STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT AND, MONITORING AND EVALUATION: DETERMINANTS OF SCHOOLS' COMPLIANCE WITH SAFETY STANDARDS

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ABSTRACT

The safety of school children at all times, and everywhere cannot be over-emphasized. Learner safety is central to the provision of quality education and globally, governments are committed to ensure safety and overall welfare of children through development of safety policies and guidelines. This study examined the influence of Boards of Management (BoMs) governance on compliance with safety standards and guidelines in public boarding secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya. The study objectives were: To establish the influence of involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decisions by BoMs on compliance with safety standards; To determine the influence of safety programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) by BoMs on compliance with safety standards. The study was based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and Systems Theories. Pragmatic philosophy and mixed-method design were adopted. The study targeted 64 public-boarding secondary schools in 5 sub-counties. Simple random sampling picked 55 schools. 3 BoM members and 5 Heads of Departments (HoDs) were purposive sampled to respond to an interview and a questionnaire respectively. All the 5 Sub-

County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) responded to an interview. The total sample was 445 participants. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyse quantitative data. Pearson's coefficient of correlation was computed to determine the correlation between independent and dependent variables at alpha = 0.05 level of significance. M&E of safety programs correlated with compliance with safety standards at $r = .927$ while involvement of stakeholders in decision making and compliance with the safety standards correlated at $r =. 813$. The study concluded that both M&E of safety programmes and involvement of stakeholders in making safety decisions positively and strongly correlated with, and significantly influenced school safety. The study recommended that boards should monitor and evaluate safety programmes while involving key stakeholders in safety decisions to enhance safety.

Keywords: Boards of Management, Governance, Compliance, Safety Standards, Public Boarding Secondary Schools, Involvement of Stakeholders, Monitoring and Evaluation

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In the recent years, school safety has gained increasing attention from policymakers and academics. A safe learning environment is a place where structured learning is free from environmental, internal, and external threats to learners and teachers' well-being; where both the infrastructure of the organization and the people within that environment are deemed safe (USAID, 2016). The safety of learners is ultimate in provision of quality education as secure school environments foster quality teaching and learning. However, the safety of learners has been compromised by occurrence of accidents and disasters with major impact on children and youth, and education systems. This has rendered it a global concern and safety management in schools has become a center of focus.

The most recent deadliest and most devastating earthquake hit Turkey and Syria on 6th and 20th February 2023 leaving nearly 50,000 people dead and, millions displaced and homeless after thousands of buildings collapsed. School going children were absent from school as affected families moved far from the schools in search of shelter, while where schools we not damaged, they served as temporary shelters for the affected population. (Kids Rights News, 2023). According to UNICEF (2023) the Ukraine war robbed 5.7 million children of stability, safety, classrooms, friends, families, homes and hopes for future with hundreds of schools being hit by heavy artillery, air strikes and other explosive weapons. During the Sichuan earthquake in May 2008, approximately 10,000 students were crushed in their classrooms while more than 7,000 school rooms collapsed. Additionally, the January 12th, 2010, earthquake in Haiti left 38,000 students, 1,300 teachers and education personnel dead. Further, the Ministry of Education offices were destroyed along with 4,000 schools – close to 80 % of educational establishments in the Port-au-Prince area (Bastidas, 2011).

In the United States school shootings continue to take many lives and cause extensive fear over the years. The most recent being the shooting of a teacher by a six-year-old at Virginia Elementary School on Friday 6th January 2023 following an altercation between the student and the teacher (Ripka & Medina, 2023) while in December 2021 a Michigan teen killed four students at St. Louis' Central Visual and Performance arts High school (Densley, Riedman & Peterson, 2022). Sandy Hook Elementary School lost 26 people, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School lost 17 students and in a Texas School 10 lives were lost (Limber & Kowalski, 2020). In 2014 the Taliban pounced on the Peshawar Army School leaving 135 children dead - Peshawar school massacre (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2017.

In Nigeria, nearly 1400 schools have been destroyed, others closed, 2295 teachers killed and 52% of children out of school. In 2014, 276 girls were kidnapped from Chibok Senior Girls secondary whereas, in 2018, 110 girls were abducted from the government-owned secondary school in Dapchi (Arop & Owan, 2018).

Countries have come up with safety policies and compliance with set safety standards by schools is thus a significant strategy in realizing inclusive safety. In the United States public schools are governed and managed by school boards (Ford, 2013; Shober & Hartney, 2014) while Bakwai, Yisa, and Musa (2015); Esliger (2017) and Mgadla (2014) confirm management by boards in British Colombia, School-Based Management Committees for Nigeria and School Governing Bodies in South Africa respectively. Kenyan Boards of Management [BoMs] are obligated by section 59 of the Basic Education Act [BEA] 2013 with school governance: provide proper adequate infrastructure; determine indiscipline cases; facilitate students' guidance and counselling; ensure the safety of learners and workers and encouraging participatory democratic governance (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

Loss of lives and destruction of property worth millions in Kenyan schools portray a lack of safety. In 1991, 19 girls died from rape and suffocation at St. Kizito Mixed while in 1998, 26 girls died in a dormitory fire at Bombolulu Girls Secondary. In 1999, four prefects of Nyeri High died from fire while 68 boys died in a dormitory fire at Kyanguli secondary school in 2001 (Nyakundi, Ongwacho, Mong'are, Oguti & Mikuro, 2014). This profile of disasters led to the government's focus on ensuring safety in schools hence the Wangai Report of 2001 on safety measures. However, the measures did not stop school disasters. The Ministry of Education [MoE] has since developed the Safety Standards Manual for Schools in Kenya (2008), believing that compliance by schools would see them propagate safe and secure environments. The Education Sector Disaster Management Policy is also in place calling for collaboration coordinated management of disasters in the sector in a bid to save lives, protect property and ensure continued access to education in a safe and secure environment.

Despite the government's effort, learners have continued to lose lives in school fires, attacks and accidents due to lack of proper safety monitoring and evaluation of school premises. In 2017, eight students died, and dozens injured in Moi Girls, Nairobi School dormitory fire (Wanzala, 2017) while in 2019, 9 pupils died and 60 got injured when Precious Talent Academy collapsed while in February of 2020, 14 learners died in a stampede at a Kakamega school due to structural weaknesses (Nyaundi, 2020).

The most recent are trails of accidents that have led to loss of students' lives; 3 Chogoria Girls High School students and a driver died on 18th December 2021 after the matatu they were travelling in collided with a lorry at Kambiti in Muranga on the Nyeri-Nairobi High way (Gikandi, 2021), on March 30th 2023, 18 students of Pwani University died when the bus they were travelling in collided head-on with a matatu at the Kayole Bridge along the Nakuru-Nairobi highway, 3 girls and a teacher of Mukhumu Gils died as a result of contaminated water (Kalekye, 2023), four students were knocked by a Tahmeed bus when walking home from school, death of 5 students of Mbihi Friends Girls High School when a matatu they were travelling in collided head-on with a track at the Delamere black spot on 19th April 2023 (Koskei et al., 2023).

