NATURE OF STUDENT CONFLICTS IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN WESTERN KENYA

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Abstract: **The final intention of any university is day-to-day create a productive, collaborative and smooth environment for high-quality daily outcomes. but, there are cases wherein college students are engaged in some conflicts that create impediments of their academic performances. daily manipulate persistent student conflicts in universities, both authorities and college management have provide you with numerous peace programmes. statistics imply that the quantity of college students conflicts have improved from 0.9% within the Nineteen Nineties daily 7.5% inside the closing decade. consequently, this look at investigated nature of student conflicts in public universities in western kenya. The look at followed descriptive survey and assessment research design and every day in decided on universities in Western, Kenya. The observe focused students, educational personnel and non-instructional personnel from the four universities inside Western Kenya. facts was gathered the usage of semi-based questionnaire and interview guides in addition to awareness group discussions. facts become analyzed using quantitative and qualitative techniques. apart from college students, different acdailyrs in scholar conflicts are personnel, administration, politicians, network and police. the main purpose of pupil conflicts become college guidelines. The effectiveness of peace programs in managing of student conflicts was at 23.9%. the general conclusion of the observe is that effectiveness of existing peace programmes isn't always good enough daily control pupil conflicts in public university in Kenya day-to-day demanding situations, however, exploiting the possibilities can beautify their effectiveness.**

Keywords: **Student Conflict, Peace programmes, Social Cohesions, Counselling.**

I.   INTRODUCTION

Campus conflicts can be different depending on a number of factors, including the institution's size, location, student population, mission, specialty, governance, and unionization. The things that can spark fights, even major ones, on one campus may never happen on another. Nonetheless, university-based conflicts contain enough similarities to be broadly comprehended. Even though student evaluations of lecturers are not mandated, for instance, they are a generally accepted aspect of the academic environment (Akparep, 2019). Moreover, campus-specific disagreements can arise over a variety of topics, such as faculty-student dating practices, sexual harassment policies, and student conduct codes. Nonetheless, when disputes arise over these and other campus-related issues, there are numerous commonalities in the dispute culture of universities.

Academic freedom, research, and peer micromanagement of personnel affairs are all examples of conflicts that can only arise in a university setting (Wekullo et al., 2018). Sometimes, events that have little to do with the institution at first glance end up being a big cause of tension and end up being acted out on campus, such as the conduct of a foreign government

that students find objectionable. The academic conflict landscape is made more complicated by the fact that many of the conflicts are not regulated by law.

The failure of people in positions of state authority to recognize the value of higher education to social, economic, and political growth is a source of tension in the field of higher education administration. When government bureaucrats act more like directors than advisers to those in charge of colleges and universities, it paves the way for massive conflicts fueled by interest politics that run counter to the nation's best interests. These interests are harmful to national institutions and fuel enduring wars while also causing social strife.

As a result, universities are riven by deep-seated disagreements. The majority of these disagreements center on issues related to ICT adoption and usage, resource mobilization, the transformation and professionalization of teaching and research organizations, and the professionalization and use of management human resources. The implementation of revision measures for effective and efficient management, renewal of academic courses and research, and also in infrastructural growth of these institutions is also a source of contention. The media have made special efforts to highlight the connection between inefficiency and ethics. The educational system has become a frequent target of blame. Since many universities and colleges lack formalized ethical guidelines, many of the sector's problems can be traced back to this omission.

Each and every university has the potential to face a variety of disputes, ranging from the interpersonal to the international level. In his study, Kebbi (2018) notes that in addition to the contributions to riots made by the aforementioned stakeholders, the increase in student population in the midst of a lack of proper planning, scarce resources, and lack of coping mechanisms to the challenges of overcrowding in the universities, also contributed a lot and is one of the reasons for the persistence of riots in universities and as such the origin of student activism, as well as the growth of universities and the student population. In addition to

Belle and Forde (2009) found that college students think that being aggressive is okay in a lot of situations. So, many college students believe violence is an appropriate means of resolving problems. Similar findings were seen among college-aged guys in the study by Zillman and Weaver (2006), who endorsed violence as an acceptable approach of resolving dispute. Some guys in this age range, it is claimed, lack sufficient empathy to be affected negatively by the victimization, and are able to successfully align moral considerations with their innate desire. Neglecting to implement effective ways to deal with the small percentage of college students who find that violence is an acceptable means of resolving conflicts has serious implications for society as a whole. This tactic will only serve to exacerbate an already tense situation.

