

**INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON  
STUDENTS' DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
MUKURWE-INI DISTRICT, KENYA**

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**A Research Project Submitted in Partial fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
award of a Degree in Masters of Education in Educational Administration**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other University.

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This research project has been submitted for registration with our approval as University Supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is in memory of my late brothers Duncan Wanjohi and Joseph Njuguna and is dedicated to my dad Patrick Muriithi and my mum, Mary Wairimu.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost is to give thanks to the Almighty God for giving me strength, mental and good health while undertaking this project. I humbly acknowledge, appreciate and wish to thank the University of Nairobi for sponsoring me fully in the entire course. I sincerely acknowledge good work done by my supervisors, Dr Grace Nyagah and Dr. Ursulla Okoth in guiding me in every step and sacrificing their valuable time to advise me in the entire project.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>BOG</b>	Board of Governors.
<b>DEO</b>	District Education Officer
<b>GOK</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>KCSE</b>	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
<b>KESI</b>	Kenya Educational Staff Institute
<b>MOEST</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>PTA</b>	Parents Teachers Association

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini district. Four objectives were formulated that sought to; establish the use of teachers' oral communication on student discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini district; to establish the use of written communication by teachers on students' discipline in Mukurweini district; establish the use of non verbal communication by teachers on student discipline in the same discipline, to determine the prevailing conditions that hinder effective communication towards student discipline. The study employed descriptive research design which is suitable in collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. The sample included 45 teachers and 360 students. Data were collected by the use of questionnaires administered personally through hand delivery. A pilot study was conducted in five schools which were not included in the final study. Reliability of the instruments was also done through the most common internal consistency measure known as Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), which indicates the extent to which a set of test items can be treated as measuring a single latent variable. The recommended value of 0.7 was used as a cut-off of reliabilities in the study. Findings indicated that holding of classroom meetings, use of school prefects, communication during assembly, use of guidance and counselling, use of rewards and incentives, encouraging members to pass information among themselves, holding of open forums, encouraging members to pass information among themselves are some of the communication strategies commonly used by teachers' in Mukurweini District on student's discipline. Majority of the teachers also indicated that they often used notice boards on student discipline. However, facial expression was rarely used on student discipline. Majority of the teachers 89% indicated that school category affects the way they communicate on the student discipline. The study results revealed that the category of the school, boys only, girls only and mixed for both boys and girls affect the way teachers' communicates on student discipline. The study also found that communication strategies with the least preferences for teachers on student discipline included the use of reward system, the use of eye contact and facial expression. According to the study, conditions which reduce effective communication ranged from distortion of information, language barrier to lack of proper mechanisms that ensures conducive environment for students to express themselves to their teachers. From the findings, it was concluded that requisite communication strategies are usually used by teachers in public secondary schools in Mukurweini district on student discipline and are able to influence the discipline of the students positively. Finally the study has suggested a similar study to be carried out in other districts in Kenya with other stakeholders like parents and B.O.G members being centre of focus as they also play an important role towards student discipline.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

Communication is the process of sending and receiving messages in order to share meanings. It involves two or more persons attempting to share their ideas, feelings, and attitudes (Galvin, 1994). According to Okumbe(2007) communication is the exchange of information and the transmission of knowledge. It is only when meaning is transmitted from one person to the other that information and ideas can be conveyed.

Communication is important to the existence of any society for without it no social structure can form or endure. Without communication no organized action is possible. Social systems can only form and endure if the participating persons are linked to each other by communication (Michael, 1992). Witherspoon and Wohlert (1996) state that communication is the process on which the initiation and maintenance of organizational change depends. The success of any change effort largely depends on how effectively the strategy for and the substance of the change is communicated to those who are targets of change.

Studies done emphasize that effective communication can enhance organizational outcomes. According to Pandey and Garnett ( 2006), communication influences perceptions and opinions about persons, communities, organizations, governments, and even society. In educational institutions communication is

usually key to the progress of many academic activities. It is through communication that the teachers are able to give instructions and even deliver lessons in classes. Communication is also important especially with regard of handling school discipline in schools.

According to Muyiera (2002), the form and way of communication used in a given school will affect the way people interact, and it will have an impact on the general atmosphere of the school, which will affect the general quality of instructions that the students receive. Communication helps to control the behavior of the teachers, students and non teaching staff. Through communication, the students are informed about their expected behavior within an educational organization. Likewise the consequences of deviant behavior are also specified and understood through communication (Okumbe, 2007).

However, even though the importance of communication to human life and organization has been emphasized quite a lot, Burke(1999) points out that many institutions do not pay attention to communication when planning and implementing change resulting in absenteeism, poor performance and indiscipline cases among students. Luthans (1989) in Achieng (2005) observes that organization ineffectiveness arises partly out of the difficulty in the exchange of information between the members concerned and the organization.

Communication has widely been used in the management of the student discipline. According to Kabandize (2004), communication is a strategy of

managing student discipline through sharing of views between students and administrators. Administration should let the students to know the dangers of indiscipline through talking. Discipline is about ways in which student behave towards each other and to their teachers (Overall & Sangster, 2003).

According to Okumbe (2007) discipline is the action by the management to enforce organizational standards. In an educational organizational, there are many standards or codes of behavior to which teachers, students and non teaching staff must adhere to. These standards however must be communicated to the concerned parties if appropriate behavior is to be realized. Nelson (2002) points out that appropriate behavior by the student is essential to the ability to attain successful education. He goes further to note that, lack of disciplined atmosphere may make it hard for teachers to teach effectively and impossible for learners to learn effectively.

Teachers have often played a significant role in controlling the behavior of students through use of communication. According to Nasibi (2003), teachers contribute to positive discipline through creating an atmosphere of trust and team work, respecting students as individuals with rights and sense of expression, being accessible to students, being role models to the student by being disciplined and participating in the formulation of rules.

According to Cowley (2001), a good teacher has an essential characteristic of managing student behavior to facilitate learning. This means that for a teacher to maintain desired discipline of the student, appropriate and effective communication strategies must be used so that the end desired result of the student discipline is realized. Cowley (2001) indicates that some teachers (perhaps all teachers) unintentionally contribute personally to their student misbehavior. He refers to these as “cardinal sins” which teachers must avoid at all cost. They include, rudeness, use of confrontation, being high tempered. This is because students’ often view their teachers as their role models and the way their teachers tend to behave is likely to be copied by the students.

The issue of student indiscipline is of global concern One of the serious problems facing education system in America schools is the issue of student indiscipline (Clarke, 2002).According to Clarke (2002), close to 50% of teachers in America leaving the teaching profession often does so due to student indiscipline. In handling student indiscipline in America, teachers are at restricted to limited alternative disciplinary measures. In India, there was also noted deteriorating student discipline (India Parenting PVT online Ltd, 2007). This report concluded that a lasting solution to the issue of student indiscipline would contribute greatly towards making schools to be more productive.



The decline in educational standards in South Africa is attributed to the schoolyard crime where teenage students often cause fatal school stabbings (Greenberg, 2006). The schools in Botswana are also not left out when it comes to the student indiscipline, for instance, acts of student indiscipline were the cause of the student deaths and others becoming blind after breaking into the science laboratory and consuming toxic ethanol and methanol (BOPA, July 6, 2006)

In the recent past, the Education system in Kenya has experienced wide ranging cases of student indiscipline emanating from breakdown in communication. For instance in 2001, (Wangai Commission/Republic of Kenya, 2001) on student discipline and unrests in secondary schools gave a report indicating that 250 schools were involved in various levels of serious unrests in secondary schools in the year 2001. The commission further established that among other issues, the cause of the student unrests was lack of clear channels of communication. Lack of freedom by the students to express themselves, developed mistrust and they therefore resorted to riot and disruptive behavior as a means of expressing themselves (Republic of Kenya, 2001). This is the rationale in which this study was based.

The use of communication strategies that are not adequate to influence student discipline by the teachers may contribute towards student misbehavior. Students' behavior worldwide is controlled through the schools code of conduct (Kindiki 2009). However in spite of the use of schools code of conduct to regulate

students' behavior most schools continue to experience students' indiscipline. In Mukurweini district, especially with the GoK of Kenya legal ban on corporal punishment in 2001, other forms of controlling students' behavior have been adopted.

Some of the methods being used by teachers on student discipline in Mukurweini District have been use of the prefect system, communication during assemblies, use of rewards as well as use of notice boards on student. The use of these modes of controlling student behavior requires the use of effective communication strategies if desired student discipline is to be realized. It is on this basis therefore that this study sought to examine the influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

According to Kindiki (2009) communication and student discipline often viewed as a contemporary problem may turn into a crisis if not checked. In dealing with cases of student indiscipline in schools, the Government of Kenya is currently implementing several measures aimed at curbing the various cases of indiscipline in learning institutions particularly the use of guidance and counseling units in all secondary schools (MOEST, 2005). The use of guidance and counseling to curb student indiscipline can however not be productive unless effective communication strategies are used.