As Kenyan schools continue to experience shocking incidents of arson, unrest, armed conflict, drugs and substance abuse, Embu County has had a bigger share of the incidents reporting high number of student unrest with arson cases targeting dormitories. The National Crime Research Centre (2017) confirmed that over 130 schools (average three schools per county) were closed down in 2016 due to unrest, violence and arson targeting dormitories and Embu County reported eight cases. Ndonga (2016) reports that Embu and Nakuru counties were among

counties that had recorded high number of cases in 2015 and made a comeback in 2016 with equally high number of cases (six in each year). The trend has been on the rise with Embu recording eight and nine cases of arson in 2017 and 2018 respectively while Nakuru cases declined to zero and one in the two years. Embu County has led in cases of arson especially targeting dorms. While the county recorded nine cases in 2018, the neighbouring counties of Machakos and Kitui recorded two each (MoE, 2018). According to Regional Director of Education- Eastern (MoE, 2021) Embu County was leading in post COVID-19 number of arson cases in the region as well as nationally. In addition, Embu has recorded other unique cases of safety breach. In 2019, a student from one of the boarding schools died after he was allegedly beaten by a teacher (Muchiri, 2019).

This was a case of negligence on the side of the school management as engagement of teachers on the ban of corporal punishment had not been done, Reports from the investigative assessment showed that use of corporal punishment on learners was rampant in the school. A parent reported;

"I transferred my son from the school after being beaten by two teachers. I had paid fees for the term but traumatized by my sons condition I decided to transfer him." (Muchiri, 2019)

In 2018 a form three student in a day secondary school 'went berserk' and slashed the institution's lab technician on the head using a machete while injuring two of his schoolmates after they barred him from beating up the principal (Ndwiga, 2018). The cases indicate lack of safety, threatening student and staff wellbeing and lives, and loss of precious learning time due to lack of proper involvement of teachers in safety decisions and, monitoring and evaluation of school safety which is expected to expose presence of weapons in the school compound.

The Basic Education Act of 2013 tasks Boards of Management with upholding of students' welfare and human rights, and ensuring their safety (RoK, 2013). To ensure safety for quality education, school boards must expedite their mandate. Compliance with the Safety Standards Manual (2008) is expected to make schools safe and secure environments. Studies on school safety have focused on compliance levels and challenges to schools and failed to investigate influence of Boards of Management governance strategies on compliance with safety standards. There was need therefore to examine the influence of BoMs' involvement of stakeholders in safety decision making and, monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes on compliance with safety standards in public boarding secondary schools.

According to Tipler (2017), stakeholders are people with interest in school-based crisis management and Eslinger (2017); Ford (2013); Mgadla (2014); Onyango (2013); and Wambua, Okoth and Kalai (2017) notes the need to involve all education stakeholders in making decisions on safety compliance. However, the researchers noted that students and teachers were left out in decisions on funds and budgeting hence mistrust and poor relationship between school management and, students and teachers which thus threaten school safety.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) help determine the progress made in achieving safety goals. Kukali (2013); Onyango (2013); Pillar (2016); and Tipler (2017) confirm M&E as essential components in implementing school safety programmes. An inclusive and meaningful evaluation should cover all areas; school grounds, infrastructure, health and hygiene, food, drugs abuse, child abuse, transport, school-community relations, and emergency readiness (Ministry of Education/MoE, 2008). It must include a risk assessment of likely dangers relative to the school's weaknesses, strengths, capacities and resources for prevention, preparedness, response and recovery.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

i) To establish the influence of involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decisions by Boards of Management on compliance with safety standards

ii) To determine the influence of programme monitoring and evaluation by Boards of Management on compliance with safety standards

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

$H0_1$: There is no significant relationship between involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decisions by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards in public boarding secondary schools in Embu County

$H0_2$: There is no significant relationship between monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards.

Review of Related Literature

Involvement of education stakeholders by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards

Every school member is responsible for own and other's safety, health and welfare and should be aware of this responsibility. A stakeholder should help identify safety threats, devise, and execute means of defeating the fears. Tipler (2017) posits that stakeholders are interested in school crisis readiness and should be engaged when planning and preparing for school safety.

Republic of Kenya/RoK (2018) calls for inclusion of class teachers, students' and parents' reps in safety sub-committee to allow participation and consultation of stakeholders in disaster management.

Participatory governance enhances compliance with government policies (Ford, 2013; King'oina, 2017). However, Nyambegera, (2018) and Okaya, (2015) found that involvement of parents was poor. Moreover, non-involvement of students in making rules make students see them as imperious, leading to student unrest; threat to school safety (Wambua et al., 2017; Esliger, 2017; and Onyango, 2013). Exclusion of some key stakeholders in safety decision making has been reported to result in loss of lives.

For instance, according to Thirumurthy (2018) a 19-year-old college student died after she was forcefully pushed to jump off the second floor of the institution during a disaster preparedness drill. Her head hit the sunshade on the first floor resulting to head and neck injuries before she fell on the safety net that her college mates were holding for her. She was pronounced dead on arrival after she was rushed to hospital. Moreover, Adisa (2015) reported that one worker and 30 students were injured after jumping from third and fourth floors due to panic during a security drill where a security officer fired rubber gun shots in a bid to test preparedness

of the institution in one Kenyan university. Unaware that this was a drill some students and workers decided to save themselves on hearing gunshots and explosives. Wambua et al. (2017) indicate that stakeholder involvement boosts ownership of decisions and confidence among governors and the governed. The scholars used systems theory, descriptive survey and targeted 5256 participants. They used stratified proportionate sampling where 118 principals responded to a survey while 108 teachers and 1534 student responded to an interview. Majority of principals involved students in decision making and choice of leaders hence a sense of ownership, feeling of respect and recognition thus high discipline. Principals who imposed leaders were met with hostility and outright demonstration; this was detrimental to school safety.

A study carried out by Kasivu, Mulwa and Kimosop (2015) on Participatory Governance in Secondary Schools: The Students' Viewpoint in Eastern Region of Kenya, indicated that the key decision makers in students' management and welfare were the principals, teachers and boards of governors. Students and parents were not key decision makers in students' management and welfare. According to the researchers, students should be involved in decision making and in their view, their involvement is very important. However, students' governance through the students'

councils was noted to face teachers' interference with the process of electing their leaders thus promoting the prefects' system. The study concluded that students particularly must be involved in decision making in their management and in their welfare issues, since these areas directly affects them, if this is not addressed, then the number of school strikes would continue rising. Students should play an active role, for example in determining; school rules and regulations, how responsibilities should be delegated to students, disciplinary action against them, type of food provided for supper and lunch and in organizing of boarding facilities.

The current study anchored on systems and needs theories, mixed method research sought to establish if education stakeholders are involved in making safety decisions, and its influence on compliance with the safety standards.

Monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes by Boards of Management and compliance with school safety standards.

Monitoring and evaluation help determine the progress made in achieving safety goals. Pillar (2016) notes that effective boards agree that self-evaluation is central to growth, makes it a non-stop review of the general output and success of the school and itself. Tipler (2017) posits that systematic

assessment and analysis of school safety; plans, training programmes and response to sensitization help the board to check if they are still appropriate and effective. Careful monitoring reveal early warning, help avert likely risks or offer stakeholders with relevant facts to permit making of informed decisions to minimise destruction (Onyango, 2013). However, despite the benefits, Ibrahim and Orodho (2014); Kukali, (2013); and Tipler, (2017) discovered that evaluation and standards assessment were inadequate; only occurring after an emergency and majority of schools had not been assessed in the three years preceding the studies. Alunga and Maiyo (2019) reported irregular supervision and inspection of school grounds; they were not free from harmful objects and substances. The study used mixed method research and, simple random and purposive sampling to get a sample of 403 respondents. Questionnaires, interview guide and focus groups were used to get data. Quantitative data were presented in frequencies and percentages while the hypothesis was tested using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. The study confirmed defiance of safety standards by most schools; majority teachers, students and staffs were untrained or unaware of safety measures. MoE (2008) tasks the board's secretary with coordination of monitoring and assessment of safety by learners, staff and parents, and liaising with

QASOs to plan and execute safety assessment. The current study investigated if BoMs were doing monitoring and evaluation of the schools' safety programmes in attempt to enhance compliance with the safety standards for schools.

This study adopted Systems and Hierarchy of Needs theories. Ludwing Von Bertalanffy-1973 the proponent of the Systems Theory recognized the need for any organization to remain open and interact with its external environment. According to Betts (1992), a system is an entity made of interacting elements that function as a whole to realize a determined purpose and barely realizes its mandate if deprived of an element while the element on its own, cannot triumph. The school imports human resources (students, staff); materials resources (infrastructure, equipment); fiscal resources (money); and controls (law, policy and parents' expectations); and knowledge from the environment and convert them to better forms in the transformation process (teaching, learning and governance). Students get rich in; knowledge, skills and values; boards, teachers and parents get informed, while output is exported to the environment. The society should keep the school system to serves its needs. The systems theory informed the current study since matters of school safety require joint effort from the school fraternity, the government and all other shareholders.

The Hierarchy of Needs Theory places human needs on a pyramid. Abraham Harold Maslow (1908 - 1970) posits that physiological and safety needs are grouped as basic needs, while affection, esteem and self-actualization are viewed as secondary needs. Maslow postulates that gratification of a lower need triggers the person's attention to fulfilling a higher need. Satisfaction of physiological needs; food, air, sleep, warmth and water that are vital for survival, demands safety guarantee (security; safe environs, health, and shelter) (McLeod, 2018). Safety is important for the good of humanity including students. Schools should nurture a safe and health-fostering culture lacking at home leading to children's deep feelings of insecurity. The theory informed the study out of believe that safety is vital for every human's survival and cannot be ignored in a school set-up.

Below is a model illustrating the researcher's understanding of the interaction between independent and dependent variables. BoMs may involve stakeholders in safety decision making during meetings and open days with safety as an agenda. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of school safety programmes will assess progress on compliance with safety standards and the readiness of resources required for planned activities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted pragmatism philosophy which allows the researcher to focus on the research problem rather than on methods and to use a variety of approaches for collecting and analyzing data which subsequently derives knowledge to best understand the problem (Creswel, 2014). The study also used mixed method design which entails collection and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a study. The design involves examining both data and incorporating them in order to compare the outcomes (Leavy, 2017). This approach was appropriate as this study aimed to describe, explain, and examine school safety management as a complex problem.

At the time of study**,** Embu County was made up of five sub-counties and 64 public boarding secondary schools. 64 BoM and 64 Parents Association chairpersons, 64 BoM Secretaries, 576 Heads of Departments [HoDs] and 5 Sub-County Quality and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) formed a target population of 773 subjects. Slovin's formula n=N/ [1+N (e) ^{2}], where n = sample size; N= finite population; e= level of significance; 1= unit or a constant was advanced to pick a sample of 55 boarding secondary schools with all categories represented.   55 BoM and 55 Parents Association chairpersons, 55 BoM Secretaries, and 275 Heads of Departments [HoDs] and 5 Sub-County Quality and

Standards Officers (SCQASOs) formed a sample of 445 respondents. A questionnaire for HoDs and interview schedule for BoM members and SCQASOs were used to collect data. Data were analyzed descriptively and using inferential statistics. Pearson coefficient was calculated to show the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables and to test the study hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section covers analysis, presentation and interpretation of data collected on the influence of Boards of Management (BoMs) governance strategies; involvement of education stakeholders in safety decision making and monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes on compliance with safety standards in public boarding secondary schools in Embu County, Kenya.

Education stakeholders' involvement in safety decision making by BoMs

Education stakeholders are groups of people with roles to play in the running of a school and include the learners; teachers; parents; sponsors; the local community; security, safety and health agencies. It is imperative that they are part of safety decisions made by the board if their contribution and support of the decisions is required. The stakeholders can be involved in making decisions related to school safety on various platforms, parents and staff meetings, class meetings,

safety committee's and student councils' meetings and other stakeholders' forums.

Schools' BoMs and teachers are expected to organize regular joint meetings with parents or guardians and learners not only on academic matters but to allow stakeholders to be involved in a wide range of school activities such as co-curricular and cultural activities with members of local communities. This should be with a view to encouraging members of local communities to cooperate with schools in ensuring learners' and staff safety. Parents and guardians should also be encouraged through meetings to be on the look-out for safety threats and dangers that their children are likely to bump into on their way to and from school so that they voluntarily come up with and own safety programmes regarding children's movement between homes and the schools (MoE, 2008). This study sought to find out if BoMs of boarding secondary schools involved key stakeholders in safety decision making with a view to encouraging them own and support the decisions arrived at. Table 1 presents the findings from the HoDs.

From Table 1 it is notable that 220 (87.0%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that safety strategies were discussed with parents during meetings in their school. However, 11 (4.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that safety strategies were discussed with parents during meetings.

22 of the respondents remained undecided. The results imply that in majority of the boarding secondary schools; 87.0% in Embu, safety strategies were discussed with parents who hold a big stake in management of their children's welfare issues; health and safety in the schools. This was confirmed by the board members who noted that parents have a role to play in ensuring the safety of their children and the schools where the children spend a lot of their time.

Parents help in infrastructure expansion, ensure supply of essentials like water, masks and consenting vaccinations, being role models and sensitizing the children on various safety issues. This requires that parents are continuously engaged to execute these responsibilities, and this is easily done during parents' meetings.