Fauzia and Khan (2012), revealed that male students are more likely to have both interpersonal and internal difficulties than their female counterparts. However, female students are more likely than male students to face Goal-conflict. While males tend to favor direct confrontation, females are more likely to resort to indirect methods like negotiating and avoiding conflict altogether. More conflicts arise between older and younger students. The root causes of student conflict at the university level included things like stress, work overload, personality differences, attitude differences, and frustration.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study considered Peace Theory, Conflict Management Theory and human needs theory relevant in explaining peace strategies and programmes in regard student conflict management in public universities. The study utilized the conflict transformation theory as its foundation. The concept of conflict formation proposed by Johan Galtung in 1969 served as the foundation for this theory. Lederach argues that recognizing and working with conflict's "dialectic nature" is essential to transforming it, rather than focusing on either eliminating or controlling it. This is what he means when he says that social conflict arises organically from individuals interacting with one another, but that it inevitably affects the very events, people, and relationships that gave rise to it. Thus, the chain of causation extends in both directions, from people and relationships to conflict and then back to people and relationships. The phrase "conflict transformation" is used in this context to describe an organic process. Conflicts modify relationships in predictable ways, including changing communication patterns, social organization, and self- and other-perceptions (Lederach, 1999).

III. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey and evaluation research design. The study was conducted in western Kenya region comprising of counties of Kakamega, Vihiga, Busia, Bungoma, Kisumu, Siaya, Homabay, Migori, Nyamira, Kisii, Kericho, Nandi, Uasin Gishu and Trans Nzoia. The region has 9 public chartered universities and 4 university colleges. The study

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The study targeted 15975 respondents comprising of students and administrative staffs of selected universities in Western Kenya; Officer Commanding Police station in the four counties. Since the total number of students exceeds ten thousand (10,000) using 15863 students as the parameters, the following social science study formulae were utilized to calculate the sample size of 375 students, as stated by Fischer in Mugenda & Abel (2003) and Krejcie and Morgan (1997):

$S = X2\ NP\ (1-P)\ /\ d2\ (N-1) + X2\ P\ (1-P)$

S= required sample size

X2 = Chi Square Value at 1 degree of freedom (3.841)

N = Population Size

P = Population proportion with desired characteristics (assumed to be 0.5)

d = Degree of accuracy as a proportion (0.50)

Sample Size Calculation

 = 3.841158630.50(1-0.5)/(0.050.05(15863-1)+3.8410.5(1-0.5))

=375.069203

=375

Census, Purposive sampling and random sampling were used to sample 38 key informants from the four universities. They included Deans of Students, Student Governing Council, Student Disciplinary Committee, Peer Educators, Student Counselors, Chief Security Officers, Chaplains, police officers and National Administrators. In accordance with Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), the study developed the instruments that will assist in gathering the essential data for the sort of research being conducted; as a result, this study used the questionnaire, focus group discussions, and interview as trustworthy and practical study tools. Data collected from both primary and secondary sources was analyzed to get information on the effectiveness of peace programme and strategies used to manage conflicts in selected public universities in Kenya. The data collected was analyzed as follows: All collected data was edited for accuracy, completeness and uniformity. Coding was done by assigning numerical values to categories of questionnaires for statistical representation of data.

The machine fed quantitative data and analyzed it via the SPSS. Qualitative data was structured on the basis of the study problems found and was evaluated using content analysis. The responses were then entered in the summary sheet Data then tabulated to establish the frequencies and percentages of the respondents giving similar responses. Inferential statistics, particularly the chi-square and spearman correlation with an aim of determining the relationship among the key study variables influencing conflict management was computed. At the end of data analysis, all data were stored in both soft and hand copies in form of frequency tables, bar graphs, pie charts and quotes of voices from respondents.

IV. STUDY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, a total of 375 questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents, of which 304 were successfully completed by respondents, representing an 81.07 %. The Australian Vice Chancellors' committee and graduate careers council of Australia (2001) considered a response rate of at least 70% for the course experience questionnaire to be both desired and attainable.
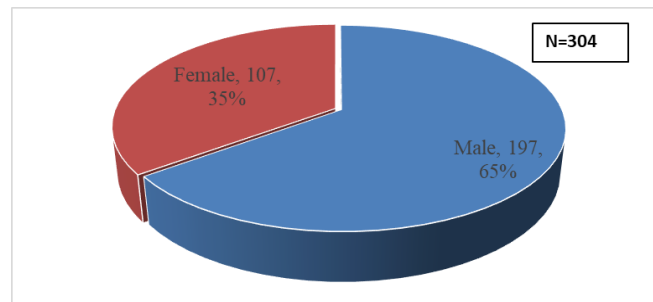
GENDER

Figure 1: Gender of respondents

Figure 1 demonstrates that 64.8 percent (197), while 35.2 percent (107) are females. The statistics suggests that majority of the participants are males compared to females according to the study finding. Regarding the handling of student problems, this indicates that there are more male than female students in Kenyan public universities. This could likely be linked to a variety of causes. According to Foreman and Retallick (2013), for example, male college students are more likely than girls to participate in extracurricular activities, clubs, and other social groups

Age of Respondents

Table 1: Age of Respondents

Years	Frequency	Percent
21 and Below	50	16.4
22	115	37.8
23	100	32.9
24 and above	39	12.8
Total	**304**	**100.0**

In table 1, Participants who are twenty years and below (19) are 16.4 percent (50) and 22 years 37.8 percent (115). Only 32 percent (32.9) of the respondents were 23 years while those that are 24 and above years are 12.8 percent (39). Additionally, this shows that the majority of the respondents aged between 22 and 23 years while the minorities are 24 and above years. Furthermore, this shows that the response to effectiveness of peace programmes employed in managing student conflicts in selected public universities in Kenya is excellent. the ages of the students indicate their familiarity with the employment of peace programmes for conflict resolution. With the implied age range, the study determined that the majority of students were in their early adolescent years, when the use of peace program platforms would be of great benefit to them; this is the age where the majority of young people are more influenced to join peace programs for reasons such as identity, belonging, self-discovery, etc., for self-affirmation and support. Scholars in the field of education emphasized that conflict management strategies vary by student age. According to Davis, Kraus, and Capobiancom (2009), older adults are less prone to participate in negative responses and are more likely to avoid conflicts.

Occurrence of Conflicts
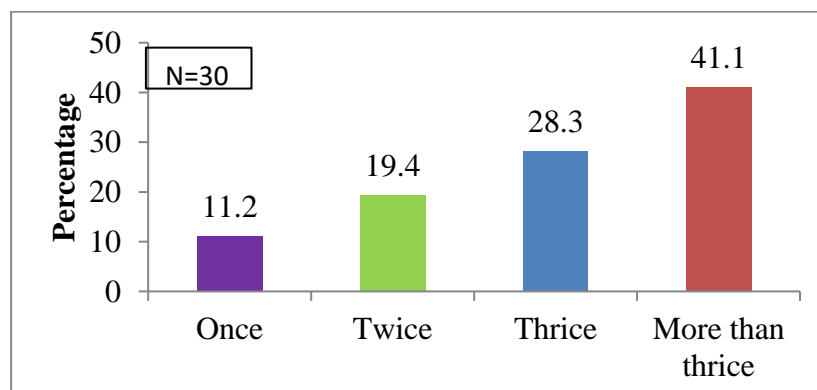
Figure 2: Occurrence of Conflicts

According to Figure 2, it suggests that 28.3 percent (86) have witnessed student conflict in their university thrice, while those who have witnessed student conflict taking place in their university twice are 19.4 percent (59). 11.2 percent (34) have witnessed the student conflict in their university once and those who witnessed the conflict in the university more than thrice are41.1 percent (125). According to the above data in Figure 4.2, it demonstrates that those who witnessed student conflicts in their university more than thrice are many and this gives the best respond to the effectiveness of peace programmes employed in managing student conflicts in selected public universities in Kenya.

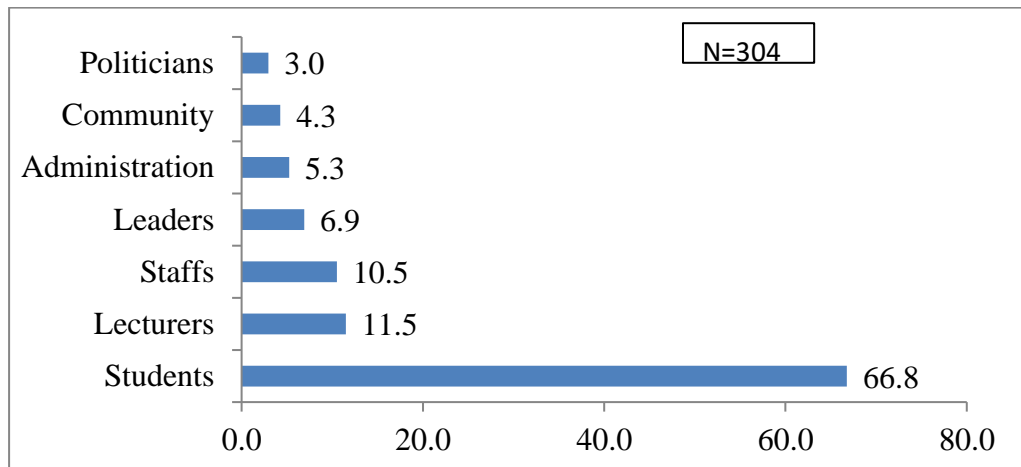**Actors Involved in Student Conflicts**

Figure 3: Actors Involved in Student Conflicts

As shown in Figure 3, 66.8% (203) of the sample respondents indicated that students are the main organizers and perpetrators of conflicts while 11.5% (35) indicated lecturers, staff were identified by 10.5% (32) while student leaders were associated by 6.9% (21). Others were university administration at 5.3% (16), Community 4.3% (13) and Politicians were identified by 3.0% (19). During focus group discussions, it was evident that students are the main actors in conflicts among public universities. In light of the foregoing, it is clear that student leadership unions and associations do little to foster intergroup cooperation in higher education. As a result of the political nature of these unions, which are influenced by national politics as well as ethnic identity and personal gain, this has occurred. Sons of the soil were found to get some favor from the local community and to same extent the administration which may interfere with cohesion as well as the university image.

Causes of Conflicts

Table 2: Main Cause of Conflicts

Main Cause of Conflicts	Frequency	Percent
University Policy Such as fees policy	156	51.32
University Elections	42	13.82
Insecurity	31	10.20
Difference in perception	28	9.21
Love relationships	24	7.89
Academic related (Missing Marks)	11	3.62
Drugs and substance abuse	9	2.96
Social Injustices	3	0.99

According to Table 2, 51.3 percent (156) believe that unpopular university policy such as fee policy is the main cause of conflicts in the public universities in Kenya, 13.8 percent (42) believe that elections are the main cause of conflicts in their university,10.2 percent (31) believe that insecurity is the main cause of conflicts in their university, 9.21 percent (28) believes that difference in perception is the main cause of conflicts in their university, 7.89 percent (24) believe that love relationship is the main cause of conflicts in their university 3.62 percent(11) believe that missing marks is the main cause of conflicts in their university while 2.96 percent (9) believes that abuse of drug and other substances is the main case of conflicts in the university. This implies that fees policy is the main cause of conflicts in the public university in Kenya because it has higher percentage of respondents.

Types of Conflicts

Table 3: Types of Conflicts

Types of Conflicts	Frequency	Percent
Student-administration	188	61.84
Student-student	171	56.25
Student-lecturer	166	54.61
Student-non-academic staff	98	32.24
Student-government	83	27.30
Student-community	79	25.99

From Table 3, it demonstrates that 56.25 percent (171) believe that student-student conflict frequently occurs in their university and this is due to love affairs, drug and substance use, elections, different ideologies, lack of cooperation among the students, lack of good communication among students, tribalism, racism, cultural differences, religious differences and student leadership, 61.8 percent (188) believe that student-administration conflict frequently occur in their university and this is due to fee increment, poor management of the university, limited resources in the university, university policy, fee balance, unsatisfied services, insecurity, students harassment by the administration, unfair treatment from the administration, poor learning environment for students, portal issues, long periods of holidays and financial issues , while 25.33 percent (77) agree that lecturer-administration conflicts occurs frequently because of delay payment of lecturers' salaries, reduced lecturer salaries, financial problems and poor management of the university.

Those who agree that Student-lecturer conflict occurs frequently in their university are 54.61 percent (166) and this is because of missing marks, delay release of examination results, rudeness among students, tribalism, exam marking complications, and love affairs between lecturers and students, and those of who think lecturer-lecturer frequently occur are 14.47 percent (44) and this is due to poor communication and misunderstanding among themselves, 725.99 percent (79) believe that student-community conflict occurs frequently because of theft, and rape cases, 27.3 percent (83) believe that student-government occurs frequently because of post-election violence and poor allocation of funds to public universities while those of student-non-academic staff are 32.24 percent (98) because of poor communication. More often than not in Kenya's public universities, student-administration conflicts are the most common, while those between lecturers and non-academic personnel are the least common. According to Fauzia and Khan (2012), male students have a higher rate of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflict than their female counterparts. In contrast, female students are more likely than males to face Goal-conflict. Confrontation is the favored conflict management method for men, while women prefer to compromise and withdraw.