There have been noted and reported cases of student indiscipline in Mukurweini district. For instance in 2004, about 300 students of Ngoru secondary school in Mukurweini, Nyeri district went on rampage and damaged school property including a science Laboratory (DEO's Office, 2013).

Over 450 students from Mukurweini Boys High School in Mukurweini district, went on rampage in 2012, after their girlfriends were blocked from seeing them during the parent's day held in the school. The students stormed out of the school and walked more than 40 kilometres to Nyeri demanding the transfer of their principal. They also complained that their principal was strict on them (DEO's Office, 2013). From this report, is very clear that the strictness of the Principal could have been seen probably in the enforcement of the school rules either through communication or other forms of enforcing discipline.

Kirimi (2000) recommended the need to undertake studies on effective communication modes in secondary school. Studies conducted on communication and discipline reveal that very little has been done especially with regard to involvement of teachers. Chege (2005) conducted a study on possible communication barriers and their effects on performance in Kiambu district, Kenya. Asugo (2005) conducted a study on the communication strategies used by head teachers in the management of public secondary schools in Nyamira. Muyeira (2002) also conducted a study on communication strategies used by headteachers and their effect on academic performance in Cherangany Division, Kenya. A close look of the above studies reveals that the influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline are not covered yet teachers play a significant role in the maintenance of student discipline. This study filled this gap by establishing the influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline in public secondary schools in public schools Mukurweini district.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline in public schools in Mukurweini district.

#### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The objectives of the study were:-

- i. To establish the use of teachers' oral communication on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District.
- ii. To establish the use of teachers' written communication on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District
- iii. To establish the use of teachers' non verbal communication on students' discipline in public schools in Mukurweini District
- iv. To determine the conditions that may hinder effective communication towards students' discipline.
- v. To establish how teachers' communication strategies can be improved in maintaining discipline.

#### **1.5 Research questions**

The following research questions guided the study

- i. To what extent do the teachers' use oral communication on students' discipline in public schools Mukurweini District?
- ii. To what extent do the teachers' use written communication on students' discipline in public schools Mukurweini District?
- iii. To what extent do the teachers use non verbal communication on student discipline in public schools Mukurweini District?

- iv. Which conditions hinders effective communication between teachers and students?
- v. How can teachers' communication strategies be improved for development of student discipline?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study may be of great use to the teachers for teachers may use the findings of this study to improve communication strategies in addressing discipline. Kenya Educational Staff Institute (KESI) may use this information to identify the areas that needs to be addressed when offering in service courses to the members of the teaching staff. The study findings may also be used by Teacher Training Colleges as well as Universities in developin programmes that can equip teachers with skills in communication stragies that may help in the management of the student discipline. The findings of the study may also be useful to future researchers as well as a source of knowledge about the influence of communication strategies on discipline.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

Limitation is an aspect that influence the results negatively but of which the researcher has no control (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Teachers' responses were affected by fear and suspicion that the information they provided could be used against them by policy makers. Students were also uneasy about their

identity being revealed especially when commenting about their teachers' communication strategies on discipline. To counter these limitations, confidentiality of the information was assured that the information would be used for the academic purposes only.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

The study was carried out in Mukurweini district. It was confined only to public secondary schools leaving out private schools in Mukurweini district. This is because methods used in the management of student discipline in private secondary schools may not be the same as those that are used in public secondary schools. The study was limited to teachers of the public secondary schools as well as students of the public schools because means of addressing student discipline used by teachers in private schools may not be the same as for those in public schools.

### **1.9 Basic assumptions of the study**

This study was based on the following assumptions.

- i. That communication breakdown existed between teachers and students in secondary schools and this affected student discipline.
- ii. Teachers were aware of their role in the maintenance of student discipline through use of communication.
- iii. The respondents in the study would give accurate response to the instruments of research used in the study.

### **1.10 Definition of the significant terms**

The following are definitions of significant terms within the context of the study:

**Communication strategy** refers to a method of presenting information and issues in an order that people will understand and respond to them.

**Discipline** refers to the action taken by the management to enforce organizational standards thus, doing the right thing, in the right manner and at the right place.

**Non verbal communication** refers to the process of conveying a message without speaking or writing

**Public school** refers to a secondary school managed by the government and which offers basic education.

**Student** refers to a learner from secondary school onwards and who attends an educational institution.

**Teachers** refers teacher or schoolteacher is a person who provides education for the learners or the students.

**Verbal communication** refers to communication that usually occurs with the help of the spoken word

**Written communication** refers to the type of verbal communication that is expressed in form of writing.



### **1.11 Organization of the study**

The research study has five chapters explaining what the study was all about, why the study is worth doing, how it was conducted and the major findings, discussions, conclusions and recommendations emanating from the findings.

It is structured as follows:

Chapter one comprises of the introduction to the study and has several sub-sections such as; Background to the study, statement of the problems, purpose/objectives of the study, significance of the study, theoretical framework, research methods, limitations and delimitations of the study, organization of the study and definition of terms. Chapter two contains literature review relevant for the study. This is based on the research problem and contains relevant pieces of literature on the concept of communication and discipline that have been written and published.

Chapter three; provides a description of how the study was done It has a separate section describing the research design, target population and sampling procedures, data collection and the analytical techniques used. Chapter 4 comprises of research findings; comprises data presentation, analysis and discussions

Chapter 5 has the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter focused on literature review and it has the introduction, concept of communication, modes of communication for effective discipline, ways of improving communication, conditions hindering effective communication, the concept of discipline, summary of the review literature, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

#### **2.2 The concept of communication**

Communication has been defined as the transmission of information and meaning from one individual or group to another (Guffey', 2000). Adair (1997) views communication as a process of exchanging meaning, that is, the deliberate meaning that one person plans to relay must be received by the second person without variation, failure to which there is lack of communication or there miscommunication. On the same line of thought, Daft (cited in Jennifer and Kerry, 2006) views communication as a process by which there is exchange of information between two or more people usually with the aim of motivating or influencing behavior. In defining communication Hanna (2005) splits general communication as an interactive process which should result in some action and internal communication being all formal and informal communication that internally takes place within an organization.

Communication is important to all phases of the management by every individual within the system for it helps in directing and leading any system (Koontz & O'Donnell, 2005). McFarland (1994) concurs with the above when he observes that communication is a central element in all aspects of life.

According to Lesikar (1999), communication is the ingredient which makes an organization possible. A school is an organization, therefore the aspect of communication in organizations does not rule out schools from the discussion. However, for communication to play an important role in any organization, it must be effective. According to Merrihue(1980), effectiveness in communication is” any initiated behavior on the part of the sender which conveys desired message to the receiver and causes desired response behavior from the receiver”. Communication also becomes effective only when there is a feedback. Feedback refers to a response from someone who has received a message. Feedback plays a very important role in helping the communicator to know whether his or her message has been received in the intended form and if it was not, to repeat, elaborate or explain the message once more (Hoy & Miskel,1998).

Tubs and Moss (2006) observes that communication is effective when the stimulus as initiated and intended by the sender, or source, corresponds closely to the stimulus, as it is perceived and responded to by the receiver. In a school setting, effective communication modes are particularly important when handling or addressing issues of indiscipline. The use of proper communication strategies

by teachers may therefore contribute towards minimizing indiscipline cases in schools.

Okumbe (2007) asserts that communication plays the role of controlling the behavior of teachers, students and non teaching staff. This is achieved when communication is used to induct teachers and other members of the teaching staff to various aspects of their jobs and employment regulations. Through this role, communication is also used to inform the students of their expected behavior and consequences of deviant behavior. Secondly, communication is used to motivate teachers, students and other workers in an educational organization. They are informed of what is to be done, how well they are performing and what can be done to make the tasks be done well. Communication is also used in decision making and expression of emotions (Whitetaker & Zoul, 2008).

According to Aberg (cited in Lisa and Christina, 2003) communication in schools serves four roles namely, regulating, persuading, informing and integrating. Church (1996) noted that much as teachers know communication is vital to their success in communicating student discipline, communication is often taken for granted.

According to Church (1996), some teachers ignore the communication processes that exist in the immediate school environment as well as those that are prevalent symmetrically across the school as an organization. This is despite the knowledge

that the ability to communicate will help the teachers coordinate and collaborate school activities and actions in more effective and efficient manner.

Katz and Kahn (cited in Church, 1996) state that communication is the most important element of an organization because without it modern organizations would not exist as they are currently known to exist. This view is supported by Hargie and Tourish (cited in McAdam and Henderson, 2003 and Philip and Finbarr, 2002) who assert that the quality of communication in an organization is a crucial variable when determining the organization's success.

The importance of communication will never change. This is because communication will always be the best method of holding all the functions, groups, individuals, and processes together; it is the organizational glue (Church, 1996). Schools are consistently formulating strategies to cope with student indiscipline. What some schools do not pay attention to, is the fact that teachers communication on the subject of discipline can determine the success or failure of communicating discipline (Barrett, 2002). According to Kotter (2002) teachers fail because they do not communicate effectively.