Table 1: Involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decisions

SA= Strongly Agree   U= Undecided
SD= Strongly Disagree
A= Agree   D= Disagree

	SA(5)		A(4)		U(3)		D(2)		SD(1)		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Safety strategies are discussed during parents' meetings	91	36.0	129	51.0	22	8.7	6	2.4	5	2.0	4.2
Parents ensure students' safe movement to school	41	16.2	145	57.3	56	22.1	10	4.0	1	0.4	3.8
Students' leaders help in managing discipline to enhance safety	82	32.4	124	49.0	38	15.0	9	3.6	0	0.0	4.1
Safety strategies discussed in staff meetings	133	52.2	94	37.2	17	6.7	5	2.0	5	2.0	4.4
Students involved when formulating safety rules	64	25.3	113	44.7	55	21.7	15	5.9	6	2.4	3.8
Parents are involved when formulating school safety rules	57	22.5	101	39.9	70	27.7	17	6.7	8	3.2	3.7
Students are included in the safety committee	67	26.5	80	31.6	64	25.3	30	11.9	0	0.0	3.6
There is a teacher in charge of school safety	85	33.6	88	34.8	38	15.0	24	9.5	18	7.1	3.8
Students' council ensures adherence to COVID 19 guidelines	77	30.4	119	47.0	35	13.8	16	6.3	6	2.4	4.0
Teachers are members of the COVID. 19 response committee	122	48.2	102	40.3	17	6.7	7	2.8	0	0.0	4.3
Grand Mean											**3.97**

They also confirmed using parents' meetings to create awareness and sensitization of the school community on school safety threats like use of drugs and acts of aggression between members of the school community. The findings were further confirmed by the Sub-county Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) as one stated;

I have attended parents' meetings in the boarding schools and witnessed issues of safety especially use of drugs and grievance redress mechanism brought to parents' attention during the meeting. Schools have also used other communication forums like parents' WhatsApp platforms and end of term newsletters to parents giving details of safety issues in the schools. Parents are even advised through these platforms to be friends with their children so as they can raise issues of concern which through parents will get to the board for address. Parents are also asked to shape their children's character for enhanced school discipline.

Another SCQASO reported that matters safety are brought to parents through the students when they are sent home due to indiscipline on account of issues touching on safety such as fire incidents, or when all students are sent home due to such occurrences. The findings contradicted Kasivu et al. (2015) who found that parents were the least involved in school decision making among the stakeholders.

Learners should be safe at all times when they walk or commute to and from school using *matatus*, buses, bicycles, *bodabodas* or school vehicles (MoE, 2008). The school boards have the responsibility of sensitizing the learners and their parents on importance of observing the laid down transportation safety guidelines and arrive at agreed decisions on how and by who should learners' safety be achieved when they are not under the care of the school and vice versa. This study sought to establish if parents ensured students' safe movement to and from schools as required, "*Parents should be included in safety programmes regarding children's movement between the home and the school,*" (MoE, 2008*).* Table 1 shows that 186 (73.5%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that parents ensured safe movement of the students to the schools. However, 11 (4.4%) disagreed that parents ensured safe movement of the students to the schools while above 50 (22.1%) of the respondents remained undecided.

 The results reveal that nearly three quarters ;73.5% of parents take care of the safety of their children during their movement between home and school, and that only a few 67 (26.5%) did not care about safe movement of their children to and from school. This was confirmed by the BoM secretaries who indicated that majority of parents do not cooperate with the school administration to organize for students' transport during opening and closing of schools by way of identifying and using public service vehicles from Saccos with good reputation. Majority further noted that

even parents who owned vehicles were too busy to drop or pick their children from school.

Student leaders are resourceful individuals and dependable problem-solvers who are not afraid to contribute their ideas and stand up for their beliefs (Marlborough, 2019). Student leadership refers to the roles that student leaders participate in within the school setting which involve communication, Students discipline, coordination, decision making, planning, and monitoring of student's activities. This study sought to find out whether student leaders in boarding secondary schools in Embu County helped in management of students' discipline as a way of promoting school safety.

The results as observed on Table1 indicate that 124 (49.0%) of the respondents agreed while 82 (32.4%) strongly agreed that student leaders helped in managing discipline in the school. Furthermore, 38 (15.0%) remained undecided while 9 (3.6%) disagreed that student leaders helped in managing student discipline. This reveals that majority of the respondents 306 (81.4%) confirmed the role of student leaders in boarding schools in Embu County in managing discipline in their schools. This was in agreement with the BoM members who confirmed that student leaders;

Help to; maintain order among students by playing supervisory roles at student levels, manage discipline

and ensure there is no use of drugs in schools as they provide direct observation and feedback on such other learners' safety threats to the administration, they link students and teachers/administration by reporting any grievances or any safety issue affecting the students to the administration. Outlining challenges facing them and channeling them to the BOM during meetings challenging the board to act, playing role models to other students in adhering to safety instructions as per the requirement of the institution. Student leaders also hold peer talks within the schools as a way of maintaining desired school culture among students.

By linking the students and the management, administration and the teachers, student leaders ensured that students' concerns were reported for action before they could resort to uncouth methods of calling for management and administration's attention to their issues. The sentiments were confirmed by an officer who noted that;

The dorm secretaries lock the dormitory doors from inside the dormitories at night and ensure that all dorm members are in the dorm so that none is left out to avoid the doors being locked from outside for safety. The student leaders also have access to suggestion boxes in designated places from where they communicate any issues affecting them to the school administration.

Staff meetings are forums through which staff members can share their thoughts, ideas, opinions and feedback on matters affecting them and their customers, learners, parents and other stakeholders.

School staff has a big stake on how the institutions are managed including school safety. The meetings if effectively conducted should provide an effective way of involving them in organizational decision making. This in turn would result to a feeling of partnership, belonging and ownership that calls for effort and support towards execution of the agreed decisions and programs. This study sought to find out from the respondents if boarding secondary schools in Embu County discussed safety strategies during staff meetings for staff contribution, ownership and support in implementing safety decisions.

From the results on Table 1 above average (52.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 94 (37.2%) agreed that safety strategies were discussed during staff meetings. Only a few (4.0%) strongly disagreed or disagreed that they discussed safety strategies during staff meetings in their schools. The results also confirmed 17 (6.7%) of respondents remained undecided. The results thus reveal that safety strategies were quite discussed during staff meetings in most of the sampled boarding secondary schools in the county. The results were confirmed by the BoM members as one member indicated that;

Teachers have a role in enforcing discipline, guidance and counselling, role modelling, teaching of life skills and safety content, sensitization of students on health and safety and, enforcing safety and health guidelines hence the need to discuss the matters with them for successful implementation of related

decisions. Furthermore, it is the teachers who make a follow-up on safety issues in the school.

School rules and regulations should be aimed at directing learners' behaviour while guiding the school management, teachers and other education stakeholders on how to handle learners' behaviour and discipline. Boards of management under the stewardship of the head of institutions should promote a culture of compliance with school rules and regulations in order to produce law-abiding citizens (MoE, 2008). The importance of involving the students through their leaders during rule and regulations formulation cannot be over emphasized if they are expected to own the process and the product for enhanced adherence. This study sought to find out from the respondents if students in their schools were involved when formulating school safety rules. The study findings are summarized on Table 1.

The results show that 113 (44.7%) of the respondents agreed while 64 (25.3%) strongly agreed that students were involved when formulating safety school rules. Only 21 (8.3%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that students were involved when safety rules were being formulated. 55 (21.7%) of the respondents remained undecided. The results indicate that nearly three quarters of the schools (70%) involved students when formulating safety rules that were expected to direct their behaviour to promote safety in

the schools. One of the SCQASOs also noted that besides participating in formulation of the safety rules, students are also expected to commit to observance of the schools' rules if safety is to be realized. Nyabuti et al., (2015) notes that it is the responsibility of school administrators, teachers, staff and students to ensure that the school environment is safe by establishing clear school rules and policies.

Parents and other education stakeholders must be informed about school safety policies and implementation activities as they have important roles to play in facilitating and enhancing safety in schools. Since parents and guardians take keen interests in the safety and the wellbeing of their children, it is unlikely that they will send their children to schools they consider insecure. It is thus paramount that they participate in formulation of school rules and regulations not only for ownership but to use them as a guide in directing their children's behaviours and social interactions while in school. The Basic Education Regulation of 2015 Article 30 requires that development of school rules be subject to public participation and in consistence with the Basic Education Act and other related laws. Article 31 further states that no school rules should be implemented before the school board's approval (RoK, 2015).

In light of this, the study sought to find out from the respondents if parents were involved when formulating school safety rules in their children's schools. The table 1

show that 158 (62.4%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that parents were involved when formulating safety school rules. However, 25 (9.9%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that parents were involved when safety rules were being formulated. Additionally, 70 (27.7%) of the respondents chose to remain undecided. The results indicate that more than half of the schools involved parents when formulating safety rules that were expected to direct their children's behaviour while at school to promote their safety and that of the schools. However, there was risk of 37.6% of the schools formulating safety rules without due participation of this important category of stakeholders. One of the parents who responded to the BoM interview noted that,

"I only interacted with the school rules as I was required to read and confirm agreement with the rules and regulations during my son's admission to the school."

The researcher sought to find out if students were included in the school safety committees. The results as observed from Table 1 show that 80 (31.6%) of the respondents agreed while 67 (26.5%) strongly agreed that students were included in the school safety committee. However, 30 (11.9%) disagreed that students formed part of the school safety committee 64 (25.3%) remain undecided.

From these results, it is evident that more than half of the schools included students in the school safety committees. According to the interviewed board members, the role played by students who were part of the committee during COVID-19 included enforcement of guidelines like hand washing, wearing of masks and maintenance of social distance among students. And this worked well in curbing the spread of the deadly virus in schools. This confirmed the need to involve the students in safety committee so that they are aware of what is expected of them and the student fraternity as far as school safety is concerned.

The *Safety Manual for Schools in Kenya* requires that there be a teacher in charge of school safety. This study thus sought to find out from the respondents if there was a teacher in charge of school safety in their respective boarding secondary schools in Embu County. The study findings displayed in Table 1 shows that most of the respondents; 173 (68.4%) agreed or strongly agreed that there was a teacher in charge of school safety. Only 42 (16.6%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that there was a teacher in charge of school safety in their respective schools. However, 38 (15.0%) of the respondents remained undecided. The study results thus indicated that in more than two thirds of the schools; 68.4%, a teacher had been put in charge of school safety.

The study was carried out during COVID 19 pandemic, and the researcher sought to establish if the students' council were involved to ensure that their fellow students adhered to COVID 19 guidelines that had been established by the MoE in collaboration with MoH to manage the pandemic in institutions of learning. From table 1 the results displayed show that 119 (47.0%) agreed while 77(30.4%) strongly agreed that students' council ensured adherence to the COVID 19 guidelines. It can also be noted that only 22 (8.7%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that the students' council helped in ensuring adherence to the guidelines. However, 35(13.9%) of the respondents remained undecided.

The findings show that more than three quarters of schools (77.4%) involved student leaders in enforcing safety guidelines during the pandemic. The interviewed BoM members appreciated the good work the students' leadership had executed in containing school infections during the pandemic by ensuring implementation of COVID safety guidelines, sensitizing other students and reminding them on expectations, supervising others to ensure cleaning was done, reporting concerns and safety breaches for action by school administration.

The COVID 19 guidelines required that teachers form part of the school response committee to manage COVID 19 related issues at the school level. The school safety manual dictates that the school safety committee includes five teachers; Head teacher (Secretary), the deputy head teacher (Member), Teacher in charge of School Safety (Member), Guidance and counselling teacher, and Teacher union representative in the school (Member). Further, the education sector disaster management policy requires that the disaster management committee at the school level includes the school principal or the deputy, teacher in charge of guidance and counselling and all the class teachers. The study thus also sought to establish if teachers in boarding secondary schools in Embu were included in their schools' safety committees. The study results in Table 1 shows that 224 (88.5%) of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that teachers were members of the COVID-19 school response committee. Only 7 (2.8%) disagreed that teachers were members of the COVID-19 response committee while 17 (6.7%) of the respondents remained undecided. The results show that teachers were involved in handling COVID-19 related issues in boarding secondary schools in the county. The board members who participated in this study affirmed this citing that.

"*Teachers helped enforce; hand washing, wearing of masks, temperature checks, recording and monitoring; social distancing among students. Further, they sensitized students and other stakeholders on health and safety guidelines and vaccine uptake; assisted in mobilizing support; and played the role models beside the committee's advisory role*"

It was further important to understand the extent of involvement of stakeholders in making safety decision by Boards of Management and how the same related to the schools' compliance with the safety standards. The study thus sought to establish the relationship between involvement of stakeholders in making safety decision by Boards of Management and compliance with the safety standards as presented in Table 2 below

Table 2: Relationship between involvement of stakeholders in making safety decision by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards

		Stakeholder involvement in safety decision making	Compliance with safety standards
Stakeholder involvement in safety decision making	Pearson Correlation	1	.813
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.005
	Ns	10	10
Compliance with safety standards	Pearson Correlation	.813	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	
	N	10	10

r = .813   p=.005<.05

Table 2 shows *r* =.813. This shows that there is a positive correlation between involvement of education stakeholders in

making safety decision by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards in public boarding secondary schools. It can also be alluded that the positive relationship is strong. The positive linear relationship implies that an improvement in the schools' level of involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decision by Boards of Management, results to improvement on schools' levels of compliance with the set safety standards.

The study further sought to test the following hypothesis *"There is no significant relationship between involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decision by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards in public boarding secondary schools"*

Table 2 shows a *p* value of .005 which was smaller than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between involvement of stakeholders in making safety decision by Boards of Management and compliance with safety standards in public boarding secondary schools. Schools should be encouraged to involve all stakeholders when making decisions on school safety to enhance school compliance with the school safety standards.

Monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes

Monitoring of school safety should be a systematic and continuous process of making observations and recording of information on progress made in relation to the safety objectives guiding the institution. It should also take note of safety threatening situations or events and the management measures in handling the threats with a view to improving safety decisions and procedures in the future. Evaluation of school safety should take the form of a systematic analysis of monitoring data in order to expose its salient characteristics, to facilitate interpretation of those characteristics, and in order to enhance application of the data to sustainable safety management. The analysis should inform reliable forecasts and realistic reorganizations of plans and operations to improve management of school safety.

Monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes can indicate the direction of the programs by giving feedback on levels of achievement of programme objectives while revealing gaps and challenges that need redress if the overall goal of the safety programme is to be realised. According to UNESCO (2017) active disaster preparedness includes monitoring of hazards and threats. The safety policy requires schools to establish a monitoring and evaluation system to be able to determine the progress made towards the achievement of

school safety goals. There should be planned and organised effort to collect objective data by use of predetermined data collection tools; checklists, questionnaires, tests, or scales (MoE, 2008). The study sought to establish if boards of boarding secondary schools in Embu County monitored safety programmes already in place in their schools. The respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement that their schools have a safety monitoring that would help them ensure that every detail of school safety was monitored. The responses are as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Monitoring and Evaluation of Safety Programme

	5		4		3		2		1		Mean
	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	Fre	%	
School has a safety monitoring checklist	61	24.1	92	36.4	58	22.9	24	9.5	18	7.1	3.6
Board involved in inspection of school facilities	76	30	113	44.7	42	16.6	9	3.6	13	5.1	3.9
Administration ensures roll calls before bedtime	115	45.5	92	36.4	25	9.9	13	5.1	8	3.2	4.2
Standards assessment done regularly by MoE	85	33.6	112	44.3	33	13	11	4.3	12	4.7	4
School has CCTV cameras for surveillance	109	43.1	22	8.7	8	3.2	48	18.9	66	26.1	3.3
School record contact and temperature of visitors	106	41.9	85	33.6	38	15	17	6.7	7	2.8	4.1
Teachers note behaviour change in drug abusers	135	53.4	95	37.5	15	5.9	6	2.4	2	0.8	4.4
Teachers monitor their temperatures before work	73	28.9	94	37.1	49	19.4	17	6.7	20	7.9	3.7
School has accurate updated learner medical data	67	26.5	98	38.7	60	23.7	15	5.9	13	5.1	3.8
Students abusing drugs are counseled and guided.	145	57.3	86	34	17	6.7	4	1.6	1	0.4	4.5
Grand Mean											**3.94**

The results from Table 3 show that 92 (36.4%) of the respondents agreed while 61 (24.1%) strongly agreed that there was a school safety monitoring checklist. Only 42 (16.6%) of the respondents disagreed that their schools had a safety monitoring checklist while 58 (22.9%) were undecided.

This indicate that slightly above average; 153 (60.5%) of boarding secondary schools in Embu used a safety monitoring checklist to guide their monitoring and evaluation of the overall school safety programme to ensure that every detail of school safety was monitored during school routine safety inspections. This is supported by the mean; 3.6 which is far from getting to a level of agreeing that monitoring checklists were in use in the schools. This agreed with SCQASOs who stated that the safety manual standards and guidelines should always guide any safety assessment in any basic education institution,

"The basis of any routine school safety assessment should be based on the listed standards and guidelines in the safety manual for schools in Kenya. Yes, that is exclusively our first check list"

The officers further noted that there was no harm if a school came up with own safety check list depending on their unique safety needs in that each school was unique in handling their unique safety needs.

Monitoring and evaluation of the school safety and health programs should be a participatory process involving all the beneficiaries of the program; the learners, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents, the board and the community members (MoE,2008). The researcher sought to find out from the respondents whether their school board members participated in hygiene inspection of the school facilities. Results as per Table 3 indicate that 113 (44.7%) of the respondents agreed while 76 (30.0%) strongly agreed that their school BoM members participated in hygiene inspection of the school facilities. From the results, only 22 (8.7%) of the respondents indicated that they disagreed that their school boards participated in hygiene inspection of the school facilities. Additionally, 42 (16.6%) of the respondents remained undecided.

This implies that school boards in nearly three quarters (74.7%) of the respondents' boarding secondary schools in Embu County take interest to inspect the school facilities to uphold hygiene as depicted by a mean of 3.9 which is approaching the agreeing level. The findings were supported by the interviewed BoM members and SCQASOS who attended BoM meetings that it was mandatory for the BoM members to go round the school plant before siting for the meeting to assess the status of the overall school safety.

The safety policy directs that regular spot checks by the teachers and the administration be undertaken before learners retire to bed and an accurate roll call be taken every day and records well maintained (MoE, 2008). This is to ensure that the dormitories are safe for the students' night rest and ensure that all students are admitted to the dorms without any being un-accounted for in their transition from classrooms to the dormitories. This study thus sought to establish if the boarding secondary schools' administrations in Embu County ensured roll calls were done before bedtime. The results in Table 3 show that 115 (45.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 92 (36.4%) agreed that their school administrations ensured roll calls were done before bedtime. However, 29 (11.5%) of the respondents disagreed that their schools through administration ensured that students' roll calls were done before bedtime. Additionally, only a few (9.9%) of the respondents opted to remain undecided.

The results imply that the school administrations of the majority boarding secondary schools of the respondents 207(81.9%) in Embu County did consider taking the students' roll call before they retired to bed. The results were confirmed by BoM secretaries that they relied so much on dorm secretaries to undertake the roll call due to scarcity of staff and overwhelming student populations.

However, there was a gap as student leaders could not be relied on totally without proper supervision. This implies that there was an attempt to effectively ensure that the students remained safe and well accounted for after the class teaching-learning sessions of the school days. However, there was need for the remaining schools to take roll call seriously as recommended. There was also need for school boards to improve on staff housing to allow teachers reside in school to support in such activities.

The Quality Assurance and Standards officers of the MoE have a role in assessing and monitoring of school safety as part of their routine advisory visits to the schools (MoE, 2008). Routine standards assessment regularly done by the officers should help schools by giving feedback on all areas of school safety and standards. This feedback should incorporate recommendations on gaps and areas of improvement to be taken care of by the school boards. In relation to this the study sought to establish if school routine standards assessment were regularly done by the designated officers of the Ministry of Education. The results as on Table 3 show that 112 (44.3%) of the respondents agreed while 85 (33.6%) strongly agreed that MoE officers regularly carried out routine standards assessment of the boarding secondary schools. However, few (9.0%) of the respondents disagreed that MoE officers regularly carried out routine standards

assessment of the boarding secondary schools. The results indicate that majority; 197 (77.9%) of the respondents' boarding secondary schools had experienced standards assessment carried out by MoE officers. However, there is a likelihood that the 56 (22.1%) remaining respondents' boarding secondary schools in the county had not experienced a standards assessment carried out by MoE officers. The findings were confirmed by the SCQASOs with some stating that they either aimed to visit a school termly or yearly depending on availability of time and funds, while others indicated that schools were rarely, occasionally, or only visited whenever a case was reported requiring an investigative inspection to gather facts for purposes of reporting to the board or higher authorities for action.

This may further imply that the schools' boards are not well guided on how to go about enhancement of school safety. Further, some BoM members reported that they hardly got their schools being visited by the ministry officials even when they were invited to attend board meetings.

Schools have not been left behind in embracing the use of technology for surveillance as a way of enhancing safety monitoring and safety threats management. Among the modern technologies taken up by schools is the use of the Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV). Installation of the CCTV system can be used as a deterrent to; intruders as the presence of CCTV is taken to be an indicator of high-tech security system, to learners' school property vandalism, bullying and anti-social behaviours (theft, anti-social behaviours, drugs and substance abuse) as perpetrators fear being identified via CCTVs. This has thus helped in improving the behaviour of students, teachers and all those who interact with the school as they are bound to make better behaviour choices.

This study sought to find out if boarding secondary schools in Embu County had installed CCTV cameras for safety surveillance. The Table 3 results indicate that 109 (43.1%) of respondents strongly agreed while 22 (8.7%) agreed that their schools have CCTV cameras installed for safety surveillance. Furthermore, 114 (45.0%) disagreed that their schools had installed CCTV cameras for safety surveillance while 8 (3.2 %) of the respondents remained undecided to the item that their schools had installed CCTV cameras to aid in safety surveillance despite CCTVs being physical gadgets that cannot go un-noticed. The results imply that 131 (51.8%) of the respondents' schools had installed CCTV cameras to aid in safety surveillance in the schools whereas 122 (48.2%) had not and thus had not up scaled their safety monitoring with one of the most effective modern means available.

The findings agreed with board members' sentiments by majority of board members who noted that;

CCTV cameras when installed outside and inside classrooms, dining hall and dormitory areas, and hard to physically reach areas of the school compound that are monitored enhance school safety as threats can be dealt with on time. The only challenge hindering schools to embrace the technology is that it is a bit expensive to install yet schools are grappling with competing priorities that include procurement of teaching and learning materials, development for proper fencing, expansion of infrastructure to decongest dormitories and tuition facilities, boarding expenses that include feeding and sanitation.

The study finding concur with Ngaruiya and Gitonga (2023) who observed that majority of schools in Meru County had incorporated the use of CCTV cameras' surveillance and installed them in a bid to ensure that the schools were physically safe, emotionally secure and psychologically enabling especially for the learners. The researcher noted that CCTV surveillance technology monitored students' activities thus playing a role in maintenance of discipline, deterred offenders and complimented the guards work by exposing areas that were prone to safety breaches; boarding areas, toilets and near the fence.

During COVID-19 pandemic, a body temperature of 37.5 ^{0}C and above was suspicious and such a person wasn't allowed to mingle with others before seeking medical attention and approval. Schools were required to take everyday temperatures of all learners and non-teaching staff and maintain records of the same. Furthermore, all authorized visitors were also required to have their temperatures taken and recorded together with their details; name, place of residence and phone numbers (MoE, 2020). The information would be shared with the MoH Rapid Response Team with the aim of easing contact tracing in case infections were reported in the schools especially if the persons who had interacted with a visitor were affected. This study thus sought to find out if the boards implemented this COVID-19 health and safety strategy.

Results as indicated in Table 3 shows that 106 (41.9%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 85 (33.6%) agreed that their schools did maintain contacts and temperature records of visitors. However, 17 (6.7%) disagreed while a small proportion (2.8%) strongly disagreed that their school-maintained contacts and temperature records of visitors. It is also notable that 38 (15.0%) of the respondents remained undecided. The results indicate that three quarters (75.5%) of boarding secondary schools in Embu County kept contacts and temperature records of visitors as a strategy that was highly

recommended and utilized by the Ministry of Health to reduce the spread of the disease. However, it is notable that 62 (24.5%) of the respondents' schools did not take precaution to protect the students and staff from the infectious disease. This was confirmed by BoM members who affirmed that the COVID-19 the gate keepers in their schools had been inducted to do the temperature checks and recording and would not allow anyone whose temperature record was above 37.5^0c. These cases were reported to the ministry of health response committee for further monitoring. Students and teachers were placed in the isolation room for close monitoring by the school nurse or they were allowed to seek medical attention under care of the MoH.

To create a drug free school environment, teachers in their learning areas are expected to teach and enlighten the students on drugs and the effects of drug abuse. Displaying of posters promoting campaign against drug abuse can enrich the instructions given. It is also required that teachers are knowledgeable and understand drugs and signs of abuse thus able to identify learners who exhibit such symptoms and take the necessary remedial actions (MoE, 2008). This study sought to find out whether teachers in the boarding secondary schools in Embu County were in a position to note behavior change as part of the symptoms of drug abuse in their students so as to accord the badly needed help. From the Table 3 it is

notable that more than a half (53.4%) of the heads of departments strongly agreed while 95 (37.5%) agreed that teachers in their schools could identify students' behaviour change as a result of abusing drugs. However, 20 (9.1%) could not tell if teachers in their schools could note behaviour change in students abusing drugs. The results can be alluded to imply that majority of teachers; 230 (90.9%) in boarding secondary schools in Embu County are able to tell when a student is abusing drugs thus can give required support. This was confirmed by the interviewed board secretaries who confirmed that majority of teachers had been sensitized on drugs and substance abuse; types; signs and symptoms of abuse and they helped in dealing with the menace.

During COVID-19 pandemic, a body temperature of 37.5 ^{0}C and above was suspicious and such a person wasn't allowed to mingle with others before seeking medical attention. All teachers were thus expected to do self-screening which included temperature check before reporting to work. A record of the 37.5^0C and above accompanied by other symptoms of sickness required the teacher to stay away from school, notify his or her supervisor and seek medical attention immediately (MoE, 2020). This research sought to collect information from the respondents to establish whether teachers in the boarding secondary schools in Embu implemented the guideline that was meant to safeguard the students. From the

Table 3 it can be observed that 94 (37.2%) of the respondents agreed whereas 73 (28.9%) strongly agreed that teachers in their schools monitored their temperatures before going to work. However, 20 (7.9%) strongly disagreed while 17 (6.7%) disagreed that teachers in their schools monitored their temperatures before going to work. The results imply that 167 (66.0%) of the respondents(teachers) had either monitored their temperatures before interacting with the students or had merely observed others take the guideline with the seriousness it deserved in order to protect the students. However, it is notable that 86 (34.0%) did not take the initiative to protect the students from the pandemic as recommended by the MoH. According to board members, some schools had competing needs and thus procurement of adequate thermo-guns enough to take care of the huge school populations within limited time was not sustainable.