Manifestation of Conflicts

The respondents were inquired about how conflicts are manifested in their university. Table 4 shows their responses. From Table 4.6 above, 31.58 percent (96) agree that lecturer boycott is used to manifest conflicts in their universities, 71.71 percent (218) agree that demonstrations is used in their university to manifest conflicts, 20.39 Percent (62) agree that work disruption is used to manifest conflicts in their university, 57.89 percent (176) agree that protest/unrest/revolt is used to manifest conflicts in their university, 20.72 percent (63) agree that physical attack is used to manifest conflict in their institution, those who agree that verbal assault/abuse/scorn is used to manifest conflict in their university are 28.62 percent (87). Other specifications of how conflicts are manifested in public universities in Kenya are 18.1 percent (55) these include exam boycott and tension amongst students.

Table 4: Manifestation of Conflicts

Manifestation of Conflicts	Frequency	Percent
Demonstrations	218	71.71
Protest/Unrest/Revolt	176	57.89
Unresolved conflicts/protracted conflicts	99	32.57
Lecturer boycott	96	31.58
Verbal assault/abuse/scorn	87	28.62
Physical attack	63	20.72
Work disruption	62	20.39

The study established that there is high prevalence of conflicts involving students in public universities with the main actor been students themselves. The main cause of students' conflict is the university policies such as fee policy and student support system such as lack of adequate security. In this case, the study concluded that there is high prevalence of student-administration conflicts in the sample university. The conflicts are manifested through demonstrations and protest/unrest/revolt which results to indefinite closure, destruction of university properties, injuries and destruction of private university. The university administration has remained the first responders to conflicts involving students although, students and community have also responded to these conflicts.

Effects of Conflicts

Table 5: After Effects of Conflicts

After Effects	Frequency	Percent
Indefinite closure	205	67.43
Destruction of university properties	202	66.45
Injuries	198	65.13
Destruction of private university	191	62.83
Loss of life	61	20.07
Insecurity	34	11.18

From Table 5 above, indefinite closure as an after effect of conflict is agreed by 67.43 percent (205), 66.45 percent (202) agree that destruction of property as an after effect of conflict in their university, 65.13 percent (198) agreed that injuries are after effects of conflicts in their institution, and destruction of property as an after effect of conflicts is agreed by 62.83 percent (191), while 20.07 percent (61) agree that death is an after effect of conflicts. This implies that the main after effect of conflict is destruction of property in public university in Kenya.

Other specified after effects of conflicts in public university in Kenya are 3.5 percent (25) and these include studies are interrupted, no team work amongst students, lessons are interfered, suspension of lecturers, deferment of university, extended period of learning, poor performance of students, additional fees, discomfort amongst students, no classes, destruction of academic calendar and delayed university programmes. It was established that the consequences of student violence at the University of Zalingei include the university's closure, academic underachievement, and a decrease in enrollment. Not only are professors and parents concerned about university violence, but other students are most affected by it. Other students suffer as a result of the disruptive behavior of the violent one. In many cases, the infraction progresses to the point where knives or guns are drawn. These weapons are used to intimidate or physically harm other students. Other students are scared of him, and as a result, they strive to avoid going to university. Violent students cause harm not only to their fellow students and professors, but also to the university's overall atmosphere, with the consequences sometimes even reaching the university's president or other higher-ups. Student misbehavior has been blamed for a number of deaths, including those of faculty members and students.

V. CONCLUSION

More than half of the sampled respondents have witnessed conflict in their universities for at least three times this has been attributed to their four year stay in the university. The main cause of conflict has been related to fee policy, study election and academic related such as missing marks and insecurity as most of the students are residing outside universities due to limited accommodation. Other causes of conflicts are university poor student support system such as infrastructure student council ineffectiveness, peer pressure and tribal grouping. The main actors in student conflicts are study themselves, however, to some extent, politicians and community have also organized conflicts involving students besides, lecturers, non-teaching staff, student leaders, and administration. Majority of the respondents indicated that the main type of conflicts is student-administration. However, other notable types of conflicts are student-student and student-lecturer. A majority of the respondents indicated that demonstration and protest/unrest/revolt are the main manifestation of conflicts involving students. However, there are elements of Unresolved conflicts/protracted conflicts, Lecturer boycott and Verbal assault/abuse/scorn.

Once the nature of the conflict has been recognized, it is critical to have procedures in place to ensure that participants understand their roles, obligations, and limitations, and that university members are made aware of their responsibilities in conflict. Following confirmation that there is a direct relationship between universities conflicts management and peace

programmes whereby from the findings there is a reverse and generic association between effectiveness of peace programmes and management of peace where the more the peace programmes effectiveness increases the more the management of students conflicts is achieved, therefore, it is imperative for university administration with immediate effect come to terms with reality and manage these conflict as they arise, with understanding that the problem is not whether the conflict exist or not but how do you mitigate the conflict, identifying their patterns, root cause, background and dynamics.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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