 3.44. The highest rated schools on discipline were 10 each with a mean of above 4.0 and 13 schools with means of above 4.0 on influence of principals information sharing. The study revealed that 101 schools (91.8 %) had higher means on information sharing by the principal and low means on discipline, this could imply that principals information sharing had no significant impact on student discipline and that there could be other factors that influenced discipline.

Some schools had same means on discipline but different means on information sharing for example schools number 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13 among others. This is expounded on table 1 below. This implied that although the level of information sharing mattered on impact of students discipline there could be other factors that influenced students' discipline. The results also show that in one of the schools the ratings for both discipline and information sharing were the same at 4.5.

**Table 1:** School means for discipline and on information sharing

Some schools with low discipline means and high means in information sharing			Some schools with same means on discipline and different means on information sharing		
School	Discipline (mean)	Information sharing (mean)	School	Discipline (mean)	Information sharing (mean)
1	4.5	4.7	1.	4.5	4.7
2	4.5	4.68	2.	4.5	4.68
3	4.5	4.58	3.	4.5	4.58
6	4.13	4.48	4.	4.5	4.5
7	4.13	4.43	6.	4.13	4.45
8	4.0	4.27	7.	4.13	4.43
9	3.88	4.28	9.	3.88	4.28
10	3.88	4.30	10.	3.88	4.30
11	3.75	4.32	13.	4.13	3.68
12	3.13	4.30	15.	3.88	3.58
18	3.25	3.60	16.	3.88	3.67
19	3.13	3.60			
20	2.88	3.27			
21	3.0	3.53			
22	2.88	3.30			
23	2.75	3.25			

**Table 2:** Students' and deputy principals' responses on principal information sharing with student on discipline

Statement	Respondent	Strong agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree
<b>Directive Sharing</b> - Information sharing helps control student behaviour hence improved discipline.	<b>Students</b>	195(53.1%)	142(38.7%)	17(4.6%)	13(3.5%)
	<b>Deputy principals</b>	42 (52.5 )	31(38.75%)	4 (5%)	3(3.75%)
<b>Strategic sharing</b> - Students are well informed about their school.	<b>Students</b>	217(59.1)	115(31.3%)	4(1.1%)	31(8.5%)
	<b>Deputy principals</b>	48 (60%)	25(31.25%)	4(5%)	3 (3.75%)
<b>Social sharing</b> - Information sharing enhances student discipline.	<b>Students</b>	168(45.8%)	173(47.1%)	15(4.1%)	11(3.0%)
	<b>Deputy principals</b>	37(46.25%)	38(47.5%)	4(5%)	1(1.25%)



**Table 3:** Principals' response on principal information sharing with student on student discipline

Statement	Often		Rarely	
	Frequency	Per cent	Frequency	Per cent
Information sharing helps control student behaviour hence improved discipline.	100	91.0	12	9.0
Students are well informed about their school.	98	89.1	20	10.9
Information sharing helps build trusting relationship enhances students discipline	86	78.2	24	21.8

N= 110

The study sought to identify from each category of respondents the influence of principals' information sharing had on students' discipline. The results from the respondents' are as shown in tables 2 and 3. The study revealed that 91.8 per cent of the students and 91.25 per cent of the deputy principals agreed that information sharing helps control students' behavior hence improved discipline. A majority of the principals 91.0 per cent also agreed that information sharing creates an understanding between the principal and students on discipline issues. This implies that the results from the student, Deputy Principals and principals concur that information sharing helps control students discipline. The study also revealed that 90.4 per cent of the students and 91.25 per cent of the deputy principals agreed that information sharing helped students get well informed about their school. The study also revealed that 92.9 per cent of the students and 93.75 per cent of the deputy principals agreed that information sharing enhances student discipline. It was also observed that 70.9 per cent of the principals agreed that information sharing helps the principal to receive feedback on how students view the school. This implied that students, deputy principals and principals all agreed that information sharing enhances student discipline. The research used the T-Test to compare the effects of principals' information sharing on students' discipline. The results from the group statistics showed that when information is shared there is a high effect on students' discipline at mean of 3.07 while the same effect is low when principals don't share information at a mean of 2.76. From the independent sample test the p-value of  $0.001 > 0.05$  hence this may imply the null hypothesis is retained and research hypothesis is rejected, that is there is a significance difference between the principals who shared information and those who never shared information on student discipline. The results were also replicated in the regression model and the correlation data with the p-value  $0.001 > 0.01$  level of significance on helping students control behavior hence student's improved discipline. This implies that students who we given information were able to improve their behaviour.

## Conclusion and recommendations

The study concludes that information sharing between the principal and the students had no effect on students' discipline but rather there were other factors such as being informed about the school, holding meetings, self-discipline, informed decision making, effective communication, cordial teacher –student relationship, effective supervision, motivated teachers and students, timely feedback ,responsible students, and students committed to academic work that would have made a difference in students' discipline. The study recommends that principals incorporate collaborative methods through involvement of the students, teachers, parents and other stakeholders to be effective.

This would help students express their views and vent their frustrations and such incidences would allow grievances concerning indiscipline to be aired out to both the teachers and the principals. The study also recommends that the principals should take into consideration of information sharing channels since this helps students to take control of their behaviour and that students are informed about their school hence creating an understanding between principal and students on discipline issues. That the principals should also hold meetings with students to help reduce misconceptions and also motivate students to have self-discipline since the root causes of the problems were discussed. The principal should create a trusting relationship allowing students to give views about their school and receiving feedback.

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