### **2.3 Modes of communication used in addressing student discipline**

There are three modes of communication that teachers use to address discipline. These are Oral communication, Written Communication and Non-verbal Communication (Campbell 1983). Oral mode of communication usually occurs with the help of the spoken word Oral mode of communication can effectively be 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 for example written communication (Fielding, 2006)

However, according to Griff (2006), Oral mode of communication has shortcomings of the message being misunderstood, as a mode of communication that requires a good speaker otherwise it will not be meaningful as well as lacking permanent record of what has been said.

Oral communication is used by teachers in school in classroom when teaching as well as in school assemblies to emphasize to the students on the importance of adhering to the school rules so as to maintain discipline within the school. The advantage of this method is that there is immediate feedback as teachers are able to note the reactions of the student whenever a certain disciplinary issue is addressed.

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

Written communication also provides a permanent record that can be preserved for years. In an institution, students get their messages on how they are expected to behave through their notices and suggestion boxes. School rules that are provided to the students on joining secondary schools are usually expressed through written mode of communication. Written mode of Communication however has its own limitations. For instance, written communication is slow and time consuming, has no immediate feedback and it is only meant for literate people (Dean, 2012).

Nonverbal communication is the process of conveying a message without speaking or writing. According to Fielding (2006) more than verbal communication, nonverbal communication is the common most 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 is non-verbal

elements involved which may send a different message from the words spoken depending on the speaker.

Similarly, written texts have non-verbal elements. Apart from what is written, readers can get substantial information about the writer of a message more so from the handwriting style, spatial arrangement of words and physical layout of the page (Poyatos, 2002)

Non verbal communication is very influential in determining the message to be communicated (Lewis, 2007). It can convey the intended or unintended message depending on the interpretation of the observer. This makes it very important for people to pay attention on their body behaviors bearing in mind that these behaviors communicate about them. However, it is imperative to mention that non-verbal cues differ depending on culture of people (Nelson & Quick, 2003).

According to Draft and Lengel (2005) there are many factors that can influence teachers choosing the right channel to communicate. One such influence is media richness. Media is rich if it has the capacity to carry large volumes of data and if it can convey meaning. (Draft and Lengel, 2005) further argue that the richness of a channel can be looked at by determining how it provides substantial understanding of the message and how it reduces message ambiguity. Generally oral communication (face to face) is considered richer than written communication due to its ability to carry larger loads of information and for its ability to allow instant clarification of any message ambiguity. Teachers typically



select the most appropriate channel that matches their message content, communication requirement and the perceived task of communication (Heckman and Karim, 2005).

The second factor that can influence the choice of a communication channel is the social influence; this is because all meaning is socially constructed. According to Schmitz and Fulk (2005) communication media choice and use that are subject to social influence, may be subjectively rationalized. Thus communication is not always aimed at maximizing efficiency and may be designed to preserve and create ambiguity for strategic ends.

Gender has been seen as an influence when choosing a communication channel, with systematic differences emerging in choice, norms and expectations of a communication process (Mary, 2001). The school's structure has a significant impact on the communication and strategy implementation process. The structure may shape the type of formal communication channels that an organization adopts to communicate students discipline. The school's structure and its impact can facilitate communication or form a barrier to communication which can have a positive and negative influence on students behavior (Litteljohn and Peng, 2001).

### **2.3.1 Elements of communication.**

There are several elements that makes communication process to be a success. The first element of a communication is the message. The message contains the content of information to be communicated or to be passed across.

The second element is the medium. This is the channel in which the message after it is encoded goes through. The medium could be verbal, written or non verbal medium.

The third element of a communication is the sender or the source. The sender is usually the source of information to be communicated. In a school situation, the source could either be teacher or the student.

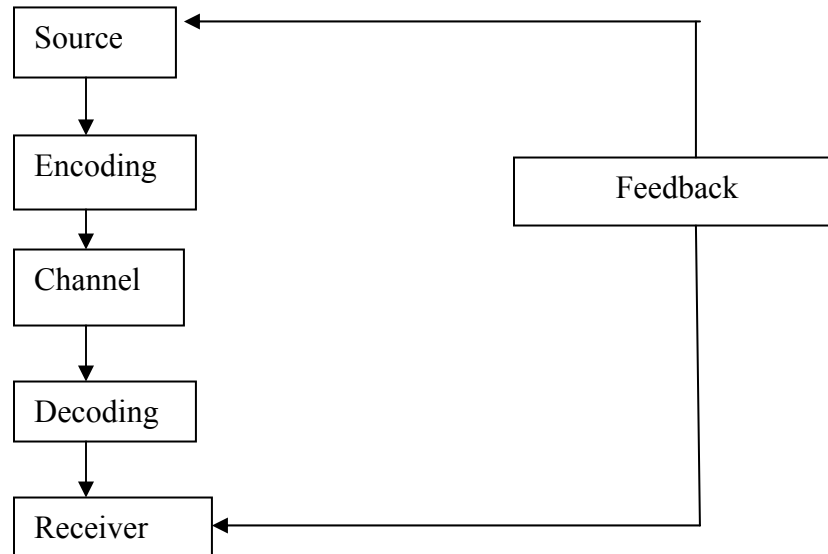
The receiver is the fourth component. This is the destination where message is decoded. The recipient interpretes and makes sense of the message.

Feedback is the fifth element. This is the response the receiver gives back after decoding the intial message.

### **2.3.2 The process of communication and elements involved**

A description of the communication process and the elements involved is illustrated in the figure 2.1 below

**Figure 2.1: The process of communication**



Adopted from Robbins (1988:99)

## **2.4 The concept of discipline**

According to American Heritage Dictionary, the word discipline refers to training that is expected to produce a specified character or pattern of behavior. Wapedia (2010) defines discipline as applied to the punishment that is the consequence of breaking the rules in a school.

According to Okumbe (1999), there are seven principles of discipline which include, prior knowledge of the rules and regulations in a school, application of disciplinary actions immediately after infraction, consistency applied, objectivity, disciplinary action should be impersonal, avoiding entrapment and allowing right

of appeal. In all these principle, teachers' communication is significant if the desired results are to be realized.

There are two types of discipline namely preventive and corrective (Brandy & Forton, 2011). Preventive discipline refers to the administrative action taken by the management to encourage members to follow the laid down rules and regulations to avoid infractions and stimulate the students to meet the schools expectations. Corrective discipline refers to the actions taken by administration following an infraction of a rule in order to discourage further infringement of the rule.

The main goals of a school discipline are to ensure the safety of staff and students and to create a conducive environment for teaching and learning (Moles, 1989). For these goals to be realized teachers communication with regard to discipline must be effective. Okumbe (1999) gives two opposing views of discipline known as Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y assumptions. Theory X assumptions views discipline negatively and refer to those educational managers who look at discipline as punishment only. It is exercised to both deter and retribute the offenders. Theory Y views discipline positively as a process of encouraging workers to move uniformly towards meeting educational objectives by aiming to inculcate voluntary self discipline among all members.

According to Cotton (2003), punishment is effective if it commensurate with the offence. Preventive actions are methods aimed at preventing situations for student misconduct. This method requires teachers' ability to prevent disruptions in the first place. The behavior modification (reward) methods involves providing reinforcement for instance observing and commenting positively on a good behavior (Cotton, 2003).

## **2.5 Conditions hindering effective communication on student discipline**

The first step in making communication effective is by recognizing barriers or prevailing Conditions to effective communication. A communication barrier refers to anything that filters, blocks or distorts the message or the message during the process of "encoding – sending-decoding" (Longest, 2000).

There are numerous barriers to effective communication. One barrier to effective communication is the language used in delivering the content of a message (Adam and Henderson, 2003). In a world where word and meanings they create matter a lot it is important for teachers not to treat language as simplistic and uncritical (Philip and Finbarr, 2002). Effective communication is further challenged by differences in perception and languages. Students will perceive the school environment differently and will react to messages differently based on these

perception. It's therefore important for the sender of a message to pay attention to important details that is being communicated (Thill and Bovee, 1999).

Okumbe (2007) observes that, distortion, filtering, omission, selective perceptions, timeliness and language as some of the barriers of communication. In an educational institution, distortion occurs when there is an alteration of the message as it passes from one point to another. It can arise as a result of imprecise language, misinterpretation of the message and even social distance between the sender and the receiver. Filtering presents itself when a sender manipulates the information so that the message can be received more favorably by the receiver. People may also omit part of the message for either fear of consequences or inability to grasp the entire message, this distortion is referred to as omission. Selective perception occurs when receivers receives information based on their needs, motivations, experience and background while timeliness distortion occurs when transmission of the message is not well timed (Koontz & Weihrich, 2006). According to Nzuve (1999), insufficient communication is another barrier that hinders effective communication. This usually occurs when the sender neither arouses interests nor meets the needs of the intended audience.

According to a paper submitted for Bureau of Educational Research Seminar, Wanga (1987) points out that poor communication accounts for 30 percent of strikes in schools. This inturn leads to a drastic effect on performance as it causes confusion,mistakes and wastages.

A study done by Castuita (1982) on the training needs of the secondary school principals revealed that competence of the headteachers in open staff communication is very important for school administration. The same will apply to the teachers especially when dealing with students on discipline related issues.

O' Relly & Pondy (1979) in Achieng (2005) state that interpersonal communication is affected by four main factors. These are: sender mobility, sender trust of the receiver, receiver's influence over the sender, aspirations and norms & group sanctions to which the sender or the receiver belong.

A study done by Chege (2005) on possible communication barriers and their effects on performance in schools in Kiambu District revealed that communication barriers for both the students and the teachers wasted time in the accomplishment and attainment of the school objectives. However, this study only considered the barriers to effective communication and not the influence of teachers' communication strategies on student's discipline in Mukurweini District.

## **2.6 Ways of improving teachers' communication strategies**

Recognizing that barriers to effective communication do exist is the first step in improving and ensuring effective communication. Longest et al (2000), provides several guidelines which can be used in overcoming barriers. Receivers and senders must ensure that attention is given to their message and that adequate time is devoted to listening what is being communicated. Secondly, there should be free flow of information.

According to Bakhda (2004), conditions to effective communication can be solved through sending messages effectively and listening to messages attentively. For this to happen, the sender has to increase effectiveness of the message, setting communication goals before communicating , using appropriate language and even practicing empathetic communication.

Conditions to effective communication may be overcome by setting communication goals. One should know what the message is intended to accomplish. Through use of appropriate language, improving sender's credibility, encouraging feedback as well as developing trustworthy climate. Similarly, listening to messages attentively through paying attention to messages sent, avoiding evaluative judgment or premature judgment helps the receiver to listen to the total meaning of the sender's message (Nzuve, 1999)



Effective communication may also be realized by avoidance of non verbal communication. The use of non verbal communication may confuse parties intended to receive the message when the sender or listener does not care about the message. Focusing on active listening may also help a lot in improving communication. Rather than focusing on how to reply to the person when reading or listening a message, effective communicators actively listen first and then formulate their response (Edmund, 2010)

Massie (1964) in Achieng (2005) classsified communication problems in three basic groups..

- i. Technical problems: These problems are associated with how accurately the symbols have been transmitted. When the message is clear,less information is put across.
- ii. Semantic problems: This refers to the extent to which the symbols convey the desired meaning. The receiver should get the message from the sender, the way the sender intended the message to get to the receiver.
- iii. Effectivness: This is the extent to which the message affects the conduct of the recipient. This is well seen through feedback.

Mbithi (1974) in Achieng( 2005) gives useful rule in official communication that can work towards improving student discipline as “ Be simple and straight

forward in your language. Make sure that the words used are acceptable to the other person. Always choose your words carefully before you speak”

To achieve successful communication, Fulmer (1983) in Asugo(2002) observes that first, the message must be straight forward & logical, that inclusion of many ideas in a single sentence can lead to lack of clarity. Secondly, the entire message ought to be complete, unnecessary parts must be omitted. Thirdly, one should be brief and to the point and lastly, abstractions must and should be avoided.

## **2.7 Summary of reviewed literature**

Okumbe (1999) defines communication as the exchange of information and transmission of meaning. He explains the importance of communication as that of motivating teachers, students and other workers in an education institution and controlling the behavior of teachers, students and non teaching staff members.. Possible prevailing conditions to effective communication have also been discussed such as insufficient communication, filtering, distortion and selective perception. Strategies of overcoming such barriers have also been covered, for instance, selecting appropriate media, encouraging feedback, improving sender’s credibility (Nzuve, 1999).

Several studies have found an association between student perceptions of teacher–student relations and discipline related outcomes. In schools where students perceive positive teacher–student relations in the form of caring and interest in

students, suspension rates are lower (Wu et al. 1982) and students feel safer although a recent study found that student beliefs about teacher caring and fairness actually increased the odds of in-school suspension (Hinojosa 2008). Other studies, drawing on Hirshi's social control theory, have found school attachment, as measured by student relationships with teachers, to be inversely related to school misconduct and delinquency (Jenkins 1997; Payne, Gottfredson, and Gottfredson 2003).

In her study focusing on teacher influence, Hallinan (2008) finds that students who believe their teachers care about them, respect them, and praise them are more likely to like school, which has been linked to lower incidents of deviant behavior (Dornbusch et al. 2001). In addition, a recent study examining the relationship between student beliefs about teachers and likelihood of suspension found that students who believed that their teachers held high expectations for them had a significantly lower likelihood of in-school and out-of-school suspension (Hinojosa 2008).

It from the point of view of the inconsistency of the findings, content and geographical location of the reviewed studies that the researcher intends to study the influence of teachers' communication modes on students' discipline in public schools Mukurweini District.

The authors have established that lack of clear channels of communication and ineffective communication in schools may lead to student indiscipline in secondary schools. It from the point of view of the inconsistency of the findings, content and geographical location of the reviewed studies that the researcher intends to study the influence of teachers' communication modes on students' discipline in public schools Mukurweini District.

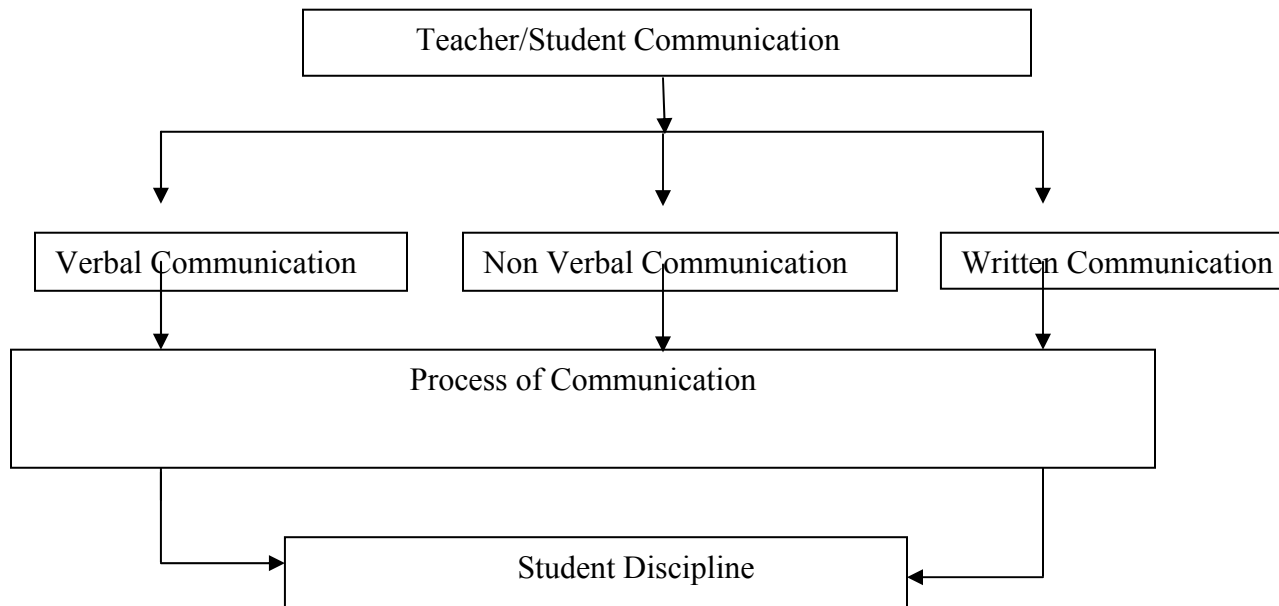
## **2.8 Theoretical Frame Work**

This study was based on the Banes Network Theory (1954). Generally, Network Analysis focuses on the relationship between people instead of characteristics of people. The relationships comprise the feelings people have for each other. Through the use of network analysis some structural features can be distinguished and analyzed, for example, formal and non formal communication patterns in an organization. In this theory, special attention is given to specific aspects of communication patterns such as communication channels, communication load as perceived by the parties concerned, communication style as well as effectiveness of the flow of communication. The theory relates well to the study because the relationship between teachers and students widely depends on the communication patterns that the teachers use on the students. This in effect leads to the desired discipline from the students.

## 2.9 Conceptual framework on networks for teachers to students

Figure 2. provides below provides a conceptual framework on the communication networks for teachers to students. Teacher to student communication on discipline be verbal, non verbal or written communication.

**Figure 2. 2: Conceptual framework on networks for teachers to students**



The study conceptualizes that the use of correct mode of communication by teachers in addressing student discipline will give desired results depending on the purpose situation teachers are dealing with. Therefore teachers should choose the correct mode of communication depending on the purpose of communication. Teachers use verbal mode of communication in addressing student discipline in the assemblies, through open forums, use of guidance and counseling and even

through holding of class meetings. They also use nonverbal communication especially facial expression and body movement. Written mode of communication is usually used by teachers when they use notice boards to let the students know how they are supposed to conduct themselves and also when writing students' reports.

To maximize benefits of a communication process, teachers must adopt both planned and controlled approaches to communication (Heckman and Karim, 2005). This may be done by teachers evaluating the communication channels' appropriateness, effectiveness, and usability from their communicators' point of view (Heckman & Karim 2005).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter comprises the research design and details of the target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, instrument reliability and validity, data collection and data analysis procedure.

#### **3.2 Research design**

According to Orodho and Kombo (2003), a research design is a plan showing how the problem of investigation will be solved. The study used descriptive research design. This is a method where data is collected by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals.

The method can be used in collecting information on people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issue (Orodho & Kombo,2003). In this study, questionnaires were administered to the public secondary school teachers as well as to the students to state their perceptions on teacher's communication strategies and their effects on student's discipline. Descriptive research design allowed the researcher to collect opinions from the respondents to facilitate descriptions of the teacher's communication strategies as they occur and their effects of student discipline.

### **3.3 Target Population**

A population is a complete set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The target population consisted of 29 public secondary schools that are 25 mixed schools, two boys' schools and two girls schools (DEO's Office, Mukurweini District 2013). The total population included 348 teachers and 3560 form two, three and four students.

### **3.4 Sample size and Sampling procedures**

In order to provide an accurate and reliable description of the characteristics of a given population, it is usually not necessary to study the entire population. In most cases, studying a sample is sufficient enough (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). According to Orodho and Kombo (2002) sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. Statements about the samples should also be true of the population. However, the larger the size, the smaller the sampling error. Since this study could not cover all the 29 secondary schools in Mukurweini District, a sample was selected to take part in the study. The 29 secondary schools had a total of 3550 in Form Two, Three and Four students and 348 teachers. Form ones were left out as they had not been in school for a long time.



According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a minimum sample of ten percent to thirty percent of a larger population is recommended for a study. Mukurweini District has 29 Public Secondary schools. Out of the 29 secondary schools, the researcher targeted 15 schools. A sample of 356 students from the 15 schools who represents 10% percent of each category was used. The researcher used an equal number of students in each class. Purposive sampling was used to ensure equal representation of gender.

Class teachers were purposively chosen from the strata of the three classes from where the students were selected which is Form Two, Three and Four in each school.

Table 3.1 provides the sample size used in the study from each of the school category. Out of the 25 mixed schools in Mukurweini district, a sample of 11 was chosen as the sample size, the two boys school and the two girls schools participated in the study, making a total of 15 schools.

**Table 3. 1: Sampling size**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Targeted</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Students</b>
Mixed	25	11	33	264
Boys	2	2	6	48
Girls	2	2	6	48
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>360</b>

### **3.5 Research instruments**

The researcher used questionnaire in the study which is considered to be the most suitable instrument for descriptive research design. According to Orodho (2005), questionnaires require less time, are less expensive and permits collection of data from a wide geographical area. Under this research instrument, respondents fill in answers in written form and the researchers collect the forms with complete information. (Orodho and Kombo, 2003). In the study, two types of questionnaires were used, teachers' questionnaires and students' questionnaire.

Teachers' questionnaires were divided into 3 parts. The first part had a question on the background information such as age, gender, academic qualification, professional experience. The second part consisted of the modes of communication frequently used in the school by the teachers and how often they are used. Part three consisted of questionnaires on the effectiveness of the modes of communication used by the teachers on the student discipline.

Student's questionnaires consisted of 2 parts. The first part of the questionnaire required the students' to fill background information such as age, gender. The second part had questionnaires on the strategies of communication frequently used by the teachers' on addressing students' discipline and the frequency in which such mode is used.

### **3.5.1 Validity of the instrument**

Validity is a measure of how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). According to Orodho (2004), to ensure content validity, a researcher needs to first appraise the instrument. Validity is used to check whether questionnaire is measuring what it purports to measure (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2010). Validity is the strength of our conclusions, inferences or propositions. More formally, Patton (2009) define it as the best available approximation to the truth or falsity of a given inference, proposition or conclusion.

A pilot study was conducted. Five schools randomly selected, five teachers and twenty five students outside the sample population, participated in the pilot study. Pilot study helped to highlight items in the research instrument that are ambiguous and inappropriate in order to improve quality and validity.

### **3.5.2 Reliability of the instrument**

Reliability is the consistency of a set of measurement items while validity indicates that the instrument is testing what it should (Cronbach, 1951). Reliability is the consistency of the measurement, or the degree to which an instrument measures the same way each time it is used under the same condition with the same subjects. In short, it is the probability of your measurement. A

measure is considered reliable if a person's score on the same test given twice is similar. It is important to remember that reliability is not measured, it is estimated.

Reliability does not, however, imply validity because while a scale may be measuring something consistently, it may not necessarily be what it is supposed to be measuring. The researcher used the most common internal consistency measure known as Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). It indicates the extent to which a set of test items can be treated as measuring a single latent variable (Cronbach, 1951). The study obtained the recommended reliability value of 0.7 on both instruments of the study which was used as a cut-off of reliabilities.

### **3.6 Data collection procedures**

The researcher sought permission from the National Council for Science and Technology through University of Nairobi. The permit was shown to the District Education Officer (DEO) in Mukurweini District. After the permission was granted, the researcher applied to the secondary schools in the district through their head teachers to be allowed to use their institutions for the study. After permission was granted by the authority of various schools in the district, questionnaires were hand delivered to the respondents.

### **3.7 Data analysis technique**

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis was used in the study. According to Nachmias and Nachmias (2006), qualitative analysis involves obtaining detailed information about phenomena being studied and establishing patterns and trends from the gathered information. Quantitative analysis is based on numerical measurement of specific aspects of a given phenomena (Thomas, 2003). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data quantitatively by frequencies and percentages.

The open ended question provided a qualitative data. Qualitative data content analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR:**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION**

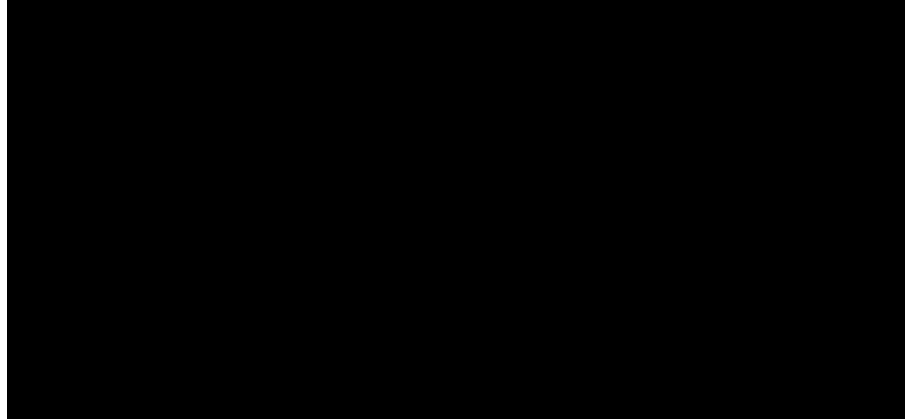
#### **4.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents findings of the study. Specifically, the data analysis was in line with specific objectives where patterns were investigated, interpreted and implications drawn on them. This chapter focuses on the following: response rate of the respondents, demographic data of the respondents, educational levels for the teachers, teachers response on communication strategies used to communicate on student discipline, students' responses on the use of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline, school category and communication and the ranking of communication strategies used by teachers' on student discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini district.

#### **4.2 Response rate**

From the data collected, in total, out of the 405 questionnaires administered, 324 were filled and returned, which represents 80% response rate. This response rate is considered satisfactory to make conclusions for the study. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observed that a 50% response rate is adequate, 60% good and above, while 70% rated very good. This collaborates with Bailey (2000) assertion that a response rate of 50% is adequate, while a response rate greater than 70% is very good. This implies that based on this assertion, the response rate in this case of 70% is therefore very good. Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1 Respondent composition**



### **4.3 Demographic data**

This section presents the demographic data of the respondents namely teachers and the students. The section presents the demographic data of the teachers followed by that of the students.

### **4.4 Demographic information of the teachers.**

The demographic data of the teachers focused on their gender, academic qualification, age and duration of service as teachers. To establish their gender, teachers were asked to indicate their gender. This is represented in Table 4.1

**Table 4. 1: Gender of the teachers**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Teachers</b>	21	10	31

Table 4.1 tabulates the gender of the teachers. Out of the 31 sampled responses from the teachers, 21 were male and 10 were female representing 67.7% male and 32.3% female.

#### **4.5 Gender of the students.**

The study also sought to establish the gender of the students and this is represented in the Table 4.2

**Table 4. 2: Gender of the students**

	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
Students	155	138	293
<b>Totals</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>324</b>

From the study findings 155 (53%) of the students were male students while 138 (43%) were female students. The findings of the study indicated that majority of the student selected for the study were male students.



**Table 4. 3: Age bracket of the teachers**

Table 4.3 represents the distribution of teachers by age..

		<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Valid	Below 40	6	19.4
	41-45	14	46.6
	36-45	7	22.5
	51-55	2	8.9
	Over 56	1	2.6
<b>Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>100.0</b>

In this study, the respondents were asked to state the age category they were in. Out of the targeted 31 respondents, 14 (46.6%) of the respondents were between 41-45 years of age, 7 (22.5%) of the respondents were between 36-45 years of age, 6 (19.4%) of the respondents were below 40 years of age, 2 (8.9%) of them were between 51-55 years of age.

#### **4.6 Education level of the Teachers**

Teachers were also asked to indicate their highest level of educational level. This was meant to assist the researcher to know whether the educational level of the

teacher influences the communication strategy they use on student discipline.

Table 4.4 represents educational levels for teachers.

**Table 4. 4: Education Level for Teachers**

<b>Educational level of teachers</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Diploma	10	32.3
Bachelor's level	16	51.6
Masters	5	16.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

On education level of the teachers, Table 4.4 indicates that majority of the teachers (51.6%) indicated they had reached bachelor's level as their highest level of education while 32.3% indicated they are Diploma holders.

#### **4.7. Strategies of communication used by teachers' on students' discipline**

Table 4.5, tabulates communication strategies used to communicate on student discipline according to the teachers.

**Table 4. 5: Teachers’ responses on communication strategies used by teachers’ on student discipline.**

Statements Discussion	4	3	2	1	Mean	Std dev
Communication during school assembly	50	12	5	5	3.7	0.18
Encouraging members to pass information among themselves	28	0	40	32	2.1	0.22
Using rewards & incentives	17	0	43	40	2.2	0.05
Guidance and Counseling sessions	43	29	14	0	3.6	0.16
Holding Classroom meetings by class teacher	81	0	19	0	4.8	0.32
Using School Prefect body	62	10	29	0	4.6	0.24
Holding open forums	71	10	0	19	1.9	0.28

Majority of the respondents indicated that they always hold classroom meetings and communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.8; also majority

indicated that they use school prefect body always to communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.6. Further, the respondents indicated they use communication during school assembly and communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.7. The respondents also indicated that they use guidance and counseling sessions and communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.6. Lastly, the respondents indicated that they rarely use rewards & incentives, encouragement of members to pass information among themselves and holding open forums to communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 2.2, 2.1 and 1.9 respectively.

From the table, it can also be deduced that teachers prefer the following oral communication strategies

1. Holding open forums
2. Holding Classroom meeting by the class teacher
3. Communication during assembly
4. Using Prefect body

The methods of oral communication that the teachers gives the least preferences are:

1. Using rewards and incentives
2. Guidance and counseling
3. Encouraging members to pass information among themselves.

This is in agreement with the views of Kabandize (2004) who found holding classroom meetings, the use of school prefect body, communication during school assembly, guidance and counseling sessions featuring prominently as strategies of managing student discipline just as Kyamulabi (2006) later did. This finding implies that oral communication should therefore be used on students' discipline in schools to communicate discipline. Using school prefect body and holding classroom meetings by class teachers are the most predominant of these strategies as opposed to punishment which was most predominant in the pioneer schools up to 1970s.

According to Hand (2010) teachers interact with students in classrooms where authority relations are established and where most disciplinary referrals are initiated. Gregory and Weinstein (2008) suggest that classrooms are an important arena for the production of student opposition and resistance. Lee and Croninger (1996) suggest that teachers play an important role in shaping students' school experiences and behavior.

These findings implies that 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 for example written co

#### 4.8 Use of written communication

Table 4.6 tabulates the findings on the extent to which written communication is used to communicate on students' discipline.

**Table 4. 6: Use of written communication**

Table 4.6 presents teacher' responses on the teachers' use of written communication on student discipline.

<b>Written Communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
Using notice board	0	19	81	0	3.8	0.32
Students' reports	0	10	29	62	3.6	0.24

From the study findings, majority of the respondents indicated that they always use notice board to communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.8 also the respondents indicated that they always students' reports to communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.6.

From the table, it can further be deduced that majority of the teachers had a preference of using notice board as a written communication strategy on student discipline. This can perhaps be explained out of the reason that, a notice board is

more accessible to the majority of the students and hence information on discipline communicated through this communication strategy is likely to get to a large group of students as compared to the use of the student reports.

#### 4.9 Non verbal communication

The study sought to find out the extent of use of non verbal communication strategies to communicate on student discipline. Table 4.7 represents teachers' responses on the use of teachers' non verbal communication strategies on student discipline.

**Table 4. 7: Non verbal communication**

<b>Non Verbal Communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std DEV</b>
Facial expressions & Body Movement	0	0	38	62	2.1	0.26

Majority of the selected teachers indicated that they rarely use facial expressions and body movement to communicate on student discipline as shown by a mean of 2.1.

#### **4.9.1 Teachers' responses on what they do to promote free flow of information to students when addressing discipline?**

Teachers were asked what they do to promote free flow of information to students when addressing discipline. Majority of the teachers stated that they ensure they use appropriate language and listen to students attentively and avoiding evaluative judgment or premature judgment.

Also majority of the teachers indicated that recognizing that barriers to effective communication do exist is the first step in improving and ensuring effective communication. Teachers must ensure that attention is given to their message and that adequate time is devoted to ensure whatever they are communicating to students is well communicated. Secondly, there should be free flow of information.

According to Bakhda (2004), conditions to effective communication can be solved through sending messages effectively and listening to messages attentively. For this to happen, the sender has to increase effectiveness of the message, setting communication goals before communicating, using appropriate language and even practicing empathetic communication.

Conditions to effective communication may be overcome by setting communication goals. One should know what the message is intended to accomplish. Through use of appropriate language, improving sender's credibility, encouraging feedback as well as developing trustworthy climate. Similarly,



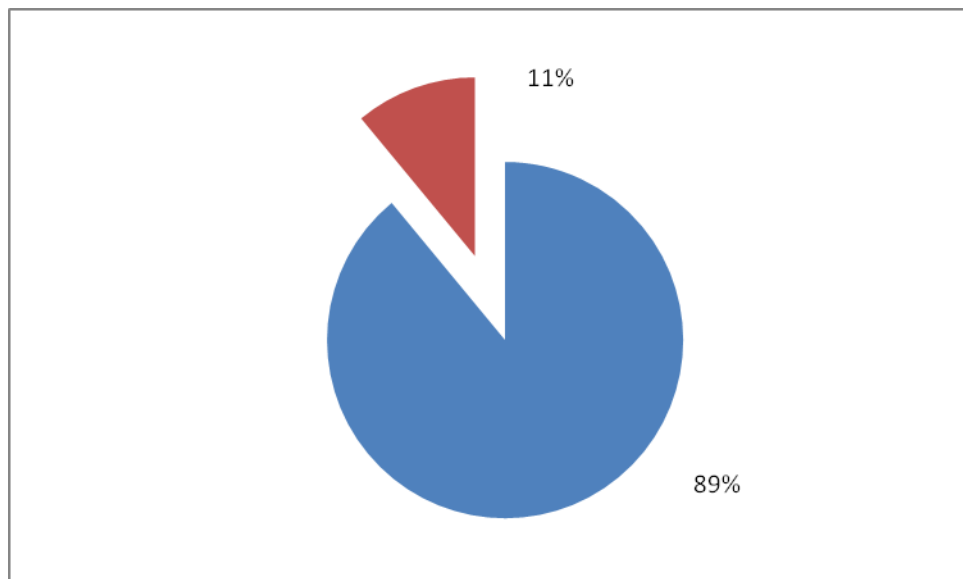
listening to messages attentively through paying attention to messages sent, avoiding evaluative judgment or premature judgment helps the student to listen to the total meaning of the teacher's message (Nzuve, 1999)

Effective communication may also be realized by avoidance of non verbal communication. The use of non verbal communication may confuse parties intended to receive the message when the sender or listener does not care about the message. Focusing on active listening may also help a lot in improving communication. Rather than focusing on how to reply to the person when reading or listening a message, effective communicators actively listen first and then formulate their response.

On the prevailing conditions in the school which reduces effective communication between teachers and the student, the students cited school rules, intimidation, lack of a proper mechanism that students can freely use to communicate with their teachers on issues related to stress management, conflict between students and conflict between teachers and students.

#### 4.9.2 School category and communication

The study further sought to establish whether the school category (boys, girls or mixed) affect the way teachers communicate with the student on discipline. From the findings in figure 4.2 majority (89%) indicated that school category affect the way teachers communicate with the student .



**Figure 4. 2: School category and discipline**

Majority of the respondents indicated that holding classroom meetings by class teacher, using rewards and incentives, guidance and counseling sessions and communication during school assembly are the communication strategies that are effectively used by teachers in addressing student discipline.

### 4.9.3 Students' responses on communication strategies used by teachers' to communicate on student discipline

Table 4.8 tabulates students' responses on the communication modes used in schools by teachers to communicate. The study asked the students to indicate the option that applied to the communication strategy frequently used by teachers on students. The study used a scale where 1= never, 2 = rarely, 3 = Often and 4 = Always

**Table 4. 8: Communication strategies used in schools by teachers to communicate on student discipline**

<b>Verbal Communication</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
Communication during school assembly	3	17	33	47	3.31	0.293
Encouraging members to pass information among themselves	7	26	33	33	3.29	0.123
Using rewards & incentives	8	13	46	33	3.3	0.214
Guidance and Counseling sessions	0	13	33	46	3.22	0.345
Holding Classroom meetings by class teacher	7	17	43	33	3.02	0.01
Using School Prefect body	15	38	39	6	2.42	0.175

Holding open forums	11	32	46	11	2.62	0.182
<b>Written Communication</b>						
Using notice board	3	11	45	41	3.1	0.188
Students' reports	11	27	55	7	2.6	0.218
<b>Non Verbal Communication</b>						
Facial expressions & Body Movement	47	17	26	10	1.29	0.1

From the findings, the majority of the students indicated that the following communication strategies are often used by teachers' on students' discipline .

Communication during school assembly,

1. Using school prefect body,
2. Holding classroom meetings by class teacher
3. Guidance and counseling sessions

Majority of the students further pointed out that holding of open forums and using rewards & incentives are some of the communication strategies that are rarely applied by teachers' on students' discipline as shown by means of 2.62 and 2.42 respectively. Further, majority of the students indicated that students' reports is often applied to the communication strategy frequently used by teachers on students as shown by a mean of 3.10 while the use of notice board is rarely

applied. Lastly, majority indicated that facial expressions and body movement is never applied to the communication strategy frequently used by teachers on students as shown by a mean of 1.29.

Although using rewards and incentives is used as a communication strategy of managing student discipline, the current study has holding classroom meetings by class teachers to be the most predominant as opposed to Mbiti's (1993) view and Nsereko's (1997) that rewards and incentives was the most predominant.

The change in the trend, with using school prefect body and holding classroom meetings by class teachers being most predominant might be a reflection of changes in development of the human race with much focus on human rights in general and children's rights in particular. It could also reflect a success story of The Ministry of Education and Sports' policy against corporal punishments.

The study also found reward being used as a strategy of managing student discipline. This is consistent with the views of Mbiti (1994) and in agreement with Woolfolk (2004) who categorized rewards as ranging from praise, recognitions, responsibilities, and material things.

#### 4.9.4 Ranking of communication strategies by students

In order of performance, the students were asked to list five communication strategies that they thought are effectively used by teachers in addressing student discipline. Table 4.9 tabulates the students' ranking of communication strategies used by teachers' on student discipline.

**Table 4. 9: Ranking of communication strategies by students**

<b>Rank</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
3	Communication during school assembly	3.81	0.293
5	Using rewards & incentives	3.62	0.175
2	Guidance and Counseling sessions	3.82	0.345
1	Holding Classroom meetings by class teacher	3.84	0.01
4	Using School Prefect body	3.71	0.214

From the study findings, holding classroom meetings by class teacher was highly ranked among students as a strategy that is effectively used by teachers in addressing student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.84, followed by guidance and counseling sessions discipline as shown by a mean of 3.82. Communication

during school assembly were ranked third and using prefect body ranked fourth as shown by mean of 3.81 and 3.71 respectively. The least ranked strategy was the use of rewards and incentives school prefect body in addressing student discipline as shown by a mean of 3.62.

## **CHAPTER FIVE:**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This Chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research. The conclusions and recommendations drawn are based on the research objectives.

#### **5.2 Summary of the study**

The Purpose of this study was to establish the influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District. Five research objectives were formulated. Research objective one sought to establish the influence of teachers' oral communication on student discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini district. Research objective two sought to examine the influence of teachers' written communication on student discipline in public secondary school; research objective three intended to establish the use of teachers' non verbal communication on student discipline. Research objective four sought to determine the conditions that may hinder effective communication towards students discipline. Research objective five aimed at establishing extent to which teachers' communication strategies can be improved in maintaining student discipline.

The target population consisted of 29 public secondary schools that are 25 mixed schools, 2 boys' schools and 2 girls schools. The total sample size was 45



secondary school teachers and 360 secondary school students, making a total of 405 respondents. This study employed a descriptive research design. Data was gathered by use of questionnaires.

According to the findings holding classroom meetings, the use of school prefect body, communication during school assembly, guidance and counseling sessions and use of rewards and incentives, and encouragement of members to pass information among themselves and holding open forums are communication strategies used to communicate on students discipline in public schools in Mukurweini District.

From the data collected, out of the 405 questionnaires administered, 324 were filled and returned, which represents 80% response rate.

Chapter two had Literature review that was done under different headings such as the concept of communication, elements of communication, the concept of discipline, prevailing conditions hindering effective communication and ways of improving communication of teachers' on student discipline.

Chapter two was later summarized by a conceptual framework that conceptualized the teacher playing an important role in managing student discipline through the use of communication.

The current study however went ahead to point the predominance of using school prefect body and holding classroom meetings by class teachers above other

strategies of communicating discipline with 75.5% of students and 84.6% of teachers reporting its use.

Majority of the teacher respondents with a mean of 3.7 indicated that communication during assembly was often being used to address discipline cases on students, further majority of the respondents with a mean of 4.8 indicated that holding of class room meetings was another strategy that teachers used in addressing discipline. Majority of the teacher respondents with a mean of 4.7 indicated that teachers would often rely on school prefects in handling student discipline.

The use of guidance and counseling as a strategy of managing student discipline had a mean of 3.6, indicating that majority of the respondents also believed teachers' used it on student discipline. The use of rewards and incentives, encouragement of members to pass information among themselves and holding of open forums to communicate on student discipline was rarely used according to majority of the respondents with mean of 2.2, 2.1 and 1.9 respectively.

This is in agreement with the views of Kabandize (2004) who found holding classroom meetings, the use of school prefect body, communication during school assembly, guidance and counseling sessions featuring prominently as strategies of managing student discipline just as Kyamulabi (2006) later did. This finding implies that oral communication should therefore be used on students' discipline in schools to communicate discipline. Using school prefect body and holding

classroom meetings by class teachers are the most predominant of these strategies as opposed to punishment which was most predominant in the pioneer schools up to 1970s.

According to Hand (2010) teachers interact with students in classrooms where authority relations are established and where most disciplinary referrals are initiated. Gregory and Weinstein (2008) suggest that classrooms are an important arena for the production of student opposition and resistance. Lee and Croninger (1996) suggest that teachers play an important role in shaping students' school experiences and behavior.

On the use of Written Communication, majority of the respondents with a mean of 3.8 indicated that notice board was the common strategy that was being used to address student discipline. Further, majority of the respondents with a mean of 3.6 indicated that student reports were always used to address student discipline.

The study also aimed at establishing the influence of teachers' non verbal communication on students' discipline. Majority of the respondents with a mean of 2.1 indicated that non verbal communication was rarely used on student discipline.

On the conditions in the school that hinders or reduces effective communication between teachers and students on discipline, the students cited school rules, intimidation, lack of a proper mechanism that students can freely use to

communicate with their teachers on discipline related issues, stress management issues, conflict between teachers and students.

Further, the respondents were asked what they do to promote free flow of information to students when addressing discipline. Majority of the respondents stated that they ensure they use appropriate language and listen to students attentively and avoiding evaluative judgment or premature judgment.

Also majority of the teachers indicated that recognizing that barriers to effective communication do exist is the first step in improving and ensuring effective communication.

Further, the teachers were asked what they do to promote free flow of information to students when addressing discipline. Majority stated that they ensure they use appropriate language and listen to students attentively and avoiding evaluative judgment or premature judgment. Also majority of the teachers indicated that recognizing that barriers to effective communication do exist is the first step in improving and ensuring effective communication. Teachers must ensure that attention is given to their message and that adequate time is devoted to ensure whatever they are communicating to students is well communicated. Secondly, there should be free flow of information.

On whether the school category affects the way teachers communicate with the student on discipline related issues, majority of the teacher respondents 89%

indicated that school category affected the way they communicate with the student.

On the student respondents, the responses on teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline concurred with those of the teacher respondents. Like teacher respondent, majority of the students indicated that communication during assembly, using prefect body, holding classroom meetings by class teacher and guidance and counselling sessions are often applied communication strategy frequently used by teachers on students' discipline with a mean of 3.3, 3.30, 3.29 and 3.28. Majority of the student with mean of 3.10 indicated that teachers' used student reports on student discipline.

When asked to rank five communication strategies on student discipline according to their effectiveness on student discipline, holding of class room meeting was most effective strategy of addressing student discipline, followed by the use of guidance and counseling, communication during assembly, using school prefects and the use of rewards and incentives ranked last.

. Lastly, majority indicated that facial expressions and body movement is a communication strategy that is never applied in the management of the student discipline.

### **5.3 Research findings**

The study came out with the following research findings:

- i. The category of the school, boys only, girls only and mixed for both boys and girls affect the way teachers' communicates on student discipline.
- ii. Communication strategies with the least preferences for teachers on student discipline included the use of reward system, the use of eye contact and facial expression.
- iii. Majority of the students stated that on student discipline, majority of the teachers preferred to use communication during assembly, the use of prefect system and student reports as communication strategies on student discipline.
- iv. Conditions which reduce effective communication ranged from distortion of information, language barrier to lack of proper mechanisms that ensures conducive environment for students to express themselves to their teachers.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

A number of conclusions were made based on the findings. The study concludes that holding classroom meetings, the use of school prefect body, communication during school assembly, guidance and counseling sessions and use of rewards and incentives, and encouragement of members to pass information among them and holding open forums are communication strategies used to communicate on students discipline in public schools in Mukurweini District. On the use of teachers' written communication on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District, the study concludes that the teachers use notice board to communicate on student discipline and also always use students' reports to communicate on student discipline.

Based the extent the teachers use non verbal communication on student discipline in public schools Mukurweini District, the study concludes that use of facial expressions and body movement to communicate on student discipline is rarely used.

Also the study concludes that teachers must ensure that attention is given to their message and that adequate time is devoted to ensure whatever they are communicating to students is well communicated.

Escalating problems of discipline could therefore be attributed not to lack of requisite communication strategies of managing student discipline but possibly other factors.

## 5.5 Recommendations

Based on the findings the study made the recommendations that:

- i. There is need for the stakeholders in education sector to facilitate teachers' communication enable them (teachers) to effectively use communication in the management of student discipline.
- ii. The situations on the ground should determine the mix of communication strategies to be used on student discipline by the teachers.
- iii. Teachers should use non verbal communication effectively, they should use eye contact effectively and non verbal cues.
- iv. The elimination to conditions that reduce effective communication should be an obligation of entire school community.
- v. Regarding verbal communication, teachers should utilize a supportive language tone, avoid language that is overly authoritative or condescending, utilize a rate and rhythm of speech that is even and smooth, deliver warnings and reminders in a calm manner.
- vi. In regard to non verbal communication, teachers should use eye contact also, use of non verbal cues as warnings when behaviors are escalating also the teacher should be aware of the impact of tone, volume, cadence, positioning and stance.



## **5.6 Suggestions for further research**

In view of the limitations and delimitations of the study, the following suggestions for further research were made:

- i. There be a study on each individual communication strategy to be studied in depth.
- ii. A similar study to be carried out in other districts in Kenya to find out on any of the uniformity of the findings with those of this study from Mukurweini District.
- iii. There be a study on the communication strategies on student discipline but with involvement of other educational stakeholders such as parents and members of the B.O.G

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## **Appendix I: Introductory Letter**

James Githui Muriithi

P.O. Box 92,

Mukurweini

The Headteachers,  
Public Secondary schools,  
Mukurweini District

Dear Sir/Madam,

### **RE: PERMISSION TO ADMINISTER QUESTIONAIRES**

I am a student of the University Nairobi pursuing a Master of Education Administration degree. I am conducting a research on the **Influence of Teachers' Communication Strategies on Students' Discipline** and your school among others has been selected for this study. Information acquired will be used for academic purposes only and confidentially and identity will be highly upheld. I will be administering questionnaires to some of your teachers as well students.

Thank you for your time. Looking forward to working with you.

Yours faithfully,

James Githui Muriithi

## Appendix II: Questionnaires for Teachers

This questionnaire is designed to collect information on **Influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District**. The researcher would like to get information about yourself. You are kindly requested to respond to all questions. Do not write your name or that of your school anywhere.

### Personal Data

1. Indicate your gender

Male  Female

2. What is your age bracket?

40 years and below  41 to 45 years

46 to 50 years  51 to 55 years

56 years and above

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

Bachelor's Degree  Masters Degree

Diploma Certificate

Any other Specify.....

4. What is your professional experience?

5 years and below  6-10 years

11 to 15 years  16 to 20 years

Over 20 years



**Part A: Communication Strategies used by Teachers on Student discipline**

1. Below is a list of Communication strategies you use to communicate on student discipline. Indicate by ticking (√) the option that applies to the communication .Use a scale where **1 = never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often and 4 = Always**

	<b>Verbal Communication</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
1	Communication during school assembly				
2	Encouraging members to pass information among themselves				
3	Using rewards & incentives				
4	Guidance and Counseling sessions				
5	Holding Classroom meetings by class teacher				
6	Using School Prefect body				
7	Holding open forums				
	<b>Written Communication</b>				
8	Using notice board				
9	Students' reports				
	<b>Non Verbal Communication</b>				
10	Facial expressions & Body Movement				

2. What do you do to promote free flow of information to students when addressing discipline

.....  
.....

3. What are the Prevailing Conditions in the school which reduces effective communication between yourself and the student

.....  
.....  
.....

4. Does the school category (boys, girls or mixed) affect the way you communicate with the student on discipline?

Yes  No

a. Please explain your answer in 9a) above.....  
.....

5. In your Opinion, what is the relationship between effective communication strategies and student discipline.....  
.....

6. Give your suggestions on how you think communication can be made more effective in secondary school in addressing discipline.

.....  
.....

7. In order of performance, list five communication strategies that you think are effectively used by teachers in addressing student discipline.

- a) .....
- b) .....
- c) .....
- d) .....
- e) .....

**Thanks for your Participation**

### Appendix III: Questionnaires For Students

The researcher would like to examine the **Influence of teachers' communication strategies on students' discipline on student discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurweini District**. Please respond honestly and frankly to all questions. Do not write your name or that of your school in this questionnaire.

#### Section A: Demographic Information

1. Indicate your gender

Male  Female

2. What is your age in years.....

3. Indicate by ticking the category of your school

Girls only  Boys only

Mixed school (boys & Girl

4. Is there any relationship between the way your teacher communicates and the way you behave in school?

Yes  No

6. List five methods of communication in the order of their effectiveness according to you

a).....

b).....

.

c).....

d).....

...e).....

.....

**Section B: School Information**

1. Below is a list of oral, written and non-verbal communication modes used in schools by teachers to communicate on discipline. Indicate by ticking the option that applies to the communication strategy frequently used by teachers on students. **Use a scale where 1 = never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Often and 4 = Always**

<b>Verbal Communication</b>	Always	Often	Rarely	Never
Communication during school assembly				
Encouraging members to pass information among themselves				
Using rewards & incentives				
Guidance and Counseling sessions				
Holding Classroom meetings by class teacher				
Using School Prefect body				
Holding open forums				
<b>Written Communication</b>				
Using notice board				
Students' reports				
<b>Non Verbal Communication</b>				
Facial expressions & Body Movement				


**APPENDIX IV**  
**RESEARCH PERMIT**

PAGE 2	PAGE 3
<b>Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/14/013/835</b>	
<b>Date of issue 24<sup>th</sup> May, 2013</b>	
<b>Fee received KSH. 1000</b>	
<b>THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT</b>	
<b>Prof./Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Institution</b>	
<b>James Githui Murrithi</b>	
<b>of (Address) University of Nairobi</b>	
<b>P.O. Box 30197-00100, Nairobi</b>	
<b>has been permitted to conduct research in</b>	
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Mukurwe-ini</b>	<b>District</b>
<b>Central</b>	<b>Province</b>
<b>on the topic: Influence of teachers' communication</b>	
<b>strategies on student's discipline in public</b>	
<b>secondary schools in Mukurwe-ini District,</b>	
<b>Kenya.</b>	
<b>Applicant's Signature</b>	
<b>Secretary</b>	
<b>National Council for</b>	
<b>Science &amp; Technology</b>	
<b>for a period ending; 31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013.</b>	

## APPENDIX V

### RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Telephone: 254-020-2213471, 2241349, 254-020-2673550  
Mobile: 0713 788 787 , 0735 404 245  
Fax: 254-020-2213215  
When replying please quote  
secretary@ncst.go.ke

P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA  
Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/013/835** Date: **24<sup>th</sup> May 2013**

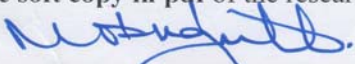
James Githui Muriithi  
University of Nairobi  
P.O Box 30197-00100  
Nairobi.

**RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application dated **20<sup>th</sup> May, 2013** for authority to carry out research on *“Influence of teachers’ communication strategies on student’s discipline in public secondary schools in Mukurwe-ini District, Kenya.”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Mukurwe-ini District** for a period ending **31<sup>st</sup> July, 2013.**

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner and District Education Officer, Mukurwe-ini District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.



**DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.**  
**DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY**

Copy to:  
The District Commissioner  
The District Education Officer  
Mukurwe-ini District

*“The National Council for Science and Technology is Committed to the Promotion of Science and Technology for National Development”.*