It is recommended that schools collect and keep accurate and up-to-date comprehensive medical data on every learner in the school in order to promote good health and hygiene among the learners (MoE, 2008). This study sought to establish if the boards of boarding secondary schools in Embu County kept accurate and updated learners' medical records. Observation from the study results on Table 3 indicate that 98 (38.7%) of the respondents agree while 67 (26.5%) strongly agree that their schools have accurate up-to-

date medical data of every learner. Moreover, 15 (5.9%) disagree while 13 (5.1%) strongly disagree that their schools have accurate up-to- date medical data of every learner. However, 60 (23.7%) took an undecided stand on the research item. From the findings it can be noted that nearly two thirds (65.2%) of the respondents' schools kept accurate up-to- date medical data of every learner. It would thus be easy to handle the students when they are unwell and address the students' need for medical assistance promptly. Additionally, it would not be easy to handle the students of the 88 (34.8%) respondents' schools which did not keep the updated comprehensive data of every learner in times of adversity. However, the SCQASOs cited fear of parents giving the correct information out of fear that their children with medical issues would be denied admission in schools as an impediment.

To reap the full benefits of guidance and counselling in schools, the boards of management are required to establish guidance and counselling programmes and strengthen guidance and counselling at the school level. This can be realized through facilitating of teacher counsellors' training and availing the necessary resources to allow them to execute their duties effectively and efficiently. Apart from giving learners a platform which allows them to easily and freely express their emotions, feeling and

fears in a safe, confidential, supportive and non-judgemental environment. Guidance and counselling should help the learners to improve relations, promote their self-esteem and resilience in facing life challenges. Guidance and counselling should thus empower learners to avoid destructive behaviours such as drug abuse. Additionally, there is need to appreciate that the best way to fight drug abuse is to counsel victims of the vice. It would thus be noble that whenever cases of use or misuse of drugs are discovered, the community, including school management shows care and concern through counselling. This study sought to establish whether students abusing drugs in the boarding secondary schools were receiving guidance and counselling as a follow-up in a bid to reform them for own safety and that of the whole school.

From the findings on Table 3 of the respondents 145 (57.3%) strongly agreed while 86 (34.0%) agreed that students abusing drugs in their schools are guided and counselled. Additionally, 5(2.0%) disagreed that students abusing drugs in their schools are guided and counselled. It can thus be inferred that majority; 231(91.3%) of the respondents' schools embraced use of guidance and counselling to rehabilitate students who were discovered to be using drugs.

However, only a few (8.7%) of the respondents' schools had not embraced guidance and counselling to rehabilitate students using drugs and to deter others from engaging in the destructive behaviour. However, board members and the MoE officers felt that the services rendered by the teachers were not enough as there was a felt need for professional counsellors in schools as teachers' commitment to guidance and counselling was dwindling with time due to over emphasis on performance in teaching subjects as requirement for promotion.

The study also sought to establish whether there was any correlation between safety programme monitoring and evaluation by boards of management and compliance with the safety standards. The study findings are as presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Correlation between programme monitoring and evaluation by Boards of Management and compliance with safety.

		M&E of safety programmes	Compliance with safety standards
Monitoring and evaluation of safety programs	Pearson Correlation	1	.927
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018
	N	10	10
Compliance with safety standards	Pearson Correlation	.927	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	.018	
	N	10	10

r = .927   *p* = .018<.05

Table 4 shows *r* = .927.

This shows that there is a positive correlation between safety programme monitoring and evaluation by boards of management and compliance with the safety standards. It can also be indicated that the positive relationship is quite strong. The positive linear relationship implies that with an improvement in safety programme monitoring and evaluation by boards of management, there is an improvement in compliance with the safety standards.

The study further sought to test the following hypothesis *"There is no significant relationship between safety programme monitoring and evaluation by boards of management and compliance with the safety standards."*

Table 4 shows a *p* value of .018 which was less than .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected implying that there is a significant relationship between safety programme monitoring and evaluation by boards of management and compliance with the safety standards. The same was echoed by SCQASOs who reported that;
Routine assessment and monitoring of school compliance with the safety standards sometimes lead to closure of boarding schools that do not comply as this pose safety threat to the wellbeing of students and the entire school population. We use the guidelines spelt out in the safety manual as

the parameter for existence of boarding schools; a school must comply with boarding guidelines to operate as boarding. Otherwise, we recommend day schools where safety risks are shared with parents/homes.

Schools' boards should be encouraged to monitor and evaluate their safety programmes to ascertain progress made in realizing set safety goals. The information collected during the monitoring process and generated through evaluation should guide the boards when making decisions on school safety.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decision by school boards strongly correlates with compliance with safety standards. Additionally, involvement of education stakeholders in making safety decision by school boards has a significant influence on compliance with the safety standards and thus the level of safety enjoyed in the school. The study concluded that education stakeholders were fairly involved in safety decision making with a grand mean of 3.97 and with all areas of concern scoring above 3.5. This was good for ownership and support of safety decisions and policies on school safety. Furthermore, the study concluded that there was need for schools to improve on such strategies as involvement of

parents in ensuring safe movement of learners to and from school (3.8), students and parents involvement in formulation of safety rules; 3.8 and 3.7 respectively, involvement of students as members of safety committees (3.6) and ensuring that there is a teacher in charge of the school safety (3.8) for comprehensive school safety to be realised.

The study further concluded that safety programme monitoring and evaluation by Boards of Management strongly and positively correlated with compliance with safety standards in boarding secondary schools. Furthermore, safety programme monitoring, and evaluation significantly influenced school compliance with the safety standards. Based on the findings the study also concluded that boarding secondary schools in Embu County fairly conducted monitoring and evaluation of safety programmes at a mean of 3.94. Further, notable was that schools were yet to fully embrace M&E strategies that registered means far lower than the grand mean like use of CCTV for safety surveillance (3.3) and use of a checklist for comprehensive M&E of the school safety (3.6) to enhance compliance with the safety standards as spelt out in the *Safety Standards Manual for Schools in Kenya* (2008).

Additionally, the study concluded that there is need for all school boards to involve education stakeholders in making safety decisions and highly engage in safety programme monitoring and evaluation so as to make informed safety decisions. According to Dube and Orodho (2016) safety is achieved and maintained through a continuous cycle of monitoring and evaluating and taking corrective action from informed decisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(i) BoMs should fully involve key education stakeholders; students, teachers and parents in all recommended areas of safety decision making for the decisions to win ownership of all the affected, and support for the boards in their implementation for safety goals to be realized.

(ii) BoMs and by extension the school administration should systematically, deliberately and endlessly monitor and evaluate safety programmes so as to gather information pertaining to the progress made in achieving the school safety goals and the direction of the safety programmes. Monitoring and evaluation of the safety programmes would also give feedback on the gaps and challenges hindering achievement of the set safety goals and the overall school safety. Furthermore, schools should invest in installation of CCTV cameras that have been perceived to enhance surveillance for school safety intelligence.

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