A CUSTOMISED PROACTIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATION PROCESS FRAMEWORK FOR SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL EXPLORATION OF STUDENTS' STRIKE IN MIRANGINE SUB-COUNTY

By

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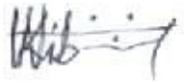FEBRUARY 2018

DECLARATION

I declare that **A CUSTOMISED PROACTIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATION PROCESS FRAMEWORK FOR SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA: A CROSS-SECTIONAL EXPLORATION OF STUDENTS' STRIKE IN MIRANGINE SUB-COUNTY** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work or part of it for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.

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ABSTRACT

Secondary educational institutions need to constantly scan their environment for crises that could hamper their operations and hinder the achievement of their organisational objectives. These institutions should also engage their strategic stakeholders in a mixed motive communication to collaboratively discuss the crises and find amicable solutions; thereby avoiding crises like the proliferating student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. This study explored the need for a customised Proactive Crisis Communication Process (PCCP) framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya to avoid student strikes.

A two-phased approach was adopted to collect the data. The first phase involved 12 one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the principals of the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County, while the second phase involved five focus group discussions with the students of Ruiru Secondary School. The results indicated that student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya were proliferating and that despite this, these institutions lack proactive measures to avoid strikes. Hence, this study posited a PCCP framework that proposed various proactive measures to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

Key terms: attribution theory, chaos theory, crisis communication, crisis management, image restoration theory, mixed motive model of communication, organisational crises, proactive crisis communication models, proactive crisis communication, situational crisis communication theory, student strikes.

OPSOMMING

Sekondêre opvoedkundige instellings moet konstant hul omgewing ondersoek vir krisisse wat hul bedrywighede kan belemmer en die bereiking van hul organisatoriese doelwitte kan verhinder. Hierdie instellings moet ook hul strategiese belanghebbers by gemengdemotief-kommunikasie betrek om gesamentlik die krisisse te bespreek en minlike oplossings te vind; en sodoende krisisse soos die toenemende studentestakings in sekondêre opvoedkundige instellings in Kenia te vermy. In hierdie studie is die nodigheid vir ʼn doelgemaakte

ProaktieweKrisiskommunikasieproses (PCCP)-raamwerkvir sekondêre opvoedkundige instellings in Kenia ondersoek om studentestakings te voorkom.

'n Tweefase-benadering is gevolg om die data in te samel. Die eerste fase het 12 halfgestruktureerde onderhoude behels wat een-tot-een met die hoofde van die sekondêre opvoedkundige instellingsin Mirangine Sub-Countygevoer is, terwyl die tweede fase bestaan het uit vyf fokusgroepbesprekings met die studente van RuiruSecondarySchool. Die resultate het getoon dat studentestakings in sekondêre opvoedkundige instellingsin Kenia vinnig toeneem en dat hierdie instellings, ten spyte daarvan, nie oor proaktiewe maatstawwe beskik om stakings af te weer nie.Gevolglik het hierdie studie 'n PCCP-raamwerk aangeneem wat verskeie proaktiewe maatstawwe voorstel om stakings deur studente in sekondêre opvoedkundige instellings in Kenia te verhoed.

Sleutelterme: attribusieteorie, chaosteorie, krisiskommunikasie, krisisbestuur, beeldherstelteorie, gemengdemotief-kommunikasiemodel, organisatoriese krisisse, proaktiewe krisiskommunikasiemodelle, proaktiewekrisiskommunikasie, situasionele krisiskommunikasieteorie, studentestakings.

IQOQA

Izikhungo zemfundoyomkhakhawamasekhondari kumele zihlale ziqaphele ukuthi akukho yini endaweniezikuyookungasusaudweshubesekuphazamisaukusebenzakwazokuvimbe impumeleloyazoezinhloswenizayo.Lezizikhungokumelezibuyezisebenzisane nabathintekayo balawule amasu okusebenza ukuba kubenokuxhumana okunhlobonhlobo kuxoxwe ngokubambisana ngodweshu olungavela nokuthi lungasonjululwa kanjani ngendlela egculisayo; ngaleyo ndlela-ke ingagwemeka imibhikisho yabafundi elokhu isabalala ezikhungwenj zamasekhondari eKenya. Lolu cwaningoluhlola isidingo sohlaka lwekhethelo lokusheshe kusukunyelweudweshu lungakenzeki,i-Proactive Crisis Communication Process (PCCP) olungasebenza ezikhungweni zemfundo yamasekhondari eKenya ukuze kugwenywe imibhikisho yabafujni.

Kwemukelwaindlela ezigaba zimbili yokuqoqainingwane. Isigaba sokuqala ngokuxoxisana okuyi-12 komuntu ebhekene nomuntu okuthi akuhleleke nje, okwenziwa nothishanhloko bezukhungo zemfundi yamasekhondaribaseMiringane Sub-County, kanti isigaba sesibili sabandakanya izingxoxo eziyisihlanu zamaqembu agxike kokuthile nje, zenziwa nabafundi besikole iRuri Secondary School. Imiphumela yaveza ukuthi imibhikisho ezikhungweni zemfundo yamasekhondari eKenya yabe yanda nokuthi nangaphandle kwalokhu izikhungo lezi zazingenazo izinyathelo ezingazithatha ngaphambi kwesikhathi ukuvimba ukwenziwa kwemibhikisho. Yikho-ke lolu cwaningo luphakamisa uhlaka lwe-PCCP oluncoma izinyathelo ezahlukene okumele zisheshe zithathwe ukugwema imibhikisho yabafundi ezikhungweni zamasekhondari eKenya.

Amatemu asemqoka: ithiyori yokwabela imbangela kokuthile, ithiyori yezixakaxaka, ukuxhumana sekunodweshu, ukuphatha kunodweshu, ithiyori yokubuyisela isithunzi, ukuxhumana okunezinhloso ezixubile, udweshu lwenhlangano,, izindlela zokuxhumana zokugwema udweshu lungakenzeki, ukuxhumana okugwema udweshu lungakenzeki, ithiyoriyokubhekana nesimo sodweshu, imibhikisho yabafundi.

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND MOTIVATION

"Crises often damage the image and reputation of an organisation and its stakeholders" (David 2011:73).

1.1 INTRODUCTION

A crisis is a significant threat or an unexpected event causing disruption to organisational operations which, if not managed sufficiently, could have negative implications not only on the organisation but also on its stakeholders and the industry in which it operates (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:217; Coombs 2007:1). A crisis has the potential to damage the organisation's reputation, a fact that emphasises the need for organisations to guard against crises to safeguard their reputations among various stakeholders to ensure organisational continuity and profitability (Swart 2010:1). To manage crises successfully, Swart (2010:1) posits that organisations need to prepare in advance for these crises by designing pro-active crisis communication plans to act as reference points to respond to crises. According to Wameyo (2012:32), a crisis could benefit those who are prepared for it but could also destroy the unprepared.

There has been an escalation of student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya, where students boycott classes, leave the institutions even at night, destroy institutional property and even lynch other students (Karanja 2012:6; Karanja & Bowen 2012:4; Munene & Wanyoro 2012:11; Kiprop 2012:122). Since 1990, 94 students in various secondary educational institutions in Kenya have died in arson attacks by fellow students and by students from other institutions (Choge, Tanui & Ndegwa 2011:1; Ombati 2015:1). Student strikes distract educational operations leading to loss of teaching and learning time, which negatively impact on the delivery of quality education (Karanja & Bowen 2012:1). Proactive crisis communication in an educational environment can be used to avoid student strikes by proactively opening up communication channels to engage in a mixed motive communication with the students to voice their grievances.

This chapter elaborates on the context of the study; reviews relevant literature; explains the goal and the objectives of the study as well as the research problem and also elaborates on the

research design. It also outlines the anticipated findings, the contribution of the study to the discipline of communication and a demarcation of the study per chapter.

1.2 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This section explains the purpose and background of the study, and the relationship of the topic to the discipline of communication.

1.2.1 Purpose of the study

Coombs (2007:1) regards crisis management as a process designed to pre-empt or lessen the damage a crisis can cause to an organisation and its stakeholders with the ultimate objective of protecting the organisation and its stakeholders from threats and/or lessen the threats. According to Swart (2010:29), crisis management includes the process of crisis communication to various stakeholders as a crisis creates high levels of uncertainty among strategic stakeholders, thus the need for immediate communication of important information. Crisis communication focuses on protecting and defending an individual or an organisation facing a crisis that could cause damage to their reputation by implementing proactive crisis communication plans which specify what the organisation should do to deal with a crisis situation (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:217; Coombs 2007:1). Proactive crisis communication strategies focus on anticipating and preventing crises (Wan & Pfau 2004:302; Sapriel (2007:24). According to Zillich, Gobbel, Stengel, Maier & Rurmann (2011:263), prevention of a crisis is at the heart of proactive crisis communication. It involves scanning the workplace environment for possible crises, reducing the likelihood of their occurrence and preparing key stakeholders for a crisis through a two-way symmetrical communication with these stakeholders before an issue escalates into a crisis (Swart 2010:72).

Proactive crisis communication could be used to avoid the perennial crises that secondary educational institutions in Kenya face resulting from the increasing cases of student strikes. These institutions either lack crucial facilities or the existing facilities are inadequate; the instructional materials are inadequate; students are often sent home for lack of school fees; water is scarce; sanitation is poor; dormitories in boarding educational institutions are overcrowded; and the food is badly prepared and inadequate (Glennerster, Kremer, Mbiti & Takavarasha

2010:4; Jagero 2011:127). There is also a communication gap between the teachers and the students in these institutions, whereby the students feel ignored and their grievances not acknowledged (Rwamba 2004:24; Keriga & Burja 2009:14). According to Kiprop (2012:122), dialogue between the institutional administrators and the students is lacking in secondary educational institutions in Kenya as most administrators adopt a superior-inferior attitude in their interactions, which breeds misunderstanding, frustration and eventually violence that is manifested in student strikes.

This study intends to explore the need for a new, customised, proactive crisis communication process framework (PCCP) for public secondary educational institutions to avoid student strikes. This will be done by exploring the risks posed by these strikes in secondary educational institutions; the proactive crisis communication measures used by the institutions to avoid student strikes; and the information needs of the strategic stakeholders during student strikes. The PCCP framework will be customised to the secondary educational environment and could form the basis for a proactive crisis communication plan to act as a reference point to avoid crises in these institutions as many of the existing crisis communication plans have focused on crisis communication as a reactive function (Swart 2010:3).

1.2.2 Background of the study

Secondary educational institutions in Kenya have been experiencing a spate of student strikes resulting from extension of terms, avoiding sitting for exams and banning of cell phones in schools, among other reasons. Students stage protest marches, burn dormitories, destroy property, vacate institutions without permission, while others block roads and attack motorists (Karanja 2012:10; Munene & Wanyoro 2012:11; Schools hit by students unrest…2012:34). In July 2016, more than 90 cases of arson were reported in various secondary educational institutions in Kenya where students burned classes, dormitories and science laboratories (Wanzala 2016:6). Despite this escalation of student strikes, Swart (2010:18) posits that it is not always possible to avoid such crises due to a lack of proactive crisis management coupled with a lack of strategic management of a crisis which allows issues to escalate into crises.

This study endeavoured to explore the risks posed by student strikes in public secondary educational institutions; lack of proactive crisis communication measures to avoid student strikes; the information needs of the strategic stakeholders during a student strike; and, based on this exploration, develop a new, customised PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

1.2.3 Relevance of the study

Seeger, Sellnow, and Ulmer (1998:233) define an organisational crisis as "a specific, unexpected and non-routine event or a series of events that create high levels of uncertainty and threaten or are perceived to threaten an organisation's high-priority goals." Crisis communication and management in a secondary educational system is important to address crises like bomb threats, child abuse, gang activities, drug abuse, suicides, natural disasters and student strikes (Schools and crisis management…2012:2). Public secondary educational institutions in Kenya are affected by student strikes resulting from grievances like a poor diet, unfashionable uniforms, poor teaching and management, embezzlement and misappropriation of school finances, teacher transfers, high-handed management and even lack of communication between teachers and students as well as between students and the school management (Schools hit by student strikes…2012:34). Student strikes need to be avoided due to their frequency and ability to destabilise programmes; instill fear in various stakeholders; create uncertainty in the schools or even result in the destruction of school property by the students (Karanja 2012:10). As a crisis communication strategy to avoid crises, Seeger et al (1998:233) propose the structuring, implementation and maintenance of an overall crisis management plan. Hence, this study could contribute to the discipline of communication by designing a PCCP framework that is customised to the secondary educational environment in Kenya. This framework will be a culmination of the existing proactive crisis communication principles and elements and the findings obtained from the empirical exploration at selected secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

1.2.4 Relationship of the topic to the discipline of communication

Goodman (2006:196) regards crisis communication as an organisational communication function which, according to Kyhn (2008:7), helps to protect an organisation's reputation or defend an organisation facing a challenge to its reputation. Proactive crisis communication focuses on the prevention of crises by identifying any perceived risks, issues and threats early and avoiding them before they escalate to crises (Wan & Pfau 2004:302; Sapriel 2007:24). The topic of this study, which is the use of proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions resonates with this definition and therefore relates to the discipline of communication as crisis communication and the development of crisis communication plans are functions of organisational communication. This study will develop a new PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

1.2.5 Other research in the field

An extensive search on the Nexus Database (2017) reveals a lack of similar studies that have specifically addressed the topic of this study. The following studies in crisis communication and management are currently being undertaken: *A theoretical framework for the use of online social media during organisational crisis management* (Du Plesis 2012-); *Communication through crisis: an exploratory analysis of managing effective crisis management strategies through media* (Dlamini 2007-).

The following dissertations and theses in organisational crisis have been completed during 2006 to 2010: *A case study research resulting in critical findings on Telkom crisis communication readiness* (Brits 2011); *Crisis communication planning and management at higher education institutions in KwaZulu-Natal* (Hussain 2010); *The effect of the crisis in scholarly communication on university libraries in South Africa* (Hoskins 2010); *An integrated theoretical framework for strategic crisis communication with the media: a case study on a financial services provider* (Swart 2010); *The development of an operational model for the efficient management of crisis communication with the news media* (Viljoen 2008); *A conceptual model of crisis management with the media: a case study of the financial sector* (MacLiam 2006); and *Local government and crisis management: an exploratory study* (Horak 2006).

As this study explores the use of proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya, this study can, therefore, be regarded as an original contribution to the field of organisational communication.

1.3 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section briefly defines and expounds on organisational communication, the flow of communication in an organisation, models of communication in an organisation, the mixed motive model of communication, organisational crisis, crisis management, crisis communication, proactive crisis communication theories and proactive crisis communication models. The nature of the secondary educational environment in Kenya is also briefly reviewed. This study will apply organisational concepts to study student strikes as crises in secondary educational institutions.

1.3.1 Organisational communication

Goodman (2006:199) regards organisational communication as including all communication between the organisation and its various stakeholders. Antonis (2005:44) postulates that organisational communication enables the key stakeholders to access the relevant information within the organisation. Organisational communication facilitates the effective functioning of an organisation by enabling socialisation among organisational stakeholders as well as decision-making and problem-solving by employees and management (Rajhans 2012:82). Organisational communication also enables the coordination of employees from different organisational functions and levels and structuring of various objectives, activities and processes within an organisation (Rajhans 2012:82). This study will apply organisational communication principles in an educational environment. The following section briefly discusses how communication flows in an organisation.

1.3.1.1 Flow of communication in an organisation

Communication in an organisation flows in three directions, namely: one-way, two-way or from

many-to-many. In one-way communication, information flows in one direction only from the sender to the receiver who does not give feedback (Lyon 2015:1). One-way communication could be face-to-face, written through memos, reports, bulletin boards, newsletters, and letters; or electronic through e-mails and the inter-com (Lunenberg 2010:3). The lack of feedback in one-way communication means that the sender does not know if the message has been received or not, which could lead to misunderstanding between the sender and the receiver (Fielding 2006:502; Lyon 2015:1).

Two-way communication flows in two directions from the sender to the receiver and back to the sender (Lunenburg 2010:2). Both the sender and receiver encode and decode the message into meaningful information (Lunenburg 2010:2; Lyon 2015:1). Two-way communication occurs in face-to-face encounters or in telephone conversations (Lunenburg 2010:2; Lyon 2015:1). Due to the provision of feedback, two-way communication enables the participants to determine if the message was successful (Fielding 2006:502).

Many-to-many communication has evolved with the increased use of social media networks which enable users to communicate with large audiences (Cohen 2011:1). Social media also enable messaging where content can be distributed to a large number of people (Du Plessis 2010:3). Social media comprises platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, MySpace, Flickr, Linkedin, Youtube and Instagram (Rensburg 2009:182; Makgopa 2016:79). Social media is considered by many organisations as an important communication tool that enables many-to-many communication to exchange information, engage, collaborate, interact and build relationships among stakeholders (Waititu 2015:30). Barnard (2015:38) postulates that social media can be used to organise events, raise awareness about a certain cause and debate interesting topics. Organisations can also use social media for customer service, reputation management, outreach, advertising, sales generation and research (Jeffries 2012:45). Barnard (2015:39) posits that the immediacy of social media enables organisations to provide their stakeholders with information immediately as issues arise and thus enables speedy response to these issues by the stakeholders.

Although many-to-many communication through social media is increasingly becoming the normative ideal in these modern times, it is yet to take root in secondary educational institutions in Kenya due to technological challenges like lack of electricity, computer technology and internet connectivity in the majority of these institutions. Hence, a mixed motive model of communication was preferred as the focus of this study.

1.3.1.2 Models of communication in an organisation

James Grunig and Todd Hunt (1984) developed the Four Models of Public Relations to explain the process of public relations (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22). These models were the press agentry model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetric model and the two-way symmetric model (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22). The press agentry model and the public information model involve one-way asymmetrical communication; the press agentry model involves propaganda while the public information model involves journalism to provide the public with information (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra 1995:164). The two-way models involve professional public relations through persuasion in a two-way asymmetric communication; and through conflict management in a two-way symmetric communication (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Grunig et al 1995:164).

Two-way asymmetrical model of communication involves the provision of unbalanced information to persuade stakeholders to adopt the point of view of the organisation (Grunig 1992b:18; Zhang 2008:305). This model involves an unethical communication by the organisation to force the stakeholders to behave in certain ways for the benefit of the organisation (Men 2014:206). The public relations practitioner uses research to understand organisational stakeholders for the sole purpose of persuading and manipulating them for the benefit of the organisation (Grunig 1992b:18; Zhang 2008:305).

Two-way symmetrical communication involves two-way balanced and open communication between the organisation and its stakeholders, where both are senders and receivers of information (Grunig & Grunig 1992:289; Karlberg 1996:270). Cooper (2009:22) regards two-way symmetrical communication as an exchange of information to resolve disputes and to negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes. Two-way symmetrical communication is characterised

by a focus on stakeholders, responsive communication, timely feedback, collaboration, negotiation, interdependency, message consistency, openness, truthfulness, fundamentality, mutual understanding, shared vision and collaborative problem solving (Slabbert & Barker 2014:70).

The mixed motive model of communication is derived from the Four Models of Public Relations proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984:22). This model includes one-way asymmetrical communication and two-way symmetrical communication in an organisation to give instructions, share information and solve organisational problems (Cooper 2009:22). The mixed motive model's continuum ranges from one-way asymmetric communication, where the organisation pursues its own interests; to two-way symmetric communication where the organisation is more focused on the interests of its stakeholders than own interests (Zhang 2008:306; Zhang 2010:289). In the middle of this continuum, a balance is struck between organisational interests and stakeholder interests (Zhang 2008:306; Zhang 2010:289). The current definition of the mixed motive model of communication does not recognise the current advancement in interactive communication technologies that has ushered in an era of many-to-many communication. Therefore, this study proposes that the current definition of the mixed motive model of communication be replaced with a definition that combines one-way, two-way and many-to-many communication. This study also proposes a mixed motive model of communication to engage students in one-way and two-way symmetrical communication to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

1.3.2 Organisational crisis

Coombs (2007:1) and Kyhn (2008:14) regard a crisis as a significant threat to organisational operations that can have negative consequences on an organisation, its stakeholders or an industry if not handled properly. These views are shared by Seeger and Padgett (2010:128) who define a crisis as unusual events in an organisational environment that involve social disruption and physical harm. These definitions relate to the one proposed by David (2011:73) who regards a crisis as "a perception of an unpredictable event that threatens important expectancies of stakeholders and can seriously impact an organisation's performance and generate negative outcomes." According to David (2011:73), crises usually escalate, attract a lot of media and

government attention and often damage the image and reputation of an organisation and its stakeholders. For the purpose of this study, a crisis is defined as any event or occurrence that threatens to disrupt the normal operations of an educational institution and which could damage its image and reputation if measures to avoid it are not implemented.

Different types of crises have been identified in crisis management and communication literature. Coombs (2004:270) places crises into two major categories: natural disasters and organisational crises where the former include epidemics, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcano eruptions, severe droughts, storms, tsunamis while the latter could be technological crises, confrontational crises, crises of malevolence, crises of organisation misdeeds, crises of skewed management values, crises of deception, workplace violence, crises of management misconduct and malicious rumours. In this study, student strikes are regarded as organisational crises characterised by confrontation and malevolence by the students.

1.3.3 Crisis management

Crisis management has been defined in various ways by different theorists. Fearn-Banks (2001:480) regards crisis management as strategic planning to prevent and respond to a crisis by removing some of the risk and uncertainty caused by that crisis. Pancic (2010:22) regards crisis management as a tool that is designed to fight crisis, minimise the damage caused by this crisis and protect the organisation, its stakeholders and the industry from harm. Coombs (2007:1) conceptualises crisis management as the process of preventing or lessening the damage a crisis can cause to an organisation and its stakeholders. A more inclusive definition of crisis management is the one proposed by Swart (2010:29), where crisis management is regarded as "the threefold process to proactively plan and prepare the organisation for possible crisis situations, to sufficiently and promptly respond to crises and to employ post-evaluative actions in order to facilitate learning and prepare the organisation for future events." This definition supports the proactive perspective of this study. For the purpose of this study, crisis management is conceptualised as a process with three stages: a proactive stage which involves scanning an organisation's environment for issues that are potential crises and finding solutions to these issues before they escalate to crises; a reactive stage to address crises occurrences; and a post-evaluative stage to use the lesson learnt to prevent future crises. However, due to the proactive

bias of this study, a focus on the pre-crisis phase of a crisis is emphasised as it is at this stage where crises can be avoided.

Swart (2010:29) explains that effective crisis management helps organisations to avoid or prevent crisis situations and is therefore a proactive action. Kyhn (2008:18) posits that the successful implementation of crisis communication enables organisations not only to avoid, but also to proactively plan for and prevent them. Swart (2010:13) posits that a reciprocal relationship exists between crisis management and crisis communication; that crisis communication is built on the crisis management process and connects the stages in the process. Pancic (2010:14) postulates that when crisis communication is effective, crisis management succeeds, hence their interconnectedness.

1.3.4 Crisis communication

Goodman (2006:196) regards crisis communication as an organisational communication function to respond to crisis situations by establishing a dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders in a two-way communication. Swart (2010:29) sees crisis communication as the organisation's response to a crisis situation to diminish damage to the corporate image. David (2011:73) regards crisis communication as the dialogue between the organisation and its public before, during and after a crisis. This dialogue details the various strategies that can be implemented in an organisation to minimise damage to its image (David 2011:73).

Crisis communication has three stages (Pancic 2010:15; Swart 2010:30): Proactive crisis communication, reactive crisis communication, post crisis communication. This view is supported by David (2011:73) who conceptualises a proactive and interactive approach to crisis communication which covers the three dimension of a crisis: pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. For the purpose of this study, crisis communication is regarded as two-way communication between an organisation and its stakeholders before, during and after the occurrence of a crisis. However, this study will focus on the proactive stage of crisis communication as this stage involves the designing of proactive crisis communication plans to avoid crises.

Proactive crisis communication strategies that focus on preventing crises from occurring are seen as the optimal approach in these modern times, according to Wan and Pfau (2004:302). This view is shared by Sapriel (2007:24) who posits that organisations are today emphasising the need to anticipate, prevent and mitigate against crises through a more deliberate process of identifying risks, issues and new and unimagined threats early and managing them before they escalate to crises. Zillich et al (2011:263) regards the prevention of a crisis as one of the basic tenets of proactive crisis communication. Swart (2010:72) regards proactive crisis communication as involving scanning the workplace environment for possible crises, reducing the probability of their occurrence and preparing key stakeholders for a crisis so as to control it when it occurs; and involves opening up and cooperating, through a two-way symmetrical communication, with an organisation's public before an issue escalates into a crisis. Falkheimer and Heide (2006:187) propose that future research should focus on a proactive and interactive approach to crisis communication that focuses on dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders during the pre-crisis phase. Therefore, this study will focus on developing a new PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

1.3.5 Proactive crisis communication theories and models

The following proactive crisis communication theories and models will be considered in this study:

1.3.5.1 Chaos theory

Chaos theory is based on the premise that organisations have predictability with general trends and patterns (Murphy 1996:105). These organisations also have sensitive dependence on the existing conditions which are easily disturbed by minor events which have the potential to impact on the organisation in a major way (Murphy 1996:105; Seeger & Padgett 2010:135). Chaos theory sees the changes in organisations that disrupt predictability as bifurcation which are the flashpoints of disruption and change at which a system's direction, character and/or structure is fundamentally changed. Bifurcation can occur at any time and is followed by self-organisation, which is the process of bringing order back to the organisation (Murphy 1996:105; Seeger & Padgett 2010:135).

1.3.5.2 Situational Crisis Communication Theory (SCCT)

The situational crisis communication theory (SCCT) was developed by Timothy Coombs (1995) to explain how communication protects an organisation's reputation during a crisis (Coombs 2004:266; Coombs 2007:163; Bell 2010:8). It employs the attribution theory where individuals make attributions about the organisation and these are used to predict the reputational threat to the organisation. Three factors (initial crisis responsibility, crisis history and prior relational reputation) are used to predict this threat and play an important role in how the organisation will be able to restore its reputation (Bell 2010:8). SCCT applies the principles of responsibility and blame to a wide range of crises situations. It focuses on how perceptions of a crisis situation affect crisis responses and the effects of responses to an organisation's reputation (Pancic 2010:30).

This research will employ the chaos theory due to its emphasis on situational analysis to identify potential crises. SCCT will also be employed in this study due to its emphasis on post-crisis communication whose lessons will inform proactive crisis communication. Proactive crisis communication will be considered in the development of a PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions.

1.3.5.3 Proactive crisis communication models

Table 1.1 summarises the proactive crisis communication models that will be considered in this study.

Table 1.1: Proactive crisis communication models

Proactive crisis communication model	Basic principles of model
Fink Stage Model of Crisis (Fink 1986:19)	Considers a crisis as having four stages: prodromal, acute, chronic, and resolution.
Mitroff's Stage Model of Crisis Management (Mitroff 1988:15)	Proposes that a crisis moves through five stages: signal detection, preparation/prevention, containment/damage control, recovery and learning.
Shari's Three-stage Approach to Crisis Management (Shari 2011:120)	Perceives a crisis as having three stages: pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis.
Horsley and Barker's Synthesis Model for Crisis Management (Horsley & Barker 2002:416)	Proposes five interconnected stages: ongoing PR activities, identification and preparation for potential crises, internal training and rehearsal, crisis response, evaluation and revision of PR efforts and inter-agency and political coordination analysis.
Issue and Crisis Management Relational Model (Jaque 2010:11)	Conceptualises a crisis in three stages: pre-crisis phase (crisis preparedness and prevention), crisis incident management phase (crisis recognition, systems activations and response) and post-crisis management phase (recovery and business resumption, post-crisis issue impacts and evaluation and modification).

The above table briefly discusses Fink's stage model of crisis, Mitroff's stage model of crisis management, Shari's three-stage approach to crisis management, Horsley and Barker's synthesis model for crisis management and the issue and crisis management relational model. These proactive crisis communication models will be applied in this study.

1.3.6 The nature of the secondary educational environment in Kenya

Secondary educational institutions are conceptualised in this study as secondary schools where students study for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (Keriga & Burja 2009:13; Wanjohi 2011:1). This study regards students as the learners in the secondary educational institutions (Wanjohi 2011:1). In Kenya, secondary educational institutions are categorised into two: private and public, where private secondary educational institutions are owned and managed by private individuals or organisations; while public secondary educational institutions are owned and managed by the government (Chase 2006:1; Wanjohi 2011:1). These institutions are characterised by inadequate or lack of crucial facilities, inadequate instructional materials, job dissatisfaction by teachers, lack of fees, lack of in-service training for teachers, scarcity of water, poor sanitation, overcrowding in dormitories in boarding schools, lack of conducive

learning environment and badly managed, prepared and inadequate diet (Karanja & Bowen 2000:1; Glennerster et al 2010:4; Jagero 2011:127). These institutional challenges give rise to indiscipline and student strikes resulting in destruction of property and even loss of lives; and consequently poor academic performance (Karanja & Bowen 2000:1; Jagero 2011:127). This study proposes a PCCP to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. In the following sections, student strikes as a crisis type and stakeholders in a secondary educational environment are briefly defined and contextualised.

1.3.6.1 Student strikes as a crisis type

Students are conceptualised in this study as the learners in secondary educational institutions in Kenya (Wanjohi 2011:1). These institutions experience student strikes resulting from extension of the term, avoiding sitting for exams, banning of cell phones in schools among other reasons (Karanja 2012:10). Students stage protest marches, burn dormitories, destroy school property, vacate schools without permission, and block roads and attack motorists (Karanja 2012:10; Munene & Wanyoro 2012:11; Schools hit by students unrest…2012:34). This study will focus on student strikes as a crisis type.

1.3.6.2 Stakeholders in a secondary educational environment

Stakeholders are regarded as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's purpose and objectives" (Freeman 1984:1; Kyhn 2008:19). This view is corroborated by Swart (2010:34) who regards a stakeholder as any group of people that has a reciprocal influential relationship with an organisation. Mokoena (2011:120), Waters (2011:1), Ministry of Education, Singapore (2013:1) regard school stakeholders as the students, teachers, principals, school boards, parents, alumni organisations, Ministry of Education officials, the community, business leaders, the faith community, trade unions, politicians and the media. The above stakeholders will be taken into consideration in the development of the PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is exploratory (Neuman 2000:19; Du Plooy 2001:49). Exploratory objectives focus on an area that is not known so as to, for example, identify the consequences of communication problems, to develop hypotheses, to confirm assumptions, to become familiar with unknown situations, conditions, policies and behaviours, or to just gain new insights into a new phenomenon (Du Plooy 2001:48). As mentioned earlier, Falkheimer and Heide (2006:187) propose that research could be conducted on the proactive crisis communication between the organisation and its stakeholders during the pre-crisis phase. Hence, this study will explore the need for a new PCCP framework that is customised for secondary educational institutions in Kenya to avoid student strikes.

1.5 THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

This section includes the various research problems and the related research questions that will be addressed in this study.

1.5.1 The research problem

The research problem for this study is to address the need for a customised PCCP framework for the secondary educational environment as a proactive measure to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County.

1.5.2 The research sub-problems and research questions

In order to address the main research problem, the various sub-problems and the related research questions are tabulated below.

Table 1.2: Sub-problems and research questions

SUB-PROBLEMS	RESEARCH QUESTIONS
Sub-problem 1: To explore the risks posed by student strikes.	*Research question 1*: What are the risks posed by student strikes?
Sub-problem 2: To explore the information needs of school stakeholders during student strikes.	*Research question 2*: What are the information needs of school stakeholders during student strikes?
Sub-problem 3: To explore proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions.	*Research question 3*: Do public secondary educational institutions have proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes?

Table 1.2 represents the various sub-problems and research questions that will guide the study to address the research problem. These sub-problems and research questions will be addressed in the various chapters of this study.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Van Eeden and Terre Blanche (2000:122), a research design involves the identification of an exact research strategy to address the research questions. This research strategy involves deciding on the following: the type of research; the research participants or the situations to collect data from; the kind of data that will be collected; and the data collection and analysis methodologies (Van Eeden & Terre Blanche 2000:122).

The following section will make reference to the methodological orientation and research design, the data collection methods and techniques, the target and accessible populations, the units of analysis, the sampling method and procedures and the data analysis methods and instruments. The trustworthiness of this research is also established to ensure that the research results are authentic.

1.6.1 Methodological orientation

This study was exploratory as it involved exploring the need for a new PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. The study derived new information from the educational environment, a deviation from a focus on the manufacturing,

service and financial industries, which were the focus of previous researchers. Neuman (2000:19) explains that exploratory research intends to familiarise the researcher with the basic facts of a phenomenon; enable the researcher to formulate research questions; refine issues for a more systematic inquiry; and develop a well-grounded mental picture of what is occurring. Du Plooy (2001:49) corroborates this view by positing that exploratory research explores an unknown area of study to derive new insights; identify key concepts, key stakeholders and consequences of communication problems; develop hypotheses and confirm assumptions; or to explore unknown situations, conditions, policies and behaviour.

This study also adopted the interpretive research paradigm which is based on the principle that there are multiple realities in this world and that people assign different meanings to such realities (Babbie & Mouton 2011:33; Kroeze 2012:48). According to the interpretive research paradigm, reality is highly subjective and socially constructed through interactions where the experiences and circumstances of the individual participant are considered (Neuman 2000:51; Kura 2012:6; Wahyuni 2012:70). The interpretive research paradigm proposes that human action only becomes meaningful among people with similar meaning system, which enables them to interpret it as a socially relevant action (Neuman 2000:51). According to Neuman (2000:54), interpretive researchers seldom ask objective questions and do not put the answers by different people together and claim to have something meaningful. Considering that specific social contexts could contain ambiguity, which makes it impossible to discover straightforward and objective facts, interpretive researchers place each participant's interpretation of the question in context, for example, the participant's previous experience (Neuman 2000:54). From an interpretive perspective, the process of data analysis includes descriptions of people's intentions, meanings and reasons (Babbie & Mouton 2011:33). Wood and Welch (2010:58) add that an interpretive data analysis enables the researcher to derive value-laden data as meanings are interpreted from the participants' subjective perspectives. Generalising the findings to the population is not important due to the non-random nature of the sample in interpretive research (Wood & Welch 2010:58).

1.6.2 Research design

This study adopted a qualitative research method. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:155) explain that qualitative research includes designs, techniques and measures that do not produce discrete numerical data but derive data that is in form of words that are often grouped into categories. Neuman (1991:322) regards qualitative research as focusing on subjective meanings, definitions, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of specific cases in specific settings and the research procedures are particular to that study making replication very rare. Qualitative research focuses mainly on meaning, language and cultural experiences in social contexts by understanding particular situations by, for example, using in-depth or intensive interviews (Du Plooy 2001:33; Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:203). A qualitative design was adopted to explore the research problem as this study attempted to derive the subjective views of the participants on how proactive crisis communication could be used to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. Additionally, this study employed intensive one-on-one semi-structured interviews to derive data that was in form of words.

1.6.3 Research method

This study used the survey research method to collect data from the principals and from the students. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:164) define a survey as the process of collecting data from the members of a population in order to determine its current status with respect to one or more variables. A survey involves collecting information from a number of cases over a wide area (Walliman 2005:116). Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:165) regards the purpose of a survey as to describe existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviour, experiences and values. Qualitative survey research follows a deductive approach by starting with a research problem and ending with an empirical measurement and data analysis (Neuman 2000:231). Qualitative survey researchers use a survey questionnaire or an interview schedule to measure the variables being studied by conducting telephone interviews, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, online surveys mail and administering self-administered questionnaires (Neuman 2000:231, 249; Groebner, Shannon, Fry & Smith 2011:9). This study used the qualitative survey method as it involved conducting one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with

the principals of the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-county as well as focus groups with the students of Ruiru Secondary School.

1.6.4 The population

Walliman (2009:72) and Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:9) define a population as the individuals, cases, events or objects with common characteristics which interest the researcher. It is important to define and describe the population carefully to ensure clarity on whom or what is to be studied (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:9). The criteria used to include people, events or objects in the population should also be clarified (Walliman 2009:72).

The following population parameters were used in the eligibility criteria. The participants in the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews must be principals of public secondary educational institutions as these are directly involved in the day to day management of the schools. The participants in the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews must be principals of the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County. The participants in the focus group discussions must be students of a secondary educational institution in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:10), there are two categories of the population; namely the target population and the accessible population. The following sections briefly expounds on these two categories of the population.

1.6.4.1 The target population

The target population represents cases, events, people or objects the researcher wants to collect data from (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:10). The target population for the purpose of this study is the principals and the students of the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County.

1.6.4.2 The accessible population

The accessible population is the population that a researcher can access after overcoming challenges like time constraints, long distances and the financial costs involved (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003:10). The accessible population comprised all the principals of the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and the students of Ruiru Secondary School, who were available for the survey.

1.6.5 The sampling method and the realised sample

Du Plooy (2001:191) regards sampling as the process of choosing or selecting units of analysis form a larger population and is guided by the research objectives, for example, exploratory objectives which can be achieved by studying a smaller sample as the intention is to gain insights into the phenomenon being studied.

Purposive sampling was employed to get the sample for this study as it allows the researcher to choose cases that have the required information through hand picking as they are informative or they have the required characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:50). Purposive sampling, Neuman (2000:203) posits, selects cases with a specific purpose in mind for exploratory research and is used to select unique cases that are informative. Du Plooy (2001:114) explains that a purposive sample is used by a researcher who possesses previous knowledge of the populations to arrive at a purposive known-group sample. A realised sample of 12 principals and 30 students was purposively drawn from the accessible population.

1.6.6 The unit of analysis

Neuman (2000:200) regards a unit of analysis as a person, a group, an organisation, a written document or an object that the researcher wants to get information from. The unit of analysis is derived from the target population and is what the researcher interviews, issues a questionnaire to, observes or conducts an experiment on (Neuman 2000:200). The units of analysis in this research were the individual principals of the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and the individual students of Ruiru Secondary School.

1.6.7 Data collection techniques

This study adopted a two-phased approach that combined one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with the principals at their respective offices in the secondary educational institutions and focus group discussions with the sampled students from Ruiru Secondary School which were held in the school library. Walliman (2005:284) regards an interview as a transitory relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee with the former asking questions and ticking off a checklist, making notes and/or recording these responses using an audio-or video-tape (Du Plooy 2001:175). A semi-structured interview involves using an interview schedule that contains standardised questions and/or a list of topics to be discussed (Du Plooy 2001:177; Natascha 2010:44). The researcher has the freedom to deviate, ask follow-up and probing questions and interact with the participants (Du Plooy 2001:177). Hence, one-on-one, semi-structured interviews have been preferred in this study as this interview type enables the researcher to derive in-depth information about the research problem by prompting and probing the participants. Focus groups are conducted in small groups of between six and 12 participants to obtain their viewpoints and experiences about a certain issue (Du Plooy 2001:178). During a focus group discussion, a moderator encourages interaction and discussions to identify differences in views, explore participants' views and their emphasis (Barbour 2007:2; Slabbert 2010:124).

1.6.8 Data analysis procedure

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:203) regard data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a large amount of information collected. Qualitative data analysis, according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:117), refers to a non-empirical analysis where the researcher analyses information in a systematic way to come up with useful recommendations from the patterns, trends and relationships of the information gathered. The data is organised into categories based on themes, concepts or similar features (Neuman 2000:415).

This study used thematic analysis to analyse the data collected from the interviews and the focus groups. Thematic analysis, according to Howwit (2010:176), is the analysis of what is said to identify relatively broad themes which summarise and describe the content of the data. It refers

to the process of analysing the data collected to examine commonalities, relationships, differences, repetitions of topics, missing data and theory-related material across a data set searching for aggregated themes within the data (Brown & Gibson 2009:127; Bryman 2012:579). A theme is a category identified by the analyst through the data and which relates to the research question and builds on the codes identified in interview transcripts (Bryman 2012:579).

1.6.8.1 Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure

This study will use Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure which proposes six steps of the data analysis process (Braun and Clarke 2006:93) as elaborated below:

- **Step 1: Familiarising oneself with the data**

The first step of this thematic analysis involves the researcher reading the data repeatedly and actively to search for meanings and patterns; taking notes or marking ideas for coding; and verbatim transcription of the interviews (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher undertook a separate open coding of the recordings of the 12 one-on-one, semi-structured interviews with principals and the five focus groups discussions by listening to the recordings to get a feel of the responses. The researcher listened to the recordings of the interviews and the focus groups a second time while transcribing them on paper.

Step 2: Generating initial codes

The second step of thematic analysis involves the production of initial codes from the data through manual coding where the researcher writes notes on the texts being analysed to indicate potential patterns or to identify segments of data (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). Manual coding also involves copying extracts of data from individual transcripts and putting them together under a specific code in separate pages (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher separately coded the transcriptions from the interviews and from the focus group discussions by grouping similar responses into one category.

- **Step 3: Searching for themes**

The third step of this thematic analysis procedure involves sorting the different codes into potential themes; putting together all the coded data extracts within the identified themes; and thinking about the relationship between codes, between themes and between the main themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher separately examined the categories formed from the responses from the interviews and from the focus group discussions for the main idea and then assign initial themes to these categories. The researcher also considered similar themes occurring in different categories as well as conflicting themes.

- **Step 4: Reviewing themes**

The fourth step of this thematic analysis procedure involves the refinement of the themes already identified, discarding some themes, combining others or breaking others into separate themes (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher carefully re-examined the themes identified from the interviews and from the focus group discussions, rephrase them, shorten their wording and discard the repetitive ones.

- **Step 5: Defining and naming themes**

Defining and naming themes involves identifying what each theme means and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures by writing a detailed analysis of what each theme means in relation to the research questions (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). This step also involves the researcher giving final names to the themes and these names should be concise and punchy (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher further refined the themes from the interviews and from the focus group discussions by rephrasing some of them to concisely reflect the ideas behind participants' responses.

- **Step 6: Producing the report**

The final step of this thematic analysis procedure involves telling the story behind the data; and this story should be concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting, and should use direct quotations from the participants to capture the essence of the point being made (Braun &

Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher will describe the findings under each theme and also use direct quotations from some participants to capture important and interesting issues.

1.6.9 Trustworthiness of the research

Trustworthiness of research findings is emphasised in qualitative research, where qualitative researchers substitute reliability and validity with data trustworthiness (DeVault 2015:1). It involves a researcher persuading his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to and worth taking account of (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347). A qualitative study is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experience of the study participant or data source and focuses on the context of data collection and the methods of data generation (Gibson & Brown 2009:60; Mabuda 2009:20). Mabuda (2009:20) explains that trustworthiness of a study involves establishing its credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as explained in section 4.5.

1.7 THE ANTICIPATED FINDINGS

The section focuses on what the study sets out to establish and the contribution of these findings to the discipline of communication.

1.7.1 The anticipated findings

From an extensive and in-depth review of literature and empirical study to test the PCCP framework in practice, this study intended to highlight the risks that student strikes pose to secondary educational institutions to better understand the problem; the need for a new PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in these institutions; and the information needs of secondary educational institutions stakeholders during a student strike.

1.7.2 Anticipated contributions of the study to the discipline of communication

This study could contribute to the discipline of organisational communication a new, customised PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya to avoid student strikes. Additionally, this study has the potential to propose the need for a mixed motive model of

organisational communication incorporating one-way communication and two-way communication.

1.8 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The various aspects of the study related to the sub-problems and the research questions will be addressed in the following chapters as indicated in the Table 1.3.

Table 1.3: Demarcation of the study

Chapter	Sub-problem	Research question
Chapter 1: Orientation and motivation	All sub-problems were addressed.	All research questions were addressed.
Chapter 2: Defining key concepts	*Sub-problem 1*: To explore the risks posed by student strikes.	*Research question 1*: What are the risks posed by student strikes?
Chapter 3: A review of existing proactive crisis communication theories and models	*Sub-problem 3*: To explore proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions.	*Research question 3*: Do public secondary educational institutions have proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes?
Chapter 4: Research methodology provides a foundation to address the sub-problems		
Chapter 5: Data analysis	All sub-problems will be addressed.	All research questions will be addressed.
Chapter 6: Conclusion and recommendations for future research		

1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter included a discussion on the purpose of the study which was to explore the risks posed by student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County; the information needs of school stakeholders during student strikes; and the proactive crisis communication strategies used to avoid student strikes in these institutions so as to develop a new, customised PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya. This chapter also elaborated on the background of the study whereby these institutions have in the past experienced an escalation of student strikes which have created crises. The relevance of this study, which was to contribute to the discipline of communication a new PCCP framework that is customised to the secondary educational environment in Kenya, was then discussed.

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The relationship of the study to the discipline of communication, where crisis communication is regarded as an organisational communication function, was also discussed. This chapter also reviewed the relevant literature by conceptualising the terms organisational crisis, student strikes as a crisis type, crisis management, crisis communication, proactive crisis communication, the mixed motive model of communication, two-way symmetrical communication, many-to-many communication and an outline of the relevant proactive crisis communication theories and models. This chapter then briefly outlined the nature of the secondary educational environment in Kenya; the stakeholders in a secondary educational institution; and student strikes as a type of organisational crisis. The objective of the study, which was to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya to avoid student strikes, was also highlighted.

The research problem, which was to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework as a proactive measure to address student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County, was discussed in this chapter. The research methodology was also presented, with the study adopting a qualitative research method and the type of research being exploratory. This study then elaborated on the qualitative survey research method through the use of one-on-one, semi-structured interviews and focus groups using interview schedules as the data collection method. This chapter then defined the target and accessible populations, which were the principals in the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and the students of Ruiru Secondary School; the sampling method which was purposive to derive purposive known-group sample and the units of analysis, namely the principals and the students. Qualitative data analysis through thematic analysis was also discussed as a data analysis method. The trustworthiness of the research was then discussed as well as the feasibility of the study. The anticipated findings and the contribution of the study to the discipline of communication were also highlighted in this chapter. Lastly, a demarcation of this study per chapter and the research sub-problems and questions addressed in each chapter was also outlined. The following chapter will provide a detailed review of the relevant literature with a specific focus on the key concepts of the study.

CHAPTER 2: DEFINING KEY CONCEPTS

> **"A crisis helps those who are ready for it but destroy in equal measure those who are not prepared for it"** [*sic*] **(Wameyo 2012:8).**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on contextualising this study and discussed the need for a new, customised PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya to avoid the proliferating student strikes. This chapter will focus on defining and conceptualising the key terms of this study as follows: organisational communication, the flow of communication in an organisation, models of communication in an organisation with an emphasis on the mixed motive model of communication, organisational crisis and the various types of crises, crisis management and crisis communication and the reciprocal relationship between the two. The characteristics and the challenges of the Kenyan educational system are also reviewed in this chapter. The chapter also defines the term stakeholders and examines the various stakeholders in secondary educational institutions as well as student strikes as a crisis in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. This chapter addresses *Sub-problem 1*, which is to explore the risks posed by student strikes and *Research question 1*: what are the risks posed by student strikes?

2.2 ORGANISATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Organisational communication is defined as the communication between the organisation and its stakeholders to enable the organisation to function effectively by facilitating interaction among the stakeholders, decision-making and problem-solving by employees and management (Goodman 2006:199; Rajhans 2012:82). Organisational communication involves communication within organisations and between these organisations and their environments to provide organisational information to the various organisational stakeholders (Antonis 2005:44; Barker & Angelopulo 2006:14; Rajhans 2012:82).

From a functionalist perspective, organisational communication involves the functional use of communication in an organisation to convey meaning and information within the organisation and to the organisational environment (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:14; Rajhans 2012:82). This

could involve internal communication where messages are shared among members of an organisation on work-related and social issues as well as external communication with the external environment to gather information and to provide information about the organisation to this environment (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:15). Organisational communication enables the coordination of employees from different functions and levels, the formulation of organisational objectives and coordination of organisational activities and processes (Rajhans 2012:82). An interpretivist approach regards communication as a social interaction, where the meaning and experience of the organisation is constructed, negotiated and adapted (Barker & Angelopulo 2006:14; Goodman 2006:199).

For the purpose of this study, organisational communication is defined as the communication among the stakeholders in a secondary educational institution to share information and tasks, formulate institutional objectives, solve institutional problems, communicate decisions, and coordinate stakeholders and institutional activities.

2.2.1 Flow of communication in an organisation

Communication in an organisation flows in three ways, namely: one-way, two-way and from many-to-many (Steyn, Steyn & Rooyen 2011:137; Cohen 2011:1).

2.2.1.1 One-way communication

One-way communication in an organisation is a process where information flows in one direction only from the sender who encodes the message by putting the intended meaning to it and then sends it through a communication channel to a receiver who decodes it by assigning a perceived meaning to it; without providing feedback (Fielding 2006:502; Lunenberg 2010:3; Lyon 2015:1). One-way communication could be face-to-face, for instance, communication from a manager to an employee and vice-versa; written, for instance, memos, reports, bulletin boards, newsletters, letters; or electronic, for instance, emails, the inter-com (Lunenberg 2010:3; Steyn et al 2011:137). Due to the lack of feedback in one-way communication, the sender may not know whether the message has been successful, and misunderstanding between the sender and the receiver may occur (Fielding 2006:502; Lyon 2015:1). Fielding (2006:502) proposes that one-

way communication is necessary in emergencies where orders need to be given or during a crisis where a manager needs to take drastic actions to enable the organisation to survive the crisis.

2.2.1.2 Two-way communication

Two-way communication is a process where information flows in two directions from the sender to the receiver and back to the sender while emphasising feedback (Lunenburg 2010:2). Both the sender and receiver are involved in creating the message by encoding it using words, symbols or gestures; and decoding the message into meaningful information (Lunenburg 2010:2; Lyon 2015:1). Two-way communication occurs in face-to-face conversations, for instance, between an employee and a manager; or in telephone conversations, for instance, between two employees in an organisation (Lunenburg 2010:2; Lyon 2015:1). Fielding (2006:502) states that two-way communication enables both participants to know if the message was successful or not and also engenders trust between them although it may take more time to communicate an issue.

2.2.1.3 Many-to-many communication

Organisational communication has shifted with the advent of the collaborative turn which refers to the shift from the linguistic turn that was characterised by information and control to an era of collaboration among stakeholders, where stakeholders have to collaborate to constitute organisations, make decisions and come up with the best solutions to organisational problems (Deetz & Eger 2013:43). Roschele and Teasly (1995:70) regard collaboration as a coordinated, synchronous activity that is the result of a constant endeavour to construct and maintain a shared conception of a problem in a joint problem space involving mutual engagement, joint decision-making and discussion. Mohr, Fisher and Nevin (1996:103) see collaborative communication as having the potential to create an atmosphere of mutual support and respect and consequently, volitional compliance among stakeholders resulting from highlighting shared interests and common goals. Mohr et al (1996:103) also posit that collaborative communication can engender shared values, mutual support and aligned interests which, in turn, can lead to improved coordination, satisfaction and commitment. Collaborative communication has created a need a multidirectional flow of communication in an organisation (Steyn et al 2011:137).

Due to its omnipresence and interactive nature, digital media has changed how public relations is practiced in contemporary organisations as it is no longer possible to control the messages stakeholders receive about the organisation (Grunig 2011:27). Many-to-many communication occurs interactively with the increased use of social media networks which enable users to have conversations with large audiences (Cohen 2011:1). Social media also enable messaging where content can be distributed to a large number of people (Du Plessis 2010:3). Social media is composed of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, MySpace, Flickr, Linkedin, Youtube and Instagram (Rensburg 2009:182; Makgopa 2016:79). Social media sites are built around groups of people with common interests (Slaymaker 2010:1). The aim of social networks is to enable users to create personal user-profiles to build virtual social or professional networks and share content with others through online conversations (Barnard 2015:37). Individuals using social media connect and communicate with family and friends, share information regarding daily activities, personal opinions and insights, inspirational quotes, photos, videos, contacts and website links and for entertainment (Du Plessis 2010:2; Barnard 2015:37) and to gossip and arrange social meetings (Jeffries 2012:51).

Today, many organisations consider social media an important communication tool that enables many-to-many communication to facilitate the exchange of information, engagement, collaboration, interaction and relationship-building among stakeholders (Waititu 2015:30). Barnard (2015:38) suggests that social media can be used to organise events and raise awareness about a certain cause or debate interesting topics. Additionally, organisations can strategically use social media for customer service, reputation management, communication and outreach, advertising and awareness, sales and lead generation, insights and research and community management (Jeffries 2012:45). According to Barnard (2015:39), social networks enable the collection and analysis of in-depth and broad data as most users share strong positive and negative emotions about the organisations they interact with, which enables the organisations to stay informed, identify new opportunities, understand stakeholders' perceptions and consequently develop the relevant communication. Barnard (2015:39) also sees the immediacy of social media as enabling organisations to provide their stakeholders with information immediately on emerging issues, thus enabling them to respond speedily to them. Despite these numerous uses of social media, Waititu (2015:30) posits that some organisations are wary of this

new media due to its potential to damage their reputation and due to the lack of control over how and what information is disseminated.

2.2.2 Models of communication in an organisation

The four models of public relations were developed in 1984 by James Grunig and Todd Hunt to understand public relations and were conceptualised along two spectrums: the level of symmetry (asymmetric or symmetric) and the direction of communication (one-way or two-way) (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Zhang 2008:305). These models were the press agentry model, the public information model, the two-way asymmetric model and the two-way symmetric model (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Zhang 2008:305). The press agentry and public information models are characterised by one-way asymmetrical communication and form a continuum of craft public relations which range from propaganda (press agentry) on the one end to journalism (public information) on the other (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra 1995:164; Zhang 2008:305). The two-way communication models make a continuum of professional public relations which range from persuasion (two-way asymmetric) on the one end to conflict management (two-way symmetric) on the other (Grunig & Hunt 1984:22; Grunig et al 1995:164).

The press agentry model was the earliest form of public relations, which dominated the field until the early 20th century, and its goal was publicity using any method to communicate true or false information (Grunig & Hunt 1984:31; Browning 2010:6). According to Zhang (2008:305), the press agentry involves one-way communication from the organisation to its stakeholders for propaganda purposes by attracting public attention for the organisation using any means available, including publicity, exaggeration, distortion, hoax and even deception.

The public information model involves one-way communication from the organisation to its stakeholders (Zhang 2008:305). This model regards the public relations practitioner as the 'journalists-in-residence' who disseminate truthful but favourable information about their organisations to external stakeholders to enable them to make informed decisions about the organisation (Grunig & Hunt 1984:31; Zhang 2008:305; Browning 2010:6).

The two-way asymmetrical model of communication involves the provision of information that is persuasive in an attempt to change the behaviour of the stakeholders (Grunig 1992b:18; Zhang 2008:305; Browning 2010:9). This model involves an unbalanced and unethical communication between the organisation and its stakeholders where the public relations practitioners position the organisation in the minds of stakeholders through manipulation and force the stakeholders to behave the way it desires (Stoker et al 2006:159; Men 2014:206). Through feedback, the public relations practitioner researches the habits, attitudes and values of stakeholders and which goals and means are acceptable to these stakeholders so as to persuade and manipulate them to behave the way the organisation wants to accomplish organisational goals (Grunig 1992b:18; Karlberg 1996:270; Stoker et al 2006:159; Zhang 2008:305; Browning 2010:9). Two-way asymmetrical communication is practiced in centralised and mechanistic organisational structures and authoritarian cultures where employees are not allowed to contribute to the decision-making process (Men 2014:260). Hence, this kind of communication is undesirable in establishing and developing mutual and quality relationships with stakeholders that would be called upon during crisis communication.

The two-way symmetrical model of communication explains how public relations should be practiced in organisations and proposes the use of dialogue to establish mutual understanding in a balanced relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders which would enable the organisation to manage conflicts (Grunig 1992b:18; Grunig 2001:13; Zhang 2008:305). This model is based on the need for an organisation to change itself as it strives to change its stakeholders (Sha 2009:300). Two-way symmetrical communication is practiced more by organisations that are more effective in their operations due to their participative culture, organic structures, symmetrical systems of internal communication, value external communication and operate in environments rife with activism (Grunig et al 1995:164; Men 2014:133). Two-way symmetrical communication involves two-way balanced and ethical communication between the organisation and its stakeholders, where the organisation and the stakeholders are both senders and receivers of information, with the purpose of arriving at mutual understanding and change (Grunig & Grunig 1992:289; Karlberg 1996:270; Gower 2006:178; Stoker & Tusinski 2006:159; Zhang 2008:305; Feighery 2011:163). Two-way symmetrical communication is an on-going process that involves listening and responding to the concerns and interests of stakeholders,

learning, sustaining dialogue, cultivating relationships and being socially responsible (Grunig 2009:2; Feighery 2011:163; Men & Stacks 2014:304). Two-way symmetrical communication fulfils the following functions: a) enhancing an organisation's reputation among stakeholders, b) generating trust and helping to develop mutual and quality relationships between the organisation and its stakeholders, c) positioning the corporate brand among end-users, and d) proactive resolution of conflicts and misunderstandings (Karlberg 1996:270; Hongmei 2008:4; Slabbert & Barker 2014:70).

Gower (2006:178) and Waddington (2013:1) posit that two-way symmetrical communication uses communication to negotiate with publics, resolve conflicts and promote mutual understanding and respect between the organisation and its stakeholders and to compromise and collaborate with the stakeholders through the exchange of information. This view is in concert with Cooper (2009:22) and Men (2014:133) who regard two-way symmetrical communication as an exchange of information through dialogue, which also focuses on the resolution of disputes to negotiate mutually beneficial outcomes. In addition, two-way symmetrical communication emphasises honesty, thorough research, open communication, feedback from the stakeholders and willingness to adapt (Grunig & Grunig 1992:289).

Swart (2010:62) posits that two-way symmetrical communication focuses on generating understanding and dialogue, as opposed to just the dissemination of information, to motivate or persuade the stakeholders who ought to be active, interactive and equal participants of a continuous communication process. This view is supported by Slabbert and Barker (2014:70) who regards two-way symmetrical communication as an interactive communication process to establish a balanced dialogue between the organisation and its strategic stakeholders that engenders transparency and sincerity and builds mutually beneficial stakeholder relationships. This two-way symmetrical communication is characterised by a consideration of the interests of the stakeholders, responsive communication and timely feedback, collaboration and negotiation, interdependency, message consistency, openness, truthfulness and fundamentality, mutual understanding and shared vision and collaborative problem solving (Men 2014:133; Slabbert & Barker 2014:70). This study explored these elements of two-way symmetrical communication between the principals of secondary educational institutions and their students.

Although two-way symmetrical communication was previously seen as a normative model and the cornerstone of public relations, it has been criticised as idealistic and unrealistic as organisations employ public relations experts to pursue organisational interests and not to advance those of stakeholders (Zhang 2008:288; Waddington 2013:1). Additionally, the Internet has broken down the structures of formal communication and erected informal communication structures (Waddington 2013:1). Further, organisational communication is moving away from two-way symmetrical communication as it is no longer realistic and attainable in an environment with many-to-many communication enabled by the Internet. However, two-way symmetrical communication was explored in this study to avoid student strikes as the literature proposes that proactive crisis communication involves opening up and cooperating, through a two-way symmetrical communication, with an organisation's stakeholders before an issue escalates into a crisis (Swart 2010:72). Additionally, many secondary educational institutions in Kenya still lack electricity, computers and internet connectivity and are yet to adopt the social media for internal communication and for communication with their stakeholders (Frederiksen 2012:1) This is despite the major development realised in the ICT sector in Kenya where 30 million Kenyans, accounting for 70% of the population, used the Internet in 2015 (Frederiksen 2012:1; Wanjohi 2015:18).

The mixed motive model of communication was developed by Murphy (1991) in response to the criticisms of the two-way symmetrical model of communication (Aitken-Turff & Jackson 2006:86). Murphy (1991:126) proposes that the mixed motive model provides a richer view of conflict resolution and cooperation than the two-way symmetrical communication. This model is based on the premise that people in an organisation can have divided loyalties or mixed motives to the organisation and its stakeholders, which necessitates a combination of several communication strategies (Zhang 2008:306; Zhang 2010:288). This model's continuum ranges from one-way asymmetric communication, where the organisation pursues its own interests and wins whereas its stakeholders lose; to two-way symmetric communication where the organisation emphasises the interests of its stakeholders more than its interests, and the stakeholders win (Zhang 2008:306; Zhang 2010:289). In the middle of this continuum, a balance is achieved between the interests of the organisation and those of its stakeholders, where both cooperate in a win-win situation (Zhang 2008:306; Zhang 2010:289). In a mixed motive model

of communication, an organisation simultaneously attempts to achieve its objectives and those of its stakeholders by appreciating the possibility of being cooperative to solve the conflicts between them; and being competitive to pursue their individual objectives (Aitken-Turff & Jackson 2006:86; Zhang 2010:289). The mixed motive model of communication proposes not just one model of communication but a combination of one-way asymmetrical communication and two-way symmetrical communication to achieve a specific organisational objective (Edwards 2006:150; (Zhang 2010:289). Acknowledging the advancements in organisational communication enabled by the mobile phone, computer and internet technologies; this study proposed an expansion of the mixed motive model of communication to include many-to-many communication.

The following section includes a discussion on organisational crisis where the concepts crisis management and crisis communication are contextualised.

2.3 ORGANISATIONAL CRISIS

A crisis is any unexpected and non-routine event or a series of events with potentially negative outcomes and overwhelming negative significance that may threaten the operations of an organisation and the achievement of its high priority goals, and which has a high level of risk and potential to socially or physically harm the organisation and its stakeholders or an industry (Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer 1998:233; Seeger, Sellnow & Ulmer 2003:4; Barker & Angelopulo 2006:217; Massey & Larsen 2006:66; Coombs 2007:1; Kyhn 2008:14; Seeger & Padgett 2010:128). Oliveira (2013:255) regards crises as serious threats to the most fundamental goals of an organisation and its stakeholders and which interrupt normal business and damages corporate reputation, thereby putting at risk future growth, profitability and even the survival of the organisation. Coombs (2007b:2) regards a crisis as a perception of an unpredictable event that threatens the expectations of stakeholders and which can seriously affect an organisation's performance and produce negative outcomes.

The above definitions focus on the negative aspects of a crisis like suddenness, unpredictability, threat, urgency, destruction and loss, disruption and uncertainty and fail to consider the opportunity an organisation could have to learn and benefit from the crisis and consequently grow and develop (Amanda 2011:181; Shari 2011:118). Conversely, Ulmer (2011:1) regards a

crisis as an opportunity that underlies the threat, based on the Chinese definition of a crisis as an opportunity behind every crisis. Ulmer (2011:1) argues that regarding a crisis as both an opportunity and a threat is advantageous as it changes the perspective the management has on the crisis and also expands the communication options that are available during a crisis. In congruence, Amanda (2011:180) argues that viewing a crisis as both a threat and opportunity enables an organisation to experience renewal which includes organisational learning, ethical communication, and prospective rather than retrospective vision after the crisis, and effective organisational rhetoric. Furthermore, an objective definition of a crisis event does not only helps communication practitioners to understand it better, but also enables them to determine the communication strategies to adopt (Ulmer 2011:1).

Ulmer (2011:1) explains that focusing on the threat alone during a crisis narrows down the attention of the organisation to what is most important in the crisis while disregarding the attendant opportunities. Furthermore, focusing solely on the threat also makes the organisation emphasise its own needs over those of its stakeholders, thereby limiting the available opportunities to fully exploit the crisis situation (Ulmer 2011:1). On the contrary, if the organisation defines the crisis more positively, it has the additional advantage of considering its stakeholders while it considers its own needs (Ulmer 2011:1). Amanda (2011:180) proposes that organisations should regard a crisis as a necessary corrective occurrence as crisis events are strongly connected to an organisation's culture and deeply embedded in its daily practices. This suggests that organisations should regard a crisis as an essential part of an organisation's life as opposed to an obstacle that needs to be restrained or removed from the organisation.

According to Heath (2004:19) and David (2011:73), crises suddenly occur, demand quick attention, usually increase in intensity and magnitude, create uncertainty and stress, and attract a lot of media and government attention and scrutiny. Fearn-Banks (2007:8) posits that a crisis affects an organisation as well its publics, services, products, and/or good name and, therefore, every organisation should be prepared for one as it will soon have one (Goodman 2006:196). Such a crisis creates high levels of uncertainty with key stakeholders necessitating an intense need for immediate information from the organisation with this information being disseminated through the process of crisis communication (Seeger & Padgett 2010:129). Organisations also

anticipate, prevent and mitigate against potential crises by identifying risks early and managing them before they escalate into crises as well as initiating dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders (Falkheimer & Heide 2006:187; Sapriel 2007:24) through the process of proactive crisis management and communication.

Crises are significant to organisations as they create high levels of threat and uncertainty and a critical need for immediate and accurate information (Sellnow et al 2002:274). Additionally, crises also create stressful and uncertain circumstances that could make crisis managers issue inappropriate crisis responses if managed insufficiently (Sellnow et al 2002:274). Such responses could, for instance, be downplaying the severity of the crisis or engaging in blanket denials of responsibility (Sellnow et al 2002:274). Organisational crises interfere with organisational performance and could lead to loss of market share, increased regulatory scrutiny and control, shareholder discontent, decreased employee morale, bankruptcy, and partial or total organisational failure (Heath 2004:19; Massey & Larsen 2006:285). Organisational crises often damage the image and reputation of an organisation and its stakeholders (Heath 2004:19; Massey & Larsen 2006:285; David 2011:73).

Brown and Ki (2013:365) posit that a crisis is unpredictable but not unexpected; it generates negative outcomes but could also generate positive outcomes for the organisation and its stakeholders, if handled effectively, quickly and systematically. Therefore, an organisation can plan and anticipate when a crisis will occur and therefore mitigate the damage of a crisis when it occurs. This perspective of a crisis supports a proactive approach to crisis management and communication which is the focus of this study.

Two major categories of crises have been identified in the literature: natural disasters and organisational crises (Coombs (2004:270; Horsley 2008:2). Natural crises or disasters are seen as 'acts of God' or 'acts of nature' due to their natural occurrence, and could threaten life, property and the environment (Sellnow et al 2002:273,275; Coombs 2004:270; Schwarz 2007:1; Pancic 2010:21; Swart 2010:4; Brown & Ki 2013:366). This study will not focus on natural crises or disasters. Organisational crises have been identified in crisis literature as comprising technological crises; crises of organisational misdeeds, crises of malevolence; and

confrontational crises (Coombs 2004:270; Schwarz 2007:12; Pancic 2010:21; Swart 2010:4; Bell 2010:140; Amanda 2011:179; Choi & Chung 2013:4). From an organisational crisis perspective, this study focuses on student strikes as examples of confrontational crises.

From an organisational communication perspective, crisis has two derivatives: crisis management and crisis communication (Coombs 2007:1). The following section discusses these derivatives by defining and conceptualising the term crisis management and by reviewing the existing literature on crisis management and communication.

2.3.1 Defining crisis management

Fearn-Banks (2001:480) defines crisis management as the strategic planning to prevent and respond during a crisis or a negative occurrence. Coombs (2007:1) defines crisis management as a process of preventing or lessening the damage of a crisis to an organisation and its stakeholders. Pancic (2010:22) regards crisis management as a tool that is designed to fight crisis, minimise the damage caused by this crisis and protect the organisation, its stakeholders and the industry from harm. Mc Kendree (2011:181) defines crisis management as the overall attention to a crisis before, during and after the crisis event and which, according to Park (2011:240), involves the cultivation of relationships with stakeholders as well as the effective use of crisis response strategies to contain the crisis. A more inclusive definition of crisis management is proposed by Swart (2010:29), where crisis management is regarded as "the threefold process to proactively plan and prepare the organisation for possible crisis situations, to sufficiently and promptly respond to crises and to employ post-evaluative actions in order to facilitate learning and prepare the organisation for future events." A related definition of crisis management is proposed by Massey et al (2006:65), who conceptualise crisis management as the systematic attempt to avoid or divert organisational crises or to manage those crisis events that occur, and involves attempting to eliminate technological failure and to develop formal communication systems to either avoid or manage crisis situations. The above three definitions support the proactive perspective of organisational crisis that is the focus of this study.

Crisis management, as the practice of dealing with crises in organisations, has the objective of protecting an organisation and its stakeholders from threats and/or reducing the impact of these

threats (Fearn-Banks 2001:480; Coombs 2007:1). Pearson (2002:70) regards the objective of crisis management as making timely decisions that are grounded on the best facts and clear thinking when operating under extraordinary conditions that makes it difficult to draft a crisis management plan (CMP) (Fearn-Banks 1996:2). Successful management of a crisis situation involves recognising that you have a crisis at hand, taking the appropriate actions to rectify the situation, being seen to take these actions and being heard to say the right things (Kyhn 2008:16). This emphasises the need to acknowledge that a crisis exists in the organisation rather than deny its existence even when stakeholders perceive the contrary, and issuing appropriate responses (Sellnow et al 2002:274).

Swart (2010:29) proposes the following activities that are undertaken in the crisis management process: reduction, readiness, response and recovery, the 4Rs of crisis management. These activities relate to those proposed by Kyhn (2008:18), which are detecting, analysing, sensing, diagnosing and assessing. Kyhn (2008:18) posits that the successful implementation of these activities enables organisations not to avoid, but to proactively plan for and prevent them. These activities are undertaken under the various stages of crisis management. Coombs (2007c:19) also proposes three activities that are undertaken as the organisation looks for ways to better prepare for the next crisis; and uses the information gathered to plan for the future. These are evaluating crisis management, learning from the crisis and other post-crisis actions like follow-up communication and continuous monitoring of issues related to the crisis.

Kyhn (2008:18) argues that the successful implementation of crisis communication enables organisations not only to avoid, but also to proactively plan for and prevent crises. Swart (2010:29) corroborates this view by positing that effective crisis management enables organisations to avoid or prevent crisis situations; and is therefore a proactive action. Crisis management is also reactive in that it provides the means to control the event causing the crisis; and also a system response to crisis situations enabling the organisation to continue with its daily activities as the crisis is being handled (Swart 2010:29). This study focused on the pre-crisis phase of a crisis as it involved the development of a PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions.

Kyhn (2008:16) proposes that organisational leaders should have an excellent understanding of crisis management so as minimise the effects of crises. Kyhn (2008:16) also posits that if an organisation has the right plans and resources in place before a crisis occurs, a remarkable reduction of the damage caused to it by the crisis can be achieved and the recovery time is shortened. This perspective resonates with Shari (2011:120), who posits that although it is impossible to predict when and where a crisis will occur, improved systems of evaluation may enable the detection of vulnerabilities and threats before they occur. However, this detection will depend on both the capacity of organisational members as well as the capacity of the organisation's system of signal detection (Shari 2011:120).

2.3.1.1 The process of crisis management

A crisis management process is defined as a process with proactive, reactive and post-evaluation crisis management stages to proactively plan and prepare the organisation for possible crises; to respond to crises and to employ post-evaluative actions to facilitate learning and prepare the organisation for potential crises (Swart 2010:71). Fink (1986:19) postulates that a crisis goes through four stages. The crisis prevention stage involves environmental scanning for signs of a crisis as crises present warnings long before they occur and therefore the organisation can take measures to avoid them or to reduce their negative consequences (Fink 1986:19). The acute stage of a crisis is arrived at when the crisis occurs after all efforts to avoid it fail while the chronic stage involves recovering from the crisis and self-analysis as the organisation struggles to resolve the crisis and deal with its effects (Fink 1986:21). The last stage of a crisis is the crisis resolution stage which is reached when the crisis ends and normalcy returns in the organisation and environmental scanning continues for signs of new crises (Fink 1986:21).

Pearson and Mitroff (1993:53) conceptualise crisis management in five phases that are cyclical, where the last phase renders itself to the first phase and the information and the lessons learnt during this last learning phase are utilised in the implementation of the other phases, suggesting that the process is continuous. These five phases are: signal detection, preparation and prevention, containment and damage limitation, recovery, and learning (Pearson & Mitroff 1993:53). These phases are comparable to Fink's stages of a crisis: the signal detection and preparation and prevention phases to the prevention stage; the containment and damage

limitation phase to the acute and chronic stages; and the recovery and learning phase to the crisis resolution stage.

Mitroff (2000:40) later renamed some of the above five crisis management phases and provided more elaborate information on what is implemented in each phase as is evident in Table 2.2:

Table 2.2: Crisis management phases

CRISIS MANAGEMENT PHASE	ELABORATION
Signal detection	The first phase of crisis management is based on the premise that all crises give early warning signals. Therefore, management can detect and act upon these signals and pre-empt the crises.
Probing and prevention	This second phase is implemented simultaneously with signal detection to prevent crises from occurring and to effectively manage those that do despite best efforts.
Damage containment	Damage containment as the third phase aims at controlling the effects of the crisis from spreading further and infecting the free parts of an organisation or the environment.
Recovery	This is the fourth phase of crisis management and it intends to return the organisation to its normal operation as soon as possible to minimise losses.
Learning	This last phase involves reflecting on what was done, well or poorly, and learning from these experiences to better handle the crisis in the future.

Table 2.2 summarises the various crisis management phases and an elaboration of what is done in each phase.

In agreement with Fink (1986), Pearson and Mitroff (1993) and Mitroff (2000) proposition that a crisis occurs in stages and crisis management should address these stages of a crisis, Coombs (2007c:13) divides the crisis management function into segments or stages. These stages are sequential and each stage contains separate sub-stages or actions that should be implemented during that stage. These stages are discussed below:

- **Pre-crisis management stage**

The pre-crisis phase deals with the crisis prevention, crisis preparation and crisis planning, and involves what can be said or done to lessen the chance of crisis and moderate its harm if it happens (Coombs 2007c:18; Pancic 2010:22; Shari 2011:120). In this stage, Coombs (2007c:18) proposes, crisis managers should develop a system for detecting potential crises and responding to them, as well as taking actions to prevent crises from happening or preparing for a crisis if it still occurs. The pre-crisis stage involves the following actions taken before a crisis occurs and has three sub-stages: signal detection, prevention and crisis preparation (Coombs 2007c:18). Shari (2011:120) posits that the organisation remains in this stage until a crisis is triggered. This stage of crisis management also involves proactive crisis communication, which is a proactive and interactive approach to crisis communication, which covers the three dimension of a crisis: pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis (Pancic 2010:15; Swart 2010:30; David 2011:73). Proactive crisis communication is discussed in section 2.3.2.1.

- **Reactive crisis management stage**

The reactive crisis management stage starts with a trigger event marking the commencement of the crisis, includes the resultant damage caused by the crisis and ends when the crisis is resolved (Coombs 2007c:19, Shari 2011:120). This crisis phase is concerned with the actual response to a crisis (Pancic 2010:22). Coombs (2007c:19) proposes two sub-stages of the reactive management stage taken in responding to the crisis: i) Crisis recognition which involves an understanding of how events are seen as crisis and the ways crisis-related information is collected. ii) Crisis containment which involves crisis response by, for example, communicating with stakeholders. This reactive management crisis stage involves reactive crisis communication which includes making decisions, responding and interacting with organisational stakeholders when the crisis occurs (Pancic 2010:22; Swart 2010:30).

- **Post-crisis management stage**

Coombs (2007c:19) proposes an interrogation of the crisis even after it has ended. The post-crisis management phase involves revision of the plans formulated during the pre-crisis stage, following up information that was gathered during crisis stage, evaluating the lessons learned during the pre-crisis and crisis stages and preparing for next crisis (Pancic 2010:22). Swart

(2010:29) calls this a post-evaluation stage where the crisis situation is managed as a learning system. This view is in concert with the position that the post-crisis management stage includes learning and resolution and provides information for the pre-crisis stage and enables the organisation to have a different mindset in preparing for crises (Shari 2011:120). Post-crisis management also involves post-crisis communication, which entails providing the stakeholders with relevant information regarding the crisis, listening to their grievances, answering their questions and learning from the crisis experience (Pancic 2010:22, Swart 2010:30).

Swart (2010:13) posits that a reciprocal relationship exists between crisis management and crisis communication; that crisis communication is built on the crisis management process and connects the stages in the process. Pancic (2010:14) says that when crisis communication is effective, crisis management succeeds, hence their interconnectedness. Swart (2010:13) depicts this relationship in the figure below:

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                    ┌──────────────────────────┐
              ┌────►│   Crisis Communication    │◄────┐
              │     └──────────────────────────┘     │
              │                                        │
              ▼                                        ▼
┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────┐
│  Proactive Crisis │◄─►│  Reactive Crisis │◄─►│ Post-evaluative  │
│    Management     │   │    Management    │   │ Crisis Management│
└──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘   └──────────────────┘
```
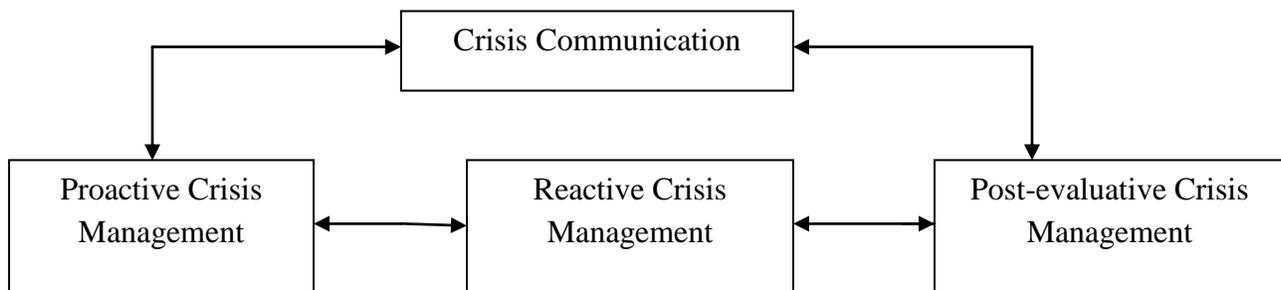
Figure 2.3: The reciprocal relationship between crisis management and crisis communication *(extracted from Swart 2010:31).*

Figure 2.3 shows how crisis communication connects the various phases of crisis management. Crisis communication is at the centre of crisis management (Swart 2010:13). It is used to avoid crisis in the proactive phase; to respond to the crisis in the reactive phase; and to assess the crisis in the post-evaluative phase and incorporate these lessons in the proactive phase to avoid future crises (Coombs 2007c:18; Pancic 2010:22; Swart 2010:13; Shari 2011:120). This study focused on the proactive crisis communication that is implemented during the proactive crisis management phase. This discussion on crisis management serves as an introduction to a focus on crisis communication as the focus of this study. The following section reviews crisis communication as the other derivative of crisis.

2.3.2 Defining crisis communication

Swart (2010:29) defines crisis communication as the organisation's response to a crisis situation to diminish damage to the corporate image. David (2011:73) regards crisis communication as the dialogue between the organisation and its publics before, during and after the negative occurrence to minimise damage to the image of the organisation by designing and implementing various strategies and tactics. Goodman (2006:196) postulates that this dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders is characterised by a two-way communication to respond to crisis situations. Crisis communication is designed to protect and defend an individual or an organisation facing a reputational challenge which could be an investigation from a government agency, a criminal allegation, a shareholders lawsuit or a violation of environmental regulations (Pancic 2010:14).

Considering the reciprocal relationship that exists between crisis management and crisis communication, the definition of the crisis management process is also applicable to the crisis communication process. This process is conceptualised as a process with proactive, reactive and post-evaluation crisis communication stages to proactively plan and prepare the organisation for possible crises; to respond to crises and to employ post-evaluative actions to facilitate learning and prepare the organisation for potential crises (Swart 2010:71).

According to Bell (2010:10), crisis communication fulfills certain functions that vary according to the type of crisis. These functions emanate from one universal goal of crisis responses, which is to have accurate, timely and useful information to help victims and restore order (Bell 2010:10). This goal relates to the functions of crisis communication proposed by David (2011:73) which include: a) smooth transfer of information within the crisis management team and between this team and the organisation, experts and others involved in crisis resolution, b) guaranteeing as little organisational image damage as possible by maintaining the organisation's reputation and credibility.

Proactive crisis communication involves establishing effective communication systems and building stakeholder relationships and organisational credibility prior to the occurrence of the crisis, which puts the organisation in a better position to prepare and resolve a crisis when it occurs (Swart 2010:30). The proactive approach to crisis communication correlates with the pre-crisis stage of crisis management, where crisis plans are formulated, meaning that crisis communication starts even before a crisis occurs (Swart 2010:30). Reactive crisis communication involves making decisions, responding and interacting with stakeholders when the crisis occurs, and utilising crisis communication plans to respond to and evaluate crises (Swart 2010:30). Communication practitioners involved in crisis communication disseminate information about the crisis situation to the public about what is happening, how it occurred, what actions are being taken and what the public should do (Seeger & Padgett 2010:129). Post-crisis communication involves listening to the grievances of stakeholders, answering their questions and learning from the crisis experience (Pancic 2010:22; Swart 2010:30). The process of crisis communication should be based on transparency, where the organisation provides as complete, clear and precise information as possible, since lack of transparency encourages the rise and spread of rumours and false information, thereby decreasing the credibility and prestige of the organisation (David 2011:73).

For the purpose of this study, crisis communication is defined as the proactive communication between an organisation and its stakeholders before the occurrence of a crisis to avoid the crisis; reactive communication to disseminate information about the crisis; and post-crisis communication to discuss the lessons learnt from the crisis and to continue the dialogue with the stakeholders to enable environmental scanning and the identification of issues that are potential crises. The following section includes a discussion on proactive crisis communication which is the focus of this study.

2.3.2.1 Proactive crisis communication

Proactive crisis communication is the process of scanning the workplace environment for possible crises, reducing the probability of their occurrence and preparing key stakeholders for a crisis so as to control it when it occurs and involves opening up and cooperating, through a two-

way symmetrical communication, with an organisation's public before an issue escalates into a crisis (Swart 2010:72).

According to Wan and Pfau (2004:302), proactive crisis communication strategies that focus on preventing crises from occurring are seen as the optimal approach in these modern times. This view is shared by Sapriel (2007:24), who posits that organisations are today emphasising the need to anticipate, mitigate and prevent crises through a more deliberate process of identifying risks, issues and new and imagined threats early and managing them before they escalate to crises. This corroborates with the view that prevention of a crisis is one of the basic tenets of proactive crisis communication (Zillich, Gobbel, Stengel, Maier & Rurmann 2011:263).

Proactive crisis communication involves implementing a proactive crisis communication plan which should have different kinds of information ready for various stakeholders and such crucial information should be provided to these stakeholders even before it is requested (Fearn-Banks 1996:31). This view is shared by Stellwagen, Ivie and Krouser (2000:6), who propose that an organisation should be ready with the most current information to avoid being perceived as ignorant of what is happening.

Falkheimer and Heide (2006:187) propose that future research should examine a proactive and interactive approach to crisis communication that focuses on dialogue between the organisation and its stakeholders during the pre-crisis phase. Hence, this study focused on developing a PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions.

Following the above proposition to initiate two-way symmetrical communication as part of proactive crisis communication, the following section reviews the mixed motive model of communication which is the focus of this study.

2.4 STUDENT STRIKES AS A CRISIS TYPE

According to the Industrial Disputes Act of Kenya (1947), an industrial strike is defined as the cessation of work by people in an organisation employed in an industry; or a refusal under a common understanding of any number of people to continue to work or to accept employment

(Industrial relations… 2013). From an organisational perspective, an industrial strike is a form of action often used by labour unions, in which workers come together to refuse to work or to collectively stop work to coerce the employer or a third party to accept certain demands, for example, salary increases, better benefits or safer working conditions or to refrain from doing something that negatively affects the workers (Industrial action… 2013; Hampton 2013:1). Strikes are caused by dissatisfaction with organisational policies, salary and incentive problems, wrongful dismissals, withdrawal of privileges and incentives, change of working hours, closure of organisations (Industrial relations… 2013). Strikes attract a lot of public attention to a certain cause (Hampton 2013:1) as they are organised to shut down the operations of organisations, causing loss of productivity and profitability. Borrowing from this definition of an industrial strike, student strikes in secondary educational institutions, which are the focus of this study, are discussed below.

Student strikes in secondary educational institutions involve disobeying authority, breaking of rules and regulations to express dissatisfaction with institutional policies, the implementation of these policies and the management of the institution (Karanja & Bowen 2012:4; Kiprop 2012:122). Student strikes involve student protests, unrests, violence, disturbances, boycotts, destruction of institution's property, lynching of fellow students, vacating institutions without permission, blocking roads and attacking motorists (Karanja & Bowen 2012:4; Kiprop 2012:122; Munene & Wanyoro 2012:11; Schools hit by students unrest…2012:34). Student strikes have sometimes turned tragic as evident in the Kyanguli High Tragedy in Machakos where 68 students were burnt to death, St. Kizito High Tragedy in Embu where 19 girls died and the Nyeri High School incident in Nyeri, where four prefects were burnt to death (Choge et al 2011:1) and the Stephjoy Boys Fire, where three students died and more than ten others were injured in a dormitory arson attack (Wafula 2015:1; Ombati 2015:1; Wainaina 2015:1).

Student strikes in Kenya have had a long history that dates back to the year 1908 when students of Maseno Secondary School rioted; and one century later in 2008, about 200 secondary educational institutions and other institutions were involved in student strikes (Karanja & Bowen 2012:1). Most of these institutions were seriously affected since student strikes are now premeditated and planned to cause maximum damage and are now growing in frequency and

gravity of damage leading to long-term repercussions on all stakeholders despite the government setting up committees to investigate the causes of student strikes and make recommendations (Karanja & Bowen 2012: 1).

Major loss of institutional property has been reported in some secondary educational institutions in Kenya. Karanja and Bowen (2012:6), in a study on student indiscipline in secondary educational institutions in Kenya, found that 83% of the institutions studied had reported loss of institutions property, with some losing property worth over KSh 2.5 million. In the same study, 35% of the institutions studied reported injuries on students during student strikes; while 17% reported deaths of students during student strikes. Additionally, more than 90 cases of arson were reported in the month of July, 2016 when students in secondary educational institutions in different counties in Kenya burned classes, dormitories and science laboratories (Wanzala 2016:6).

Student strikes also undermine institutional operations, lead to loss of teaching and learning time and consequently affects the delivery of quality education, which in turn, results in poor performance in examinations and in various co-curricular activities (Karanja & Bowen 2012:1). Student strikes also damage the working relationship between students and their teachers as the emotional and psychological trauma involved during and after the strike, such as suspension, expulsion, penalties and punishments make interaction between students and teachers difficult, affecting the delivery of quality education (Karanja & Bowen 2012:6).

A lack of democratic leadership and communication gap between the head teacher, the teachers and the students because of the existing autocratic and hierarchical school administration are some of the causes of the continuous student strikes in secondary educational institutions (Rwamba 2004:24; Keriga & Burja 2009:14; Kiprop 2012:123; Karanja & Bowen 2012:6). In such institutions, students are not involved in the management of their institutions and thus they feel ignored, their grievances are not acknowledged and their complaints treated with high-handed authoritarianism (Keriga & Burja 2009:14). This situation escalates the frustration and resentment among students, which in turn, results in student strikes (Keriga & Burja 2009:14). According to Kiprop (2012:122), most students and teachers attribute student strikes to lack of

dialogue between the administrators and the students with administrators adopting master/servant, superior/inferior attitude when dealing with students and seldom listen to student grievances as they believe that students have nothing to offer. This situation breeds tension, stress and misunderstanding and, eventually, frustration and violence (Kiprop 2012:122).

Outlawing canning has also been blamed for the rising indiscipline and student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya; caning is against the Children's Act (Karanja & Bowen (2012:3). The Kenyan government has insisted that the ban will remain and called on teachers to engage their students in counselling to deal with indiscipline (Karanja & Bowen (2012:3). Student strikes have also been attributed to extension of school terms, avoiding sitting for examinations, banning of cell phones, existence of terror and criminal gangs in some institutions and, in others, student leaders have the power to punish fellow students and receive preferential treatment from the administration by being given special diets, living in private rooms, being sponsored for holidays and having fellow students serve them as domestic servants (Karanja & Bowen 2012:10; Wanzala 2017a:48; Wanzala 2017b:8).

The Cabinet Secretary for Education has attributed student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya during the second term of the year to the mock examinations taken before the Kenyan Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) (Wanzala 2015:3; Buhere 2015:4). Consequently, secondary educational institutions have gone on strike, institutions have been closed and the students sent home, leading to the banning of mock examinations by the Cabinet Secretary for Education (Tinto 2015:1). Many students have expressed fear that the mock examinations would be used to grade them in the final year of their secondary education in the event of irregularities in the KCSE, and hence the strikes to avoid sitting for these mock examinations (Keriga & Burja 2009:14).

Karanja and Bowen (2012:10) in the study aforementioned found that students are not always to blame for strikes. They ranked the blame as follows: teachers (62.1%), parents (55.2%), society (48.3%), government (24.1%), students (21%) and the school administration (17.2%). This situation calls for the involvement of the various institutional stakeholders in proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions. This study focused

on involving the students in public secondary educational institutions in proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes.

Public secondary educational institutions in Kenya have taken various measures to deal with student strikes. According to Karanja and Bowen (2012:12) and Kiprop (2012:123), these include open fora between the students and the administration, where students air their grievances. Public secondary educational institutions have made attempts at addressing these grievances and have also encouraged parents to participate in guiding, counselling and disciplining their children (Karanja & Bowen 2012:12; Kiprop 2012:123). The government, on its part, has banned mock examinations, holiday tuition and mobile phones in public secondary educational institutions (Karanja & Bowen 2012:12). Students have proposed the provision of adequate facilities, prompt addressing of students grievances, involvement of stakeholders, listening to students, reducing curriculum and curbing drugs use (Karanja & Bowen 2012:12). Despite all the above efforts aimed at curbing student strikes, strikes continue to plague public secondary educational institutions, necessitating proactive crisis communication to avoid the strike. This study proposed a PCCP framework that posited proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya. The following section includes a discussion on the characteristics of the educational environment in Kenya to provide additional background for student strikes.

2.5 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE KENYAN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

This section reviews the characteristics of the Kenyan educational environment by focusing on the system of education and administration and the challenges of this system, the nature of the secondary educational environment in Kenya and the stakeholders in a secondary educational institution in Kenya.

2.5.1 Structure of the 8-4-4 system of education

The 8-4-4 system of education was adopted in 1985 based on the Report on The Presidential Working Party on the Second University in Kenya (The Mackay Report of 1981) (Wanjohi 2011:1; Keriga & Burja 2009:12). This system emphasises on the provision of basic education at

the primary and secondary levels and requires pupils to spend eight years in primary, four in secondary and another four in the university (Keriya & Burja 2009:12; Kumar 2008:1). Primary education starts from the age of six years and consists of eight years of schooling with most schools being co-educational (boys and girls); secondary education ideally starts at the age of 15 years and consists of four years schooling in private and public educational institutions; while an undergraduate degree in the university takes a minimum of four years in public or private universities (Wanjohi 2011:1; Chase 2006:1).

2.5.2 Curriculum under the 8-4-4 system of education

Curriculum under the 8-4-4 system of education includes academic, co-curricular and vocational courses whereby primary pupils are taught five subjects, English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies; and various games and sports (Wanjohi 2011:1; Keriga & Burja 2009:12). Primary education culminates in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), a summative examination that is both a sieve and a gate to filter and allow pupils into secondary educational institutions (Wanjohi 2011:1; Keriga & Burja 2009:12).

The secondary education curriculum is taught and examined in a minimum of seven subjects and a maximum of eight at KCSE ranging from English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, Chemistry, Biology, Physics, History, Geography, Religious Education, Agriculture, Business Studies, Computer Studies, technical subjects and foreign languages (Keriga & Burja 2009:13). Students take English, Kiswahili and Mathematics as mandatory subjects and opt for two sciences, one social science subject and two others from the other options (Keriga & Burja 2009:13). Students also participate in co-curricular activities like games and sports, music and drama and academic and non-academic trips (Wanjohi 2011:1). Keriga & Burja (2009:13) explains that university education in Kenya is liberalised with universities developing their own curricula but the same have to be approved by the Commission for University Education (CUE).

The Mackay Report (1981) proposed a language policy that prioritises English, Kiswahili and the indigenous languages in that order (Oduor 2010:91). This report proposed that English could remain the language of instruction; Kiswahili a compulsory subject in both primary and secondary educational institutions; and the indigenous languages could be used as the language

of instruction in the lower grades of primary educational institutions in the rural areas (Omollo 2014:16). Kiswahili has now been recognised by the Kenyan Constitution as the national language and English as the official language and the language of instruction and administration in Kenyan educational institutions (Odour 2010:91).

2.5.3 The 8-4-4 system: an examination-oriented system

The 8-4-4 system has over the years emerged as an examination-oriented system that lays a lot of emphasis on rote learning and passing of examinations, as opposed to studying to develop a deep understanding and mastery of one's life and environment (Keriga & Burja 2009:13). Due to the pressure to pass examinations at all costs and the attendant high stress levels, school unrests are on the increase, especially when students fear that the mock examinations taken before KCSE would be used to grade them in their final year (Keriga & Burja 2009:14).

2.5.4 System of educational administration in Kenya

Secondary educational institutions in Kenya are managed by boards of management and parents and teachers associations and are supervised by the Ministry of Education and the Teachers Service Commission (Keriga & Burja 2009:14). This system is autocratic, hierarchical and is characterised by obedience to authority, mismanagement and a communication gap between management, teachers and students (Keriga & Burja 2009:14). The students are, in most cases, are excluded from participating in the running of their institutions as they are regarded as passive learners (Kiprop 2012:123). They, therefore, feel ignored, their grievances are not acknowledged and their complaints treated with high-handed authoritarianism and this breeds frustration and resentment and the students resort to strikes to force audience with the school management (Keriga & Burja 2009:14).

2.5.5 The challenges of the Kenyan education system

The system of education in Kenya faces numerous challenges characteristic of most developing countries. The main challenge is that of matching its meager resources with the numerous responsibilities like teacher training and salaries, infrastructure, text books and learning materials (Kumar 2008). A large part of the cost of education is met by the government through the free

primary education programme (FPE) and on the free secondary education (FSE). Despite this, parents still must pay some money for development, tuition and remedial classes, food, uniforms, boarding facilities and the internally-employed teachers (The challenges facing education… 2013).

Delays in disbursement of funds for FPE and FSE make budgeting difficult and parents sometimes have to bridge the gap occasioned by the delays (Kumar 2008). These funds are also insufficient and paying of suppliers is difficult with some suppliers withdrawing from supplying commodities and services to certain institutions (Kumar 2008). A related problem is an insufficient and unreliable government programme to fund capital projects like infrastructure, forcing institutions to resort to fundraisers, NGOs, and National Government Community Development Fund (NG-CDF) to develop infrastructure (Kumar 2008). This problem is manifested in inadequate and missing physical classroom space in Kenyan educational institutions at every level, with some classes in primary educational institutions having upward of 80 pupils and 50 students in secondary educational institutions (The challenges facing education… 2013). In some institutions, classes are ill-equipped and dilapidated, some having no roofs, doors, window panes and some even walls (Njuguna 2013:13). An insufficient government subsidy means inadequate learning resources like textbooks, dictionaries, atlases and supplementary learning materials, as well as insufficient desks and chairs (Njuguna 2013:13).

High levels of poverty in Kenya, with a current per capita income of $1600 (KSh. 160,000), are a major problem bedeviling education in Kenya (Ndiku 2007:157). Up to 48% of Kenyans live below the poverty line and spend less than a dollar (KSh 100) a day with the poverty rate standing at about 43% and parents lack basic necessities like food and consequently have no money left to meet the education costs for their children. (Mutua 2013:11; Njuguna 2013:13). Attendant problems like low enrolment rates, high repetition rates, child labour and HIV/AIDS come into play where it is estimated that 5% of Kenyan children do not attend school, with this percentage being higher in marginalised areas (SPRR 2005). A low transition rate is another major problem in the Kenyan education, according to Ndiku (2007:157). Only 30% of Kenyan children complete primary education and, of these, only 50% complete secondary school

(Njuguna 2013:13). This transition rate is even lower from secondary educational institutions to universities and colleges, leading to high wastage rates (Mutua 2013).

Educational institutions in Kenya are few per capita and far between, and students thus must walk for long distances or take public transport to school (Mutua 2013:11). Due to the long distances, students wake up as early as 5.00 a.m, return home at night exhausted, do their school assignments, some attend to household duties as directed by their by parents (The challenges facing education … 2013). According to Glennerster et al (2010:4), poor nutrition and poor health, where 20% of Kenyan children are underweight, is a major problem affecting Kenyan children. This affects their cognitive development, and consequently, a below average academic performance.

The introduction of FPE and FSE has resulted in an increase in student enrolment that has not been matched by an increase in teacher employment. Thus, educational institutions in Kenya lack qualified teachers with the shortage being estimated at an average of four teachers per school, the total shortage well above 80,000 (The challenges facing education…2013; Solve problems facing… 2011; Siele, Kipng'eno, Mureithi 2013:16). The teacher to student ratio is estimated to be 1:70, far beyond the recommended maximum ratio of 1:40, which makes it difficult for teachers to pay attention to all learners, give adequate assignments and mark them, besides their huge teaching workload (Siele et al 2013:16). Coupled with teacher shortage is the lack of professional growth and development by teachers to enable them to competently handle the numerous changes in Kenyan schools occasioned by changing education policies and the changing society (Siele et al 2013:16).

Even with the aforementioned workload that the teachers have to contend with, their remuneration is a major challenge in Kenya. The government lacks the will to implement a progressive reward system (Ndiku 2007:157)). Poor salary levels paid to qualified teachers has seen an escalation of labour unrests to demand salary increment (Ndiku 2007:157); Solve problems facing… 2011). In January 2015, the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and the Kenya Union of Post-Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) called a nationwide teachers' strike demanding salary increments resulting in a two-week long strike. This was repeated in

September 2015 when teachers went on strike for more than two weeks demanding better pay (Gicobi & Rono 2015:2; Rono 2015:9; Gicobi 2015:8; Gicobi & Namunane 2015:4; Obegi 2015:8).

Another pertinent problem with the Kenyan education system is the lack of adequate managerial skills and knowledge to perform administrative duties, where school managers lack skills in planning daily routine activities, managing finances, human resources, communication, implementing educational policies and managing change (Ndiku 2007:157). Embezzlement and misappropriation of funds is another major problem affecting Kenyan educational institutions where Ministry officials, institutional heads, PTA and BOG and teachers have been implicated in such embezzlement (Siele et al 2013:16). Of note is the fact that these people, in most cases, get away with it due to an extensive cover-up network, which adversely affects teaching and learning as money to fund the various institutional projects is misappropriated (Siele et al 2013:16).

Primary and secondary educational institutions in Kenya are characterised by an unsafe learning environment, where students are abused by other students and teachers, sexual harassment is common, school violence and bullying are rife and corporal punishment continues even when it has been banned (Siele et al 2013:16). Heinous acts have been committed by students on their fellow students in Kenyan institutions. These include the Kyanguli tragedy, St. Kizito tragedy, the Nyeri High School incident (Choge et al 2011:1) and the Stephjoy Boys arson attack (Wafula 2015; Ombati 2015; Wainaina 2015).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is vital to modern teaching and learning but schools in Kenya lack electricity, computers, internet connectivity, computer laboratories and ICT teachers and technicians, according to Abagi (2013:5). Even with the promise by the Jubilee government to provide each child enrolling in class one in primary school with a laptop computer, the challenges identified above need to be surmounted first for the One Laptop Per Child Programme to succeed (Abagi 2013:5, Khaemba 2013:29).

Lack of skills in communication management, for example, is evident in the absence of a democratic and participatory environment where teachers and students express themselves (Kiprop 2012:123). Kiprop (2012:123) advocates the use of suggestion boxes, school assemblies, house meetings, class meetings, guidance and counseling and open days to encourage students' participation and communication of views and grievances.

Secondary educational institutions in Kenya are characterised by inadequate or lack of crucial facilities, inadequate instructional materials, job dissatisfaction and strikes over pay by teachers, lack of in-service training for teachers, lack of school fees by students, scarcity of water and poor sanitation, overcrowding in dormitories in boarding schools; lack of conducive learning environment, badly managed, prepared and inadequate diet, student unrest and indiscipline resulting in destruction of property and even loss of lives and poor academic performance resulting from the strikes (Karanja & Bowen 2000:1, Glennerster et al 2008:4, Jagero 2011:127, Gatabu (2012), Kabangi (2012), Ng'ang'a (2012).

2.5.6 Stakeholders in a secondary educational institution in Kenya

A stakeholder is defined as any group or constituency that can affect or is affected by organisation purpose, objectives and activity (Koschmann 2007:1; Kyhn 2008:19; Smudde & Courtright 2011:137; Brown 2013:108). Stakeholders have also been defined as individuals, groups or organisations that are affected by the operations of an organisation and face some risk because of their relationship with that organisation (Bruce & Shelley 2010:3). Swart (2010:34) defines a stakeholder as any group of people that has a reciprocal influential relationship with an organisation. From the purpose of this study, stakeholders can be regarded as individuals, groups or an organisation that have a relationship with the organisation resulting from a mutual interest that brings the stakeholder and the organisation together to pursue this interest.

Hill (2016:1) posits that stakeholders in an organisation are identified by determining how they are impacted by the operations of an organisation. Hill (2016:1) also proposes two methods of identifying organisational stakeholders: identifying them organisationally, geographically or by their involvement in organisational operations or by determining those who are directly impacted and those indirectly affected by the operations of the organisation. Smith (2012:840) proposes

two additional ways of identifying organisational stakeholders: either as precedents that include perceptions, motives, needs and behaviours that are formed through the changes that happen within an organisation's environment that connect the organisation and the stakeholder, or as a mutual benefit where both parties find value in the connection rather than in the organisation. Hill (2016:1) regard the individuals or entities that benefit from or are directly impacted by the operations and activities of an organisation as primary stakeholders and those indirectly affected as secondary stakeholders, a view that is supported by Clarkson (1995:92). Bruce and Shelley (2010:3) posit that stakeholders can be categorised into groups: the narrow and the broad stakeholders. Narrow stakeholders are the individuals or groups that are vital to the survival and success of the organisation and include shareholders, staff, suppliers and customers. Broad stakeholders are the individuals or groups that are less directly linked to the organisation and include the community and the government. Slabbert and Barker (2014:72) refer to primary stakeholders as strategic stakeholders who are internal and/or external organisations or groups and are considered crucial to the organisation. The organisation and the primary stakeholders share a reciprocal interest that should be nurtured through proactive, mutually beneficial relationship building to ensure the continuity of the organisation (Slabbert & Barker 2014:72).

Mokoena (2011:120), Waters (2011) and Ministry of Education of Singapore (2013) regard stakeholders in an educational institution as composed of students, teachers, management boards and parents as the primary stakeholders; and alumni organisations, Ministry of Education officials, the community, business leaders, the faith community, trade unions, politicians and the media as the secondary stakeholders. This study focused on students, as one of the primary stakeholder groups in secondary educational institutions.

2.6 SUMMARY

This chapter addressed *Sub-problems 1* and *Research Question 1* which were to explore the risks of student strikes in secondary educational institutions. These risks were identified as destruction of property; lynching of colleagues; attacking motorists; loss of teaching and learning time; poor performance in examinations and co-curricular activities; and damage of the relationships between teachers and students. To avoid these risks, this chapter proposed the implementation of

proactive crisis communication with the students to identify and address issues that could escalate to student strikes.

The concept crisis was defined and its types and examples highlighted. Student strikes as crisis were also explored. The chapter further reviewed crisis management and crisis communication as derivatives of crisis. Proactive crisis communication was also reviewed at length, as well as the mixed motive model of communication. These kinds of communication were proposed to communicate with students in secondary educational institutions to address issues that could cause student strikes. The chapter further included a discussion on the characteristics of the Kenyan educational environment; the Kenyan education system and the challenges of the Kenyan education system. This was to enable an understanding of the secondary educational environment where the PCCP will be implemented to avoid student strikes. Lastly, the stakeholders in a secondary educational environment were highlighted and students identified as the most important primary stakeholder group in a secondary educational institution. This chapter lays the basis for this study and also serves as the foundation for the next chapter which will review the various theories and models of proactive crisis communication.

CHAPTER 3: A REVIEW OF EXISTING PROACTIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORIES AND MODELS

"Theories and models lay the foundation for research" (Swart 2010:84).

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on defining and conceptualising the key concepts in this study. The term organisational crisis was defined from an organisational perspective and conceptualised as a student strike in the context of a secondary educational environment. The previous chapter further examined the concepts crisis management and crisis communication and the reciprocal relationship between the two. Further, the concept proactive crisis communication was discussed and the mixed motive model of communication proposed as a component of this proactive crisis communication that could be implemented in a secondary educational environment to avoid student strikes. The previous chapter further reviewed the characteristics of the Kenyan education system and challenges of this system, which make secondary educational institutions susceptible to crises occasioned by student strikes. The concept 'stakeholders' was also defined from an organisational perspective as well as from the perspective of a secondary educational institution. The various stakeholders in a secondary educational environment in Kenya were also highlighted.

This chapter will focus on reviewing existing proactive crisis communication theories and models to derive various principles that may be used to design the PCCP framework. The following theories will be reviewed: Atribution Theory; Image Restoration Theory; Chaos Theory and the Situational Crisis Communication Theory. The latter two theories will be selected for the purpose of this study and will serve as grounding for the study. Various crisis communication models were also explored namely: Fink's stage model of crisis (1986); Meyers and Holusha's model (1986); Mitroff's stage model of crisis management (1988); Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt's integrated four step symmetrical process for crisis management (1996); Preble's integrated crisis strategic management process (1997); Pearson and Clair's process of crisis management (1998); Horsley and Barker's synthesis model for crisis management (2002); Hale, Dulek and Hale's linear crisis response model (2005); the spiral crisis response communication model (2005); Macliam's conceptual model for crisis communication with the

media (2005); the single spokesman model of crisis communication (2006); Coombs' crisis management model (2007); Jaques' issue and crisis management relational model (Jaques 2010); Shari's three-stage approach of crisis management (2011); and the proactive process model for crisis communication (2013). The proactive crisis models were used to build the PCCP framework due to their inclusion of a preparation/planning stage that resonates with the proactive focus of this study.

Crisis communication theories and models are interrelated since crisis communication models are derived from the theories and refer to simplified ways of representing the theories in action (Macliam 2006:71). Crisis communication models are also graphic images of the principles of crisis communication and provide order to complex issues enabling their clarification and interpretation (Macliam 2006:71). It was important to review these theories and models as this study was to eventually design a PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions in Kenya to avoid student strikes; based on the relevant crisis communication literature, theory and models and from the findings of the study. The specific contributions of each of these theories and models to the framework have been elaborated under each concept.

This chapter has addressed *Sub-problem 3* and *Research Question 3,* which, is to explore to the proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

3.2 CRISIS COMMUNICATION THEORIES

This section reviews various theories of crisis communication that are often applied to the study of crisis communication and whose principles can be used to design the PCCP framework for secondary educational institutions. These include the attribution theory, the image restoration theory, the chaos theory, and the situational crisis communication theory. These have attempted to cast light on the practice of crisis communication and help in the understanding of this subject. The following is a discussion of these four theories of crisis communication. It begins with a brief discussion of attribution theory and image restoration theory as these are not applicable to this study as explained under each theory.

3.2.1 Attribution theory

Attribution theory was developed by B. Weiner (1985) to provide a useful framework for conceptualising crisis management. According to Coombs (1995:448), attribution theory serves as the basis for expounding on the relationships between crisis response strategies and crisis situations as specific strategies should be formulated for specific situations due to their uniqueness. Weiner (1986:50) states that if the outcome of an event is negative, unexpected or important, people will search for the cause of that outcome and will make judgments about its causes based on the dimensions of locus, stability and controllability. Locus assesses whether the cause of the crisis is caused by the organisation (internal) or is caused by the situation (external) while stability assesses whether the cause of an event is always present (stable) or it varies over time and context (unstable) (Weiner 1986:50; Wilson, Cruz, Marshall & Rao 1993:353). Controllability assesses if the organisation can influence the causes of the crisis (controllable) or if the same are beyond the control of the organisation (uncontrollale) (Weiner 1986:50; Wilson et al 1993:353).

Coombs (2007a:136) suggests that stakeholders will make attributions about the cause of a crisis and will also assess crisis responsibility. Attributions of internal locus, controllability and stability create the perception that the organisation is responsible for the crisis but if the attributions are external, uncontrollable and unstable, the organisation is regarded as not responsible for the crisis and is, thus, removed from blame (Coombs 2007a:136). Different crisis situations create different attributions of organisational responsibility for a crisis (Coombs 1995:449). The stronger the attributions, the more likely the negative effects of the crisis will damage the organisation, the more negatively the stakeholders will perceive the organisation, and the less they will want to interact with it (Coombs 1995:449).

Weiner (1985:559) posits that the attributions stakeholders make about a crisis generate affective reactions about the organisation and that these emotions will affect how the stakeholders will interact with the organisation in future. Coombs and Holladay (2005:265) identify sympathy, anger and malice as some of these emotions. A stronger perception of crisis responsibility strengthens the negative emotions of anger and malice, while a weaker perception of crisis responsibility strengthens the positive emotions of sympathy (Coombs & Holladay 2005:269).

3.2.1.1 Crisis response strategies of the attribution theory

Attribution theory proposes that crisis response strategies could achieve two objectives: trying to repair the damage of a crisis by changing how stakeholders perceive crisis responsibility; and trying to mend the damage caused by a crisis by trying to change the emotions the stakeholders have towards the organisation facing a crisis (Coombs 1995:449; Coombs & Holladay 2004:97).

3.2.1.2 Limitations of attribution theory

By focusing on the attributions that stakeholders make about a crisis and the emotions generated by a crisis (Coombs 2007a:136), attribution theory addresses the crisis phase of a crisis as opposed to three phases namely pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis. Therefore, attribution theory will not be applicable to this study as this study focuses on the pre-crisis of a crisis to avoid student strikes.

3.2.2 Image restoration theory

Developed by William Benoit (1997), image restoration theory is concerned with the nature of attacks and complaints that lead to an organisational crisis (Benoit 1997b:178, Benoit & Pang 2007:246). It holds that if an organisation is accused of an offense, it must defend itself and attempt to restore its damaged image (Seeger & Padgett: 2010:129). Swart (2010:89) argues that an organisation whose corporate image is positive is able to manage a crisis more efficiently than that organisation whose image is tarnished.

3.2.2.1 Strategies of image restoration

Image restoration theory proposes various strategies that can be adopted and operationalised by an organisation to respond to a crisis and restore its image that has been damaged by the crisis (Benoit 1997b:178). The following discussion shows how each strategy can be used by an organisation after a crisis to repair its damaged image, relative to what caused the crisis. Benoit (1997b:178) proposes five strategies that an organisation can adopt to restore its image namely: denial, evading responsibility, reducing offence, taking corrective action and mortification. Within these five strategies are 14 distinct rhetorical sub-strategies or response sub-strategies namely, simple denial, shifting the blame, claiming provocation, defeasibility, claiming accident,

claiming good intentions, bolstering, differentiation, transcendence, minimising the crisis, attacking the accuser, compensating the victims, restoring the situation and promising to change behaviour, and making changes (Benoit 1997b:179; Seeger & Pang 2010:129; Pancic 2010:30). These strategies are elaborated in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1: Benoit's crisis response strategies (adopted from Benoit 1997b:179)

Response strategy	Response sub-strategy
Denial	Simple denial (Refuses to take responsibility)
	Shifting the blame (blames others)
Evading responsibility	Provocation (claims it was provoked)
	Defeasibility (claims it lacked sufficient information to act to avoid the crisis)
	Accident (says it was an accident)
	Good intentions (says it was acting with good intentions)
Reducing the offence	Bolstering (strengthening the stakeholders' positive feeling towards the organisation)
	Differentiation (projecting the crisis as less severe than other crises by others)
	Transcendence (changing focus to other issues)
	Minimising the crisis (accepting the crisis while downplaying its severity)
	Attacking the accuser (confronting the accuser verbally or legally)
	Compensating the victims (sympathising with the victims by offering compensation)
Taking corrective action	Restoring the situation (taking the organisation back to the situation prior to the crisis)
	Promising to change and making changes (promising to solve the problem and taking the right action towards this).
Mortification	Accepting responsibility for wrongdoing and asking to be forgiven.

3.2.2.2 Limitation of the image restoration theory

The crisis response strategies discussed above are majorly reactive, and in some instances post-evaluative, to respond to a crisis after it has occurred. Therefore, one of the predominant disadvantages of the image restoration theory is that it does not consider the fact that image repair is not only a reactive and a post-evaluative strategy, but also a proactive strategy that can be implemented in the pre-crisis phase to avoid damage to organisational image (Swart 2010:91). Therefore, the image restoration theory could not be applied to this study as this study focused

on the pre-crisis phase of a crisis to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

The following section reviews chaos theory and situational crisis communication theory in depth as this study has drawn from the principles of these theories.

3.2.3 Chaos theory

Chaos theory describes the behaviour of a non-linear, unpredictable system that usually changes over time (Murphy 1996:105). Chaos theory is suitable to inform crisis communication strategy in today's dynamic and ever-changing business environment (MacLiam 2006:94). Murphy (1996:103) posits that chaos theory is useful in understanding a crisis because its dynamics resemble that of a chaotic system as it passes through increasingly complex stages towards a disordered state. Chaos theory advocates the monitoring of small changes in the organisation and its environment, interpreting their context and determining the reactions of stakeholders; with the perspective that it is not possible to forecast or control a crisis (Murphy 1996:108; MacLiam 2006:95). Monitoring of changes in an organisation is possible through constant feedback from the environment and is the key to successful crisis management (Murphy 1996:108). Chaos theory also holds that crises tend to have a life and logic of their own, which makes intervention impossible and thus it defies a planned approach to crisis communication (Murphy 1996:108). MacLiam (2006:94) states that the unpredictability of a crisis contradicts what crisis management literature propose that it is possible to plan for and predict crises.

Chaos theory is sometimes called 'the butterfly effect' as it suggests that even the actions of a butterfly are connected to other occurrences elsewhere (Zaremba 2010:65). These occurrences appear far-removed, inconsequential and unrelated but may be related to an issue at hand and have some consequence, although it may not be possible to determine how or why (Zaremba 2010:65). In an organisational setting, all activities in an organisation have the potential to affect all other activities; hence managers should focus on the goals of that organisation and acknowledge that any activities that contradict those goals could create crises (Zaremba 2010:65). Chaos theory can be used to manage conflict between an organisation and its stakeholders (Swart 2010:88).

3.2.3.1 Principles of chaos theory

Chaos theory is based on the premise that organisations or any system, however complex, have predictability with general trends and patterns and relies on an underlying order (Jaques 2007:149). These organisations or systems have sensitive dependence on the existing conditions which are easily disturbed by minor events or changes which have the potential to greatly impact on the organisation by causing very complex behaviours or outcomes (Jaques 2007:149; Sellnow, Seeger & Ulmer 2000:272). The unpredictability that exists during a crisis makes it impossible to determine its exact consequences or the resources and personnel required to manage it due to the complexity and nonlinearity of the environment the organisation is operating in (Kiel 1995:1; Murphy 1996:1; Seeger 2009:329). Therefore, it is necessary to understand and prepare for the unpredictable business environment to enable the organisation to adapt to its environment in order to manage and resolve the crisis (Swart 2010:88, 89).

Chaos theory also proposes the principle of non-linearity which refers to the dynamism and disproportion between variables in a system whereby small changes or small errors can have huge consequences (Kiel 1995:1; Sellnow et al 2000:271). Sellnow et al (2000:272) posit that chaos theory examines how the interactions between social and technical elements in highly dynamic and disproportionate ways will result in unanticipated and very disruptive outcomes in highly complex systems, which could escalate into crises.

Chaos theory recognises the changes in organisations that disrupt predictability as bifurcations, which are the abrupt, discontinuous and divergent disruptions and changes in a formal system (Sellnow et al 2000:272; Seeger & Padgett 2010:135). The system's direction, character and structure are fundamentally changed and this change can occur at any time and is followed by self-organisation (Sellnow et al 2000:272; Seeger & Padgett 2010:135). All complex systems, even those that appear stable, have the potential for bifurcations, especially those with more interactions with their environment (Sellnow et al 2000:272). Crisis events, for example student strikes that are the focus of this study, are regarded as bifurcations in chaos theory.

Self-organisation is a natural process where order re-emerges from the chaos and results from inner guidelines and principles in the organisation rather than by external forces, according to

Sellnow et al (2000:276). Self-organisation leads to a higher level of order, stability and complexity (Sellnow et al (2000:276). The duality of order and disorder in systems and the attempt to understand complex systems make chaos theory very useful in the study of organisational crises (Sellnow et al 2000:276).

Chaos theory also proposes the principle of functionality of disorder and instability in organisations as a way of adapting to new situations (Kiel 1995:3). During a period of this disorder and instability, the organisation takes advantage of the situation to widen the options available to manage the crisis and also forces the organisation to look for new perspectives to manage the crisis (Kiel 1995:3). During times of high instability like major crises, stability can only be regained by developing unstable or flexible strategies, that is, dynamic and fluid strategies to manage the crisis (Kiel 1995:3). According to Swart (2010:88), instability forces an organisation to learn from crisis occurrences so as to prepare for future crises, an activity that is also implemented in crisis management and communication.

Kiel (1995:3) posits that chaos enables a system to break up self-maintaining behaviour that permeates such a system at a time when it is necessary to adopt new behaviour for survival and adaptation in a changing environment. Breaking up such behaviour paves way for engendering a learning culture in an organisation as it attempts to explore the various options available to it to manage the chaos (Kiel 1995:3). Learning from chaos leads to new behaviour and responses as well as an evaluation of the capabilities of existing crisis response systems (Kiel 1995:3; Sellnow et al 2000:272; Zaremba 2010:65). Learning from the chaos also builds the capacity of individuals and the organisation to survive major crises as well as the capacity of the organisation to renew and restructure itself after the crisis and also evolve more efficiently (Kiel 1995:3; Sellnow et al 2000:272; Zaremba 2010:65).

Chaos theory is applied in longer-term crisis management as opposed to a short-term resolution of a crisis (Jacques 2007:149). This theory is very useful in crisis communication to understand persistent image problems and to interrogate organisational control of public perceptions as an organisation attempts to change or to improve its image in the eyes of its stakeholders (Murphy

1996:95). Chaos theory can therefore be applied in the three phases of crisis management and communication namely proactive, reactive and post-evaluative.

MacLiam (2006:99) states that the chaos theory holds everyone in the organisation responsible for crisis management (and not just the crisis management team), thus accentuating the need to involve everyone in the organisation in crisis management and communication.

3.2.3.2 Limitation of chaos theory

Despite the applicability of the chaos theory in crisis management and communication, it has an important limitation. According to Swart (2010:89), this theory fails to emphasise the need to evaluate crisis occurrences and to incorporate these lessons in proactive crisis communication to avoid crises in the future.

3.2.3.3 Application of chaos theory to proactive crisis communication

Chaos theory proposes the monitoring of changes in an organisational environment and the collection of constant feedback from this environment to determine if the changes can result in crises. Therefore, the PCCP framework could aim at proposing the identification of issues in a secondary educational institution's internal and external environments that have the potential to cause student strikes and the need to proactively address these issues. Student strikes in secondary educational institutions are examples of the bifurcations proposed by the chaos theory. Student strikes are abrupt, intermittent and disruptive and can occur even in schools that appear stable and without a history of student strikes. Therefore, the proposed PCCP framework could focus on the means to pre-empt the occurrence of bifurcations like student strikes that negatively affect the operations of a secondary educational institution. Additionally, chaos theory proposes learning from a crisis in the post-evaluative phase, where lessons learnt could be used to inform pre-crisis preparation and planning. The PCCP framework could propose the incorporation of the lessons learnt from student strikes into crisis planning and preparation. In line with the proposition that everyone in the organisation is responsible for crisis management, this study proposes that secondary educational institutions in Kenya could involve all the students in proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes.

3.2.4 Situational crisis communication theory (SCCT)

The situational crisis communication theory (SCCT), developed by Timothy Coombs (1995), focuses on predicting the reputational threat presented by a crisis and to explain how communication protects the reputational assets of the organisation during a crisis (Coombs & Holladay 2002:167; Coombs 2004:266; Coombs 2007:163; Bell 2010:8). SCCT is predominantly reactive in nature and it proposes that a history of crises in an organisation influences perceptions of present crises and that these perceptions should guide the responses that an organisation sends to its stakeholders to protect its reputation (Coombs 2004:266; Swart 2010:91). SCCT provides a system for anticipating how stakeholders will react to a crisis and to the crisis response strategies, which it prescribes to protect organisational reputation (Coombs 2007:163). Post-crisis communication is also covered by SCCT as it focuses on the preventative measures that can be implemented to avoid crisis repetition (Swart 2010:91). This post-crisis communication involves post-crisis evaluation which informs pre-crisis management and communication (Swart 2010:91).

SCCT emphasises the prioritisation of the protection of the victims of the crisis from damage resulting from the crisis by ensuring their safety and survival before embarking on the protection of the reputation of the organisation (Coombs 2007:165; Kriyantono 2012:214). Coombs (2007:165) posits that it would be unethical to prioritise the organisation's reputation at the expense of the physical and the psychological wellbeing of the victims. To protect stakeholders from a crisis, SCCT proposes that the organisation should share information regarding the crisis (Coombs 2004:266; Coombs 2007:163).

SCCT draws from the attribution theory, where individuals make attributions about the organisation and how these attributions are used to predict the reputational threat to this organisation (Wright 2008:21). This theory proposes the identification of factors shaping the threats to organisational reputation and using these factors to predict and gauge the threats as accurately as possible (Coombs 2007:166). These factors are initial crisis responsibility, crisis history and prior relational reputation (Coombs 2007:166; Bell 2010:8; Kriyantono 2012:214; David & Chiciudean 2013:31) as discussed in the following section.

3.2.4.1 Factors influencing threats to organisational reputation

Initial crisis responsibility refers to the level the stakeholders hold the organisation responsible for the crisis, while crisis history occurs when the stakeholders know that the organisation has experienced similar crises previously (Hansson & Vikstrom 2011:10). On the contrary, prior relational reputation is the stakeholders' perception of how the organisation has cared for them in previous crises (Coombs 2007:166; Villines 2011:15; Kriyantono 2012:214). Crisis history, if unfavourable, may increase attributions of crisis responsibility leading to damage of organisational reputation (Lai 2010:27). On the contrary, a favourable crisis history has a major reducing effect on crisis responsibility and damage to organisational reputation (Lai 2010:27). Crisis responsibility is also influenced by the severity of the crisis in that if the crisis is very severe, more crisis responsibility will be attributed on the organisation as it is seen as incapable of handling the crisis (Schwarz 2007:3; Lai 2010:25; Hansson & Vikstrom 2011:10).

Bell (2010:8) and David and Chiciudean (2013:31) expound on three clusters of attribution of crisis responsibility with regard to the level of reputational threat on an organisation and of the level of damage to organisational achievement that a crisis causes. These are also the various clusters of crisis or crisis types (Villines 2011:15). The attributed responsibility is regarded as a key indicator of the potential reputational damage, as stakeholders expect the organisation to do more for victims when it is perceived as more responsible for the crisis (David & Chiciudean 2013:31). These clusters are based on how the crisis originated; the position of the organisation in the crisis; and the extent of the threat to its reputation (Bell 2010:8; David & Chiciudean 2013:31). The following is a discussion of these clusters of attribution of crisis responsibility:

3.2.4.2 Clusters of attribution of crisis responsibility

In the victim cluster, crisis types like natural disasters, workplace violence, product tampering and rumours are evident, and stakeholders assign a weak attribution of crisis responsibility as the organisation is a victim of the action or event causing the crisis (Coombs 2007:167; Bell 2010:8). The threat to its reputation is also mild as the stakeholders perceive it as a victim rather the cause of the crisis and may treat it with sympathy and loyalty (Coombs 2007:167; Bell 2010:8; Cooley & Cooley 2011:205; Hansson & Vikstrom 2011:10; David & Chiciudean 2013:31).

In the accidental cluster which includes challenges, mega-damages, technical breakdown accidents and recalls, the actions of the organisation that caused the crisis are perceived as unintentional or uncontrollable (Coombs 2007:167; Bell 2010:8). Therefore, minimal attributions of crisis responsibility are targeted on the organisation, resulting in moderate threat to organisational reputation (Cooley & Cooley 2011:205; Hansson & Vikstrom 2011:10; David & Chiciudean 2013:31).

In the preventable cluster, which comprises human breakdown accidents, product-harm and recalls, organisational misdeeds and management misconduct, the crisis event is considered intentional (Coombs 2007:167; Bell 2010:8). Therefore, the organisation is perceived as the cause of the crisis as it knowingly placed people at risk and hence it receives a strong attribution of crisis responsibility (held more responsible for the crisis) (Cooley & Cooley 2011:205; Hansson & Vikstrom 2011:10). Consequently, the threat to organisational reputation is severe (Hansson & Vikstrom 2011:10; David & Chiciudean 2013:31).

SCCT proposes that stakeholder attributions of crisis responsibility have affective and behavioural consequences for an organisation, in that if the organisation is seen as responsible, stakeholders are disappointed, angered or do not support the action or lack of it by the organisation (Coombs 2007:169; Coombs 2010:39). Consequently, individual stakeholders send negative messages or talk negatively about the organisation (Cooley & Cooley 2011:205; Villines 2011:15). Therefore, the reputation of the organisation is damaged and stakeholders may end their relationship with the organisation (Coombs 2007:166). Research indicates that crisis responsibility is negatively related to organisational reputation (Coombs 2007:168).

The clusters of attribution of crisis responsibility help to determine the crisis response strategies to be employed to manage the crisis (Bell 2010:8). The link between crisis situations and crisis response strategies is grounded on the responsibility for the crisis and who is responsible for this crisis (Bell 2010:8). Crisis response strategies are what the organisation says and does after the occurrence of a crisis and are used to repair an organisation's reputation and reduce the negative effects and behaviour towards the organisation (Coombs 2007:170; Bell 2010:8). SCCT proposes

that responsibility is the key strategy as the organisation must be accountable for and answerable for its actions (Coombs 2007:170). Researchers have found that the damages that a crisis causes to the reputation of an organisation can be positively influenced by matching the elements of the crisis to the right crisis response strategy (Schwarz 2007:3; Bell 2010:150). Linking crisis response strategy to crisis situation means that strategies are designed and implemented with specific situations in mind, as one situation is different from another due to its unique characteristics.

SCCT proposes that organisations should assess the degree of crisis responsibility made by stakeholders to organisations and match the same with the right crisis response strategy (Schwarz 2007:4; Coombs 2007:137; David & Chiciudean 2013:31). For example, if stakeholders strongly feel that the organisation is responsible for the crisis, the organisation should employ a strategy that accepts responsibility, for example, full apology, to restore or protect its image (Coombs 2007:137). There are three objectives that are fulfilled by crisis responses according to SCCT: to shape attributions of the crisis on the organisation and to change perceptions of stakeholders about the organisation in crisis (Coombs & Holladay 2002:167; Coombs 2007:170). Another objective of crisis responses is to reduce stakeholders' negative emotions generated by the crisis by, for example, reminding organisational stakeholders of the good that the organisation has done in the past, with positive information replacing the bad (Coombs & Holladay 2002:167; Coombs 2007:170; Bell 2010:150).

3.2.4.3 SCCT crisis response strategies

SCCT proposes several strategies to manage a crisis and these are grouped into four clusters depending on their perceived similarities: denial response strategies; diminishing response strategies; rebuilding strategies; and bolstering or reinforcing (Coombs & Holladay 2002:171; Coombs 2007:170).

Denial response strategies seek to reject the organisation's responsibility for the crisis (Coombs & Holladay 2002:171; Coombs 2007:170; Pancic 2010:30). The following denial response strategies are employed: attacking the accuser by confronting the person or group faulting the

organisation, denying the existence of the crisis and scapegoat which involves blaming another party for the crisis (Lai 2010:25; Coombs 2010:40; Cooley & Cooley 2011:205).

Diminishing response strategies acknowledge that the organisation is somewhat responsible but attempt to minimise this responsibility (Coombs 2010:40). An organisation could try to change stakeholder attributions of responsibility by redefining how they should interpret the crisis (Lai 2010:26). These strategies reduce blame of organisational control over the crisis or reduce the negative effects of the crisis by suggesting that the crisis is not as bad as it is being framed (Coombs & Holladay 2002:171; Coombs 2007:171). Additionally, these strategies involve the organisation denying any intention to harm and claims inability to control the crisis; and justification where it minimises the perceived negative image (Pancic 2010:30; Lai 2010:30; Cooley & Cooley 2011:205).

Rebuilding strategies try to improve the reputation of the organisation by showing compassion to the victims, offering assistance to the victims by, for example, offering compensation or giving a full apology or expressing regret for the occurrence of the crisis (Coombs & Holladay 2002:171; Coombs 2007:171; Coombs 2010:41; Pancic 2010:30; Lai 2010:26; Cooley & Cooley 2011:205).

Bolstering or reinforcing strategies aim to build a positive relationship between the organisation and its stakeholders (Coombs & Holladay 2002:171; Coombs 2007:171). These strategies include praising the stakeholders for their efforts during the crisis, reminding stakeholders of its good actions to counter-balance the negative effects of the crisis, and playing the victim (Coombs & Holladay 2002:171, Coombs 2007:171, Coombs 2010:41, Pancic 2010:30, Lai 2010:30, Cooley & Cooley 2011:205, Villines 2011:16).

Coombs and Holladay (2002:168) and Lai (2010:26) posit that the stronger the potential reputational damage, the more the crisis response strategy must attempt to consider the victims of the crisis, as stakeholders expect the organisation to do more for those adversely affected by the crisis when it is more responsible for the crisis. Coombs (2007:173) emphasises the need to maintain consistency in the employment of these strategies as mixing, for example, denial

strategies with either diminish or rebuild strategies will reduce their effectiveness. Coombs (2007:173) also explains that some crisis response strategies may be difficult to implement due to financial limitations, hence SCCT enables the organisation to determine the next best strategy that is affordable.

3.2.4.4 Limitations of SCCT

Swart (2010:93) identifies specific important limitations of SCCT. SCCT does not capture the whole crisis communication process (proactive, reactive and post-crisis communication) but only emphasises the reactive phase to protect the reputation of organisations (Swart 2010:93). SCCT emphasises communicating information to stakeholders to inform them of the crisis and its development and not to build stakeholders' relationships through mutually beneficial interactions (Swart 2010:93). SCCT is more concerned with how stakeholders perceive the organisation than addressing stakeholder concerns before, during and after a crisis (Swart 2010:93).

3.2.4.5 Application of SCCT to proactive crisis communication

This study employed SCCT as it proposed communicating information about a crisis to the relevant stakeholders to inform them of the crisis. The PCCP framework could propose having information about a student strike ready for key school stakeholders including the students who will be involved in the strike. SCCT also proposes post-crisis communication that focuses on preventative measures that can be implemented to avoid the repetition of a crisis, which, therefore, informs pre-crisis communication. The PCCP framework could propose the importance of incorporating the lessons learnt from student strikes into crisis prevention.

The following section expounds on various crisis communication models. Emphasis is given on the models that include a pre-crisis phase as the focus of this study is proactive crisis communication.

3.3 CRISIS COMMUNICATION MODELS

MacLiam (2006:82) posits that crisis communication models represent simplified ways of conceptualising crisis communication or graphic illustrations depicting the crisis communication

process. Crisis communication models provide order to complex issues and enable a clarification and interpretation of these issues (MacLiam 2006:82). This section reviews various crisis communication models, which are categorised as: crisis models addressing the proactive crisis management stage, crisis models addressing the reactive crisis management stage and crisis models addressing all the stages of crisis management. The PCCP framework could draw some principles from the models that address proactive crisis management as these models include a preparation/prevention/planning stage that is undertaken before a crisis, which is in line with the proactive approach of this study.

3.3.1 Crisis models addressing proactive crisis management

This section reviews a crisis model that addresses the proactive crisis management stage. This model could be used in designing the PCCP framework due to its emphasis on crisis planning and prevention which is the focus of this study.

3.3.1.1 Pearson and Clair's process of crisis management (1998)

Pearson and Clair's process of crisis management begins by proposing that top management should see the need for crisis management and early response by acknowledging that organisations are not immune to crises as well as acknowledging the need for crisis preparations by adopting crisis management programmes (Pearson & Clair 1998:59; Swart 2010:80). This model proposes the formation of crisis management teams by positing that those organisations where the responsibility for crisis preparation and response rests with such a team will realise greater success in managing the crisis than those organisations where this responsibility rests with individuals (Pearson & Clair 1998:60; Swart 2010:80). Pearson and Clair's model proposes the formation of alliances and sharing information with external stakeholders prior to a crisis to enable better crisis management and that this information should be disseminated quickly, accurately, directly and candidly to the key stakeholders (Pearson & Clair 1998:60; Swart 2010:80). This model also proposes that the organisation or the affected industry should plan to be positively visible during the crisis for successful crisis management (Pearson & Clair 1998:60; Swart 2010:80).

a) Limitations of Pearson and Clair's process of crisis management

Pearson and Clair's process of crisis management is majorly theoretical as it does not propose definite steps or actions for the implementation of proactive crisis management (Swart 2010:80). For instance, this model proposes the formation of a crisis team to manage the crisis; but does not propose how this should be done and who should constitute this team. Additionally, Pearson and Clair's model proposes sharing information with external stakeholders prior to a crisis; but does not propose how this should be done and through which means of communication.

b) Application of Pearson and Clair's process of crisis management to proactive crisis communication

This model could aid the PCCP framework by proposing preparation for crises and the formation of crisis communication teams to implement the framework to avoid crises.

3.3.2 Crisis models addressing the reactive crisis management

This section reviews the crisis models that focus on crisis management during the crisis. These models will not be used in designing the PCCP framework as their focus is on crisis response and management and not on crisis prevention that is the focus on this study. The following table summarises these models:

Table 3.2: Crisis models addressing reactive crisis management

Model	Correspondence with crisis stage	Description	Critique
Meyers and Holusha's model (1986)	Reactive stage	Provides a basis for understanding and responding to crises. Analyses a crisis based on the dimension, control, time to act and the options to manage the crisis (Meyers & Holusha 1986:207; Swart 2010:80).	Addresses a crisis after it has occurred instead of preventing the crisis (Swart 2010:80). It is not always possible to proactively determine the dimensions of a crisis and the time available to act (Macliam 2006:76).

Hale, Dulek and Hale's linear crisis response model (2005)	Reactive stage	The process of crisis response communication follows five sequential and interdependent steps: triggering event, observation, interpretation, choice and dissemination (Hale, Dulek & Hale 2005:119)	Proposes reactive crisis management activities instead of proposing the means of preventing the crisis (Swart 2010:80). The one-way and linear communication perspective fails to acknowledge the dynamism of the contemporary many-to-many communication (Macliam 2006:89).
The spiral crisis response communication model (2005)	Reactive stage	Presents a cyclical process where the crisis is observed; crisis information interpreted; choices made; and decisions disseminated. This process is followed until the crisis dissipates (Hale et al 2005:123; Swart 2010:80). Suggests an open systems approach to communication that allows information from the environment and incorporates the same into the decision-making process (Macliam 2006:93).	Does not propose ways of preventing the crisis (Swart 2010:80). Does not address the actual communication decisions by the crisis team during the crisis but only focuses on the process (Macliam 2006:93).
Single spokesman model of crisis communication (2006)	Reactive stage	Linear in nature and proposes that one person presenting one message is more effective in crisis communication than multiple spokespersons. Proposes the principle of projective cognitive similarity where the listener and the speaker perceive, judge and reason in the same way; and therefore the stakeholders will receive a consistent message during a crisis (Littlefield & Cowden 2006:8).	There are multiple stakeholders receiving a crisis message without any uniformity and may not respond as intended (Littlefield & Cowden 2006:8). The contemporary world is not linear but is characterised by many-to-many communication. Does not incorporate learning from the crisis.

Macliam's conceptual model for crisis communication with the media (2006)	Reactive stage	Proposes a multidisciplinary crisis communication team with access to all crisis-related information including top management decisions. Proposes proactive response and accessibility of an organisation by the media to build trust and credibility and increase the chance of better public perceptions. Proposes various crisis response strategies, similar to those proposed by SCCT (Macliam 2006:205, 207).	Crisis communication should be built on the proactive, reactive and post-evaluative stages of crisis management and not just the reactive stage (Swart 2010:81). Lacks post-crisis evaluation to inform proactive crisis communication.

3.3.3 Crisis models addressing the three stages of crisis management

This section reviews the models that address the three stages of crisis management. These models could contribute various principles that could be used to design the PCCP framework due their inclusion of the crisis prevention/planning stage that is the focus of this study.

3.3.3.1 Fink's stage model of crisis (1986)

Fink's stage model of crisis compares crisis to an illness and has four distinct stages through which a crisis evolves: prevention stage, acute stage, chronic stage crisis and resolution stage (Fink 1986:19). This model emphasises the prevention of a crisis in the prevention stage where crises present warnings that appear long before the illness or the crisis event (Fink 1986:19; MacLiam 2006:77). These warnings may be in form of repeated messages or persistent clues that could help in anticipating a crisis to reduce the negative consequences (Fink 1986:19; MacLiam 2006:77). In this stage of a crisis, the organisation scans its environment to gather issues that may escalate to crises as it is easier for an organisation to address a crisis in the prevention stage (Fink 1986:19). Fink (1986:19) states that any measure that reduces the uncertainty in a given situation and allows more control over an outcome is a form of crisis management. The prevention stage is comparable to the pre-crisis phase of crisis management and communication discussed by Shari (2011:120) which will be addressed in section 3.3.3.8.

The acute stage is reached when all efforts meant to avoid a crisis fail and the crisis occurs (Fink 1986:21; MacLiam 2006:77). This stage is characterised by high intensity and speed with which activities happen and the ability of management is dependent on the quality of planning done in the prevention stage as it is difficult to plan appropriately during a crisis (Fink 1986:21; MacLiam 2006:77). Therefore, the crisis management and communication activities undertaken in this stage are reactive and are meant to respond to and solve the crisis. The chronic stage involves recovery, healing or self-analysis as the organisation is resolving the crisis, as well as financial struggles, management shake-ups, hostile take-overs or bankruptcy (Fink 1986:21; MacLiam 2006:79). The importance of having a crisis management plan is underscored by Fink (1986:21), who posits that those without one suffer the effects of the crisis longer as opposed to those who are prepared for it. The crisis resolution stage is reached when the crisis dissipates and the organisation returns to its normal operations (Fink 1986:21; MacLiam 2006:79). However, the organisation should not be complacent but should continue scanning its environment for signs of new crises as the same are cyclical in nature (Fink 1986:21).

a) Limitations of Fink's model of crisis

MacLiam (2006:79) critiques Fink's model for not including details on the manner in which an organisation should respond to a crisis and the content of such messages. However, Fink's model of crisis is important in crisis management and communication as it proposes crucial principles on prevention of and planning for crises. These principles have been borrowed and developed in other models discussed hereafter.

b) Application of Fink model of crisis to proactive crisis communication

Fink's model of crisis focuses on the prevention of and planning for crises. The proactive principles proposed by the crisis prevention stage of this model could used in designing the PCCP framework to propose the identification of repeated negative messages or clues from an institution's internal and external environments that point to potential student strikes.

3.3.3.2 Mitroff's stage model of crisis management (1988)

Mitroff's five-stage model describes the stages through which a crisis moves and how it is managed, by examining the corresponding types of crisis management. In line with the advocacy for a proactive approach to crisis communication proposed in this study, this model regards crisis management as a cyclical process that emphasises preventing the crisis by including two pre-crisis stages of signal detection and preparation or prevention as well as a learning phase (Mitroff 1988:15; MacLiam 2006:80; Shari 2011:118). The signal detection stage involves identifying and acting upon warning signs to prevent a crisis, which is regarded as a proactive measure in crisis management (Mitroff 1988:15; Shari 2011:118; MacLiam 2006:80). This stage is comparable to Fink's prevention stage, which also involves scanning the environment for early signs of a crisis.

The preparation or prevention stage is comparable to Fink's first stage of crisis prevention and involves organisational members searching for known risk factors and working to reduce potential harm from the crisis (Mitroff 1988:17). Preparation also involves creating crisis teams responsible for undertaking the various activities involved in managing a crisis and training of these teams (Mitroff 1988:17; Shari 2011:118; MacLiam 2006:80). The damage containment and limitation stage involves reactive activities undertaken at the beginning of a crisis as the organisation tries to contain and limit its damage (Mitroff 1988:17). The success of this containment as dependent on the planning stage as the organisation cannot innovate during a crisis due to disruptions and the urgency that characterises crises, which make planning difficult (Mitroff 1988:19; Shari 2011:118; MacLiam 2006:80).

The recovery stage involves helping the organisation to recover from the effects of a crisis as well as working to return the organisation to its usual business operations as soon as possible (Mitroff 1988:18; Shari 2011:118; MacLiam 2006:80). Mitroff (1988:21) conceptualises the last stage of this model as a learning phase which involves reviewing and criticising the crisis management process, as well as picking up vital lessons from the process. Learning is a post-crisis management and communication activity and may involve re-looking at the crisis to determine what caused the crisis in the first place and find ways to avoid such an occurrence (MacLiam 2006:80). Learning may also involve looking into how the organisation responded to

this crisis to derive important lessons that may be used to proactively plan to avoid such a crisis in future by incorporating them in preparation/planning stage (MacLiam 2006:80).

a) Limitations of Mitroff's stage model of crisis management

MacLiam (2006:80) criticises Mitroff's stage model of crisis management as giving the organisation a false sense of security about their crisis prevention plans, placing more emphasis on preventive measures rather than on dealing with the crisis, and for further arguing that a crisis cannot always be planned for as it is unexpected.

b) Application of Mitroff's stage model of crisis management to proactive crisis communication

Mitroff's model focuses on the proactive approach to crisis communication by including two pre-crisis phases namely: signal detection and the crisis preparation or prevention, which is in line with this study. This study proposes an environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment for issues that could escalate to student strikes and implementing proactive crisis communication to address those issues to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. The preparation or prevention stage also proposes the formation and training of crisis communication teams, which will undertake crisis communication. This model is, thus, applicable to this study as it proposes preventative means to avoid student strikes and the formation and training of a crisis communication team to implement the framework. The learning stage of this model provides important principles like reviewing and criticising the crisis management process and identifying lessons regarding the organisation' crisis responses. These lessons could be incorporated in the preparation or prevention stage to avoid a repetition of such a crisis hence the model's applicability to this study to avoid student strikes.

3.3.3.3 Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt's integrated four step symmetrical process for crisis management (1996)

Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt's integrated four-step symmetrical process for crisis management presents an integrated four-step symmetrical model for the effective management of crises

through the following steps: issues management, planning and prevention, crisis and post-crisis (Gonzalez-Hererro & Pratt's 1996:89). This model proposes that a crisis passes through birth, growth, maturity and decline to illustrate how a crisis changes over time, and that this crisis cycle does not end but it lingers after the decline and death of the crisis (Gonzalez-Hererro & Pratt's 1996:89; Boudreaux 2005:8). This model, which is meant for crises caused by mismanagement, proposes that organisations should practice crisis management before crisis birth to prevent it from occurring or to kill it at its infancy (Gonzalez-Hererro & Pratt's 1996:89; Howell & Miller 2006:2). This model proposes early identification of the crisis, redirection or influence of issues by practicing issues management, planning and prevention, and implementation of crisis avoidance strategies (Gonzalez-Hererro & Pratt's 1996:89).

a) Application of Gonzalez-Herrero and Pratt's integrated four step symmetrical process for crisis management to proactive crisis communication

This model's emphasis on early detection of crises by identifying issues that are potential crises and planning for their prevention is in line with proactive focus of this study to avoid student strikes. The PCCP framework will purpose to propose an environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment for issues that are potential student strikes. The PCCP framework could also propose implementing proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

3.3.3.4 Preble's integrated crisis strategic management process (1997)

Preble's integrated crisis strategic management process proposes the integration of strategy directly into crisis management procedures (Preble 1997:783). The first step of this process proposes the formulation of strategy by developing a mission statement and then undertaking a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis (Preble 1997:784). The SWOT analysis will attempt to reveal an organisation's areas of vulnerability and susceptibility to potential crises, thus, exposing risks for consideration and reflection (Preble 1997:784). The second step of this process involves the development of strategies that are based on an organisation's internal strengths that minimise weaknesses, fight off threats to the organisation and exploit opportunities (Preble 1997:784). The third step is strategy implementation, beginning

with articulation of the organisation's policies and annual goals, formulation and documentation of detailed crisis plans, and formation of a crisis management team (Preble 1997:785-786; Swart 2010:82). The fourth step of Preble's model involves simulations and rehearsals for crises to enable the crisis management team to be creative, imaginative and familiar with external stakeholders (Preble 1997:785-786; Swart 2010:82). The fifth and final step of this process involves the evaluation of the progress made in the achievement of the strategies formulated in the crisis plans and using this information to solve problems, correct errors, refine strategies and reward performance (Preble 1997:786). This final step also involves evaluating the organisation's crisis preparedness through periodical simulations and drills (Preble 1997:786). This process model also posits that if a crisis occurred or was thwarted at the crisis incident stage, an extensive evaluation of an organisation's crisis management performance should be conducted and additional crisis prevention strategies explored and incorporated into a new planning cycle (Preble 1997:786).

a) Application of Preble's integrated crisis strategic management process to proactive crisis communication

Preble's integrated crisis strategic management process proposes a SWOT analysis of an organisation and addressing the risks faced (Preble 1997:786). This proposition resonates with the environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment for potential student strikes that is proposed in this study. Additionally, this process model also proposes the formation of crisis management teams to implement proactive crisis management strategies which is in line with the proposition for the formation of crisis communication teams to implement the proposed PCCP framework.

3.3.3.5 Horsley and Barker's synthesis model for crisis management (2002)

Horsley and Barker (2002:416) propose a synthesis model for crisis management whose basic tenet is that an organisation's level of crisis preparedness is important in reshaping the trust and confidence of the public towards the organisation. This model proposes that an organisation should design crisis communication plans which should comprise five interconnected stages. Ongoing public relations efforts emphasise planning or prevention of a crisis through image

building and public and media relations (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:84). These activities will prepare the existing communication systems for use during a crisis and also establish good relationships with various stakeholders to engender their goodwill and support (MacLiam 2006:83).

Identification of and preparation for potential crises is the basis of crisis management and it involves the organisation identifying potential risks; determining the impact of these risks; and preparing for these risks (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:84). This stage also involves identifying potential crises, identifying crises that affected the organisation in the past and which may recur, identifying crises that affected similar organisations in the past, and identifying issues that may turn into crises in the future (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:84).

Internal training and rehearsal involves designing a written crisis communication plan and undertaking media training and mock crisis drills to ensure that all organisational members are familiar with their roles and are sufficiently prepared should a crisis emerge (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:85).

The crisis event stage is reached when all efforts to avoid the crisis have failed and the crisis has already occurred (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:86). To sufficiently respond to a crisis, the crisis team needs correct, complete and consistent information through two-way communication with various stakeholders (MacLiam 2006:86). During this stage, crisis response communication involves deciding whether to share and what amount of information to share with various stakeholders (MacLiam 2006:86).

Evaluation and revision of public relations efforts is the final stage of the crisis communication process, where attempts are made to learn from the event internally and managing public perceptions externally (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:86). This stage also involves showing that the organisation has recovered from the crisis, has made changes to avoid a similar crisis, and is also prepared to deal with future potential crises (Horsley & Barker 2002:416; MacLiam 2006:86). This stage will inform the first step where the organisation will continue to

engage in public relations with its stakeholders to maintain the existing relationships and to develop new ones (MacLiam 2006:86).

a) Application of Horsley and Barker's synthesis model for crisis management to proactive crisis communication

Horsley and Barker (2002:416) apportion the first three stages of this model to preparation for a crisis thus accentuating the importance of preparation in crisis management and communication and on a proactive approach to crisis communication. This model will, thus, be readily applied to this study due to its emphasis on crisis prevention, preparation and planning. Specifically, ongoing public relations efforts will prepare the existing communication systems for use during a crisis and also use communication to establish relationships with various stakeholders whose goodwill and support will be called upon during a crisis. The PCCP framework could propose ongoing public relations to establish various channels of communication and proactively communicate with the students to avoid student strikes.

3.3.3.6 Jaques' issue and crisis management relational model (2010)

Jaques (2010:11) proposes the issue and crisis management relational model, which conceptualises crisis management as a cyclical process. This model proposes that the elements of crisis management are clusters of related and integrated activities that may either overlap or occur simultaneously (Jaques 2010:12). This cyclical model also posits that issues and crises are rarely conventionally resolved in the short term, as management systems must be in place to manage longer term impacts of the issue or crisis (Jaques 2010:11).

The issue and crisis management relational model divides the pre-crisis phase into two parts: crisis preparedness and crisis prevention (Jaques 2010:11). Crisis preparedness includes various activities like planning, systems and manuals, documentation and exercises and simulations, which are done to prepare the organisation to better respond to future crises (Jaques 2010:11). Crisis prevention includes early warning systems, issue scanning, issue and risk management, social forecasting, environmental scanning, and emergency response (Jaques 2010:11). These

activities help in identifying issues in an organisational environment and within the organisation that could, otherwise, escalate into crises as well as finding ways to avoid such crises.

The crisis incident management phase is conceptualised in three parts. Crisis recognition includes the transition from emergency to a crisis, early recognition of the crisis and an objective assessment of the crisis (Jaques 2010:11). System activations and response involve activation of the systems that are established to respond to and manage the crisis, operationalising effective mechanisms for responding to the crisis, making backups available, and evaluating systems redundancy where there is inadequate response or no response at all (Jaques 2010:11). Crisis management involves strategy selection and implementation, damage mitigation, stakeholder management and media response (Jaques 2010:11).

The post-crisis management phase is also conceptualised in three parts. Recovery and business resumption involves operational recovery, evaluating the financial costs, market retention, re-establishing business momentum, and share price retention (Jaques 2010:13). Post-crisis issue impacts involve taking the organisation through litigation, reputational damage and media scrutiny (Jaques 2010:13). Evaluation and modification includes analysing the root cause of the crisis, assessing the management of the crisis, and reviewing the process of crisis management and implementing any necessary changes (Jaques 2010:13). This phase also involves debriefing the crisis team and evaluating the crisis plan to determine weaknesses and make the necessary improvements (Jaques 2010:13). This is a learning phase and an opportunity to change what triggered the crisis in the first place and to understand the situation differently (Roux-Dufort 2000:26; Elliott, Smith and McGuiness (2000:21). Learning can only be possible where the organisation has made deliberate efforts through thorough preparation and planning (Jaques 2010:13).

a) Application of the issue and crisis management relational model to proactive crisis communication

The issue and crisis management relational model emphasises crisis preparedness and prevention in the pre-crisis phase to prepare the organisation to better respond to future crises, which is in

concert with the proactive crisis communication focus of this study. Strategies like the establishment of early warning systems and the identification of issues in a secondary educational environment that are potential student strikes and finding the means to avoid these issues could be included in the PCCP framework to avoid student strikes.

3.3.3.7 Swart's integrated crisis communication framework (2010)

Swart (2010:184) proposes an integrated crisis communication (ICC) with proactive, reactive and post-evaluative stages to enable strategic stakeholder relationship building with the media to identify and address issues to avoid potential crises. Swart (2010:185) proposes that the ICC framework could proactively create a favourable platform to communicate effectively with the media during the crisis by creating and nourishing media relationships through two-way communication. Other strategies are purposeful media interactivity, stakeholder focus and prioritisation, cross-functional planning and monitoring, using an integrated agency and alignment of internal and external messages and ensuring communication excellence. During a crisis, the ICC framework could help the organisation, through two-way communication relationships with the media, to communicate effectively and address media enquires, while advising top management on the outcomes of their business decisions (Swart 2010:184). After the crisis, the ICC framework proposes the continuation of two-way stakeholder communication to establish a listening and learning culture to enable the avoidance of future crises (Swart 2010:184).

a) Application of Swart's integrated crisis communication framework to proactive crisis communication

Swart's model proposes the continuation of two-way communication with organisational stakeholders after a crisis to establish a listening and learning culture to avoid future crises. This principle could be adopted by the PCCP framework which aims to propose post-crisis evaluation to use the lessons learnt from a particular student strike to avoid future strikes.

3.3.3.8 Shari's three-stage approach to crisis management (2011)

The three-stage approach to crisis management focuses on preparation and planning for a crisis before it occurs and includes the pre-crisis, crisis and post-crisis phases of crisis management (Shari 2011:120). The pre-crisis stage of crisis management includes crisis preparation and planning, and the organisation remains in this stage until a crisis is triggered (Shari 2011:120). The crisis stage includes activities undertaken during the crisis event to reduce the severity of the crisis (Shari 2011:120). These activities involve crisis communication with organisational stakeholders to provide them with crisis information and to attempt to mitigate the negative effects that this crisis will have on the image and reputation of the organisation (Shari 2011:120). The post-crisis stage includes learning and resolution and provides information for the pre-crisis stage to enable the organisation to have a different mindset when preparing for crises (Shari 2011:120). Shari proposes that post-crisis learning should inform pre-crisis preparation to empower the organisation to better assess a potential crisis.

a) Application of the Shari's three-stage approach to crisis management to proactive crisis communication

The three-stage approach to crisis management proposes crisis preparation and prevention. These principles could be applied in this study to design the proposed PCCP framework to avoid student strikes. This framework could propose the identification of contentious issues in a secondary educational environment and addressing these issues before they escalate to student strikes. The principle of post-crisis learning that informs pre-crisis preparation and planning will be applied in this study, where lessons learnt from a certain student strike will be incorporated into proactive crisis communication to avoid strikes in future.

3.3.3.9 Corrigan and Mortensen's proactive process model for PR crisis communication (2013)

Corrigan and Mortensen (2013:1) propose a proactive process model for public relations crisis communication which considers a crisis as a life cycle that is dependent on a number of variables. Corrigan and Mortensen (2013:1) propose that this life cycle could last indefinitely if

the organisation does not move away from the lower sub-process that represents reactionary and non-strategic tactics. Corrigan and Mortensen (2013:1) conceptualise a crisis resembling a bomb that sends dangerous fragments in every direction making it virtually impossible to cover the explosion and difficult to deal with every damaged area simultaneously. This model proposes a triage approach and selects and starts with the worst damaged area as well as attending to the victims of the crisis first and then the receivers of the news like the public, customers and the media (Corrigan and Mortensen 2013:1). Protecting the victims of the crisis as a priority before embarking on reputational damage control is also emphasised by the SCCT as discussed in section 3.2.4.

Corrigan and Mortensen (2013:2) propose a dualistic receiver function where news of the crisis is perceived either positively or negatively by the public. News of a crisis is received positively if it is communicated by professional media which collect objective stories before going public; and negatively if communicated by instantaneous (interactive) media which broadcasts news before checking the facts (Corrigan & Mortensen 2013:2). Therefore, the medium that a crisis message is sent through is important in shaping stakeholders' opinion about the crisis. Proactive public relations is prioritised by functioning in the upper half of this process and involves building rapport with the media to ensure goodwill when a crisis occurs (Corrigan & Mortensen 2013:2).

Corrigan and Mortensen (2013:3) suggest that the organisation should take time to re-evaluate the whole crisis and make a strategic decision to avoid the reactionary path and move upward to the proactive and strategic path. Taking the reactionary paths means that the organisation has failed to prevent the crisis and is now responding to it. This model also proposes strategic verbal communication with stakeholders but emphasises the non-verbal actions, which are more meaningful and memorable (Corrigan and Mortensen 2013:3).

a) Application of the Proactive Process Model for PR Crisis Communication to proactive crisis communication

The proactive process model for PR crisis communication emphasises proactive and strategic approach to crisis communication to prevent crises makes it relevant and applicable to this study to avoid student strikes and to prepare secondary educational institutions for such incidents should they occur. In line with the proposition for strategic verbal communication with organisational stakeholders, the proposed PCCP could suggest proactive crisis communication with students in secondary educational institutions to avoid student strikes. Additionally, as the medium that a crisis message is sent through is important in influencing the opinions of the audience, the PCCP framework could propose appropriate channels of communication to communicate with the students.

3.4 SUMMARY OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE CRISIS THEORIES AND MODELS TO THE PCCP FRAMEWORK

The following principles were derived from the relevant theories and models and could be included in the PCCP framework: formation of a crisis communication team to plan to avoid student strikes through environmental scanning of the secondary educational institution's internal and external environments for issues, changes and interactions that could escalate to student strikes and avoiding the same; appreciating the disruptive and destructive nature of student strikes and engaging the students in proactive crisis communication through appropriate channels of communication to avoid the strikes; having information about a student strike ready and providing this information proactively to various stakeholders; and post-crisis communication to evaluate a student strike and to include the lessons learnt into crisis planning and prevention.

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter addressed *sub-problem 3*: to explore proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions. An in-depth review of the relevant crisis communication theories and models was done to enable an understanding of the process of proactive crisis communication and to draw principles that could be used to design the

PCCP framework. Emphasis was given to chaos theory and SCCT due to their focus on proactive crisis management and communication that is the focus of this study. Chaos theory was selected due to its emphasis on environmental scanning, a proactive activity, for issues that are potential crises such as student strikes. SCCT was selected because it emphasises post-crisis communication to use the lessons learnt from the crisis, for instance, a student strikes, in crisis planning and preparation. Emphasis was also given to various models that include a proactive crisis communication stage due to their emphasis on proactive crisis planning and prevention, which is the focus of this study.

The following chapter will focus on discussing the research methodology that will be used to explore the elements identified in this study in practice.

CHAPTER 4: THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

"Unlike the natural sciences, the qualitative researcher is not observing phenomena from outside the system but is inextricably bound into the human situation which he or she is studying." Walliman (2005:205).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provided the methodological strategy to explore the PCCP framework in practice as a proactive measure to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County. It also specified the methodology required in addressing the research problem, which is to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework as a proactive measure to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya. This chapter laid the foundation to address the following sub-problems and research questions in practice: *sub-problem 1*: to explore the risks posed by student strikes, and *research question 1*: what are the risks posed by student strikes?; *sub-problem 2*: to explore the information needs of school stakeholders during student strikes and *research question 2*: what are the information needs of strategic stakeholders during student strikes?; and *sub-problem 3*: to explore proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions and r*esearch question 3*: do public secondary educational institutions have proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes?

This chapter focused on the research methodology by addressing the interpretive research paradigm followed by the methodological orientation of this research where the qualitative research approach is expounded on. This was followed by an exposition of the sampling strategy where the units of analysis, the population, the sampling method and the sample are explained. One-on-one interviews and focus group discussions as the data collection methods and thematic analysis as the data analysis approach are also elaborated on. Finally, the chapter addressed the trustworthiness of this study.

4.2 METHODOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

Dunne (2005:163) explains that methods in research refer to ways in which data are produced, interpreted and reported and consists of procedures and techniques of using a certain research instrument. This section firstly discusses the interpretive research paradigm and exploratory research followed by discussion on qualitative research design.

4.2.1 Interpretive research paradigm

This study adopted the interpretive research paradigm whose basis is that people make sense of their world, that there are multiple realities in this world, and that people assign different meanings to such realities (Babbie & Mouton 2011:33; Kroeze 2012:48). The interpretive paradigm regards reality as highly subjective and socially constructed through interactions where individual participant's experiences and contexts are considered (Neuman 2000:51; Kura 2012:6; Wahyuni 2012:70).

According to the interpretive research paradigm, human action only becomes meaningful among people who share a meaning system that enables them to interpret it as a socially relevant action (Neuman 2000:51). The interpretive approach is ideographic, as it provides a symbolic representation or "thick" description of something and inductive as general statements are built up slowly after the researcher immerses self in specific observations of social life (Neuman 2000:53). Neuman (2000:54) posits that interpretive researchers rarely ask objective questions and do not compound the answers of different people and claim to have something meaningful. Rather, they place each participant's interpretation of the question in context, for example, the participant's previous experience as specific social situations could contain ambiguity which makes it impossible to discover straightforward, objective facts (Neuman 2000:54).

Babbie and Mouton (2011:33) posit that from an interpretivist perspective, data analysis includes descriptions of people's intentions, meaning and reasons, and according to Wood and Welch (2010:58), the researcher is able to derive value-laden data as meanings are interpreted from the participants' subjective perspectives. Additionally, generalising the findings to the population is not important as the sample is not randomly derived (Wood & Welch 2010:58).

4.2.2 Exploratory research

Exploratory research has the objective of enabling a researcher to know the basic facts of a phenomenon, formulate questions for a study, refine issues for a more orderly investigation of the issues, and develop a clearer mental picture of what is occurring (Neuman 2000:19). From an organisational communication perspective, exploratory research studies an unknown area of research to obtain new insights, identify key concepts, identify key stakeholders, identify the consequences of communication problems, develop hypotheses, confirm assumptions or become familiar with unknown situations, conditions, policies and behaviour (Du Plooy (2001:49). The objective of this study was exploratory as it aimed to explore the need for a new PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya; a deviation from a focus on the manufacturing, service and financial industries done in previous studies.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Van Eeden and Terre Blanche (2000:122) regard a research design as involving deciding how to conduct the research so that the research questions can be answered. The researcher needs to decide on the type of research to conduct, the participants and the situations to collect data from, the type of data that will be collected, how this data will be collected and analysed (Van Eeden & Terre Blanche 2000:122). Yin (2011:74) regards a research design as a logical blueprint that link the research questions, the data to be collected and the strategies for analysing the data to ensure that the findings address the intended research questions and by extension to strengthen the validity (trustworthiness) of a study. According to Gibson and Brown (2009:47), a research design involves determining what kind of data is needed to answer a research question or questions and specifying approaches for collecting data, for instance, experiments, case studies, ethnography or action research. A research design is a rough template providing a broad structure on how to work through a study with each research design having unique characteristics (Gibson & Brown 2009:47).

This section focused on the qualitative research approach to enable an understanding of this approach. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:2) define qualitative research as an interpretive, naturalistic approach to study things in their natural settings and interpret social phenomena based on the

meanings that people attach to them, and which enables a deep understanding of such phenomena (Silverman 2000:8). According to Yin (2011:76), qualitative research designs have no fixed designs like in experimental studies and each qualitative study might have a different design customised to fit a particular design.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:155) and Cooper and Schindler (2014:144), qualitative research includes designs, techniques and measures that do not produce discrete numerical data due to their interpretive nature. Alternatively, qualitative research uses language as a tool to construct meaning and derives data that are in form of words, which are often grouped into categories (Michal-Johnson 1993:170; Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:155). Neuman (2000:322) regards qualitative research as focusing on subjective meanings, definitions, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of specific cases in specific settings and the research procedures are particular to that study making replication very rare. This view is corroborated by Willis (2007:287), who posits that qualitative research is open to different methods of data collection and analysis and do not lend itself to a recipe or technical approach due to its flexibility.

Marshal and Rossman (1999:2) explain that qualitative research is emergent, evolving and interpretive, a view corroborated by Gibson and Brown (2009:9) and Cooper and Schindler (2014:144), who posit that qualitative research is flexible, iterative and naturalistic. Qualitative research puts forward a flexible research structure that could include general, rather specific research questions, which can be changed as the research develops, with the concepts and theory grounded in data, that is, inductively arrived at from the data collected (Flick 2011:56; Bryman 2012:403, 404; Cooper & Schindler 2014:144).

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994:4), qualitative research emphasises value-laden nature of inquiry and provides thick descriptions or detailed outlines of the social world, that is, people's experiences and behaviours. Qualitative research focuses mainly on meaning, language and cultural experiences in social contexts by understanding particular situations by, for example, using in-depth or intensive interviews (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:203; Du Plooy 2001:33). Berg and Lure (2012:18) regard qualitative research as attempting to seek answers by looking at

various social settings and the groups or individuals who live in these settings. Seeking these answers involves investigating how people arrange themselves and their settings and how they make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures and social roles to arrive at a contextual understanding of social behaviour (Berg & Lure 2012:401).

Silverman (2008:8) posits that qualitative research derive data that is naturally occurring by inductively studying meanings to document the world from the point of view of the people being studied. Bryman (2012:380) and Berg and Lure (2012:8) posit that qualitative procedures seek patterns among cases without reducing them to their averages. Qualitative procedures also seek the means of accessing unquantifiable knowledge about the people the researchers observe and talk to or about what represents them, for example, letters, photos, images, newspaper accounts and diaries (Bryman 2012:380; Berg & Lure 2012:8). This strategy emphasises words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data, thereby allowing researchers to share in the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily lives (Bryman 2012:380; Berg & Lure 2012:8). Additionally, Bryman (2012:399) states that qualitative researchers commit themselves to viewing events and the social world from the participant's point of view.

Qualitative research uses focus groups, one-on-one interviews, case studies, ethnography, action research and observation to collect data, content and thematic analysis of written or recorded materials drawn from personal expressions by participants and behavioural observations and debriefing of observers as data analysis methods (Cooper & Schindler 2014:144). Bryman (2012:384) posits that when reporting findings, qualitative researchers provide a great deal of explanatory detail of what goes on in the setting being investigated, thereby enabling an in-depth understanding of the research questions.

According to Bryman (2012:318), qualitative research could have six steps: general research question(s), which are sometimes stated explicitly, selection of relevant site(s) and subjects, that is, the geographical place where the study will be conducted and respondents to include in the sample, collection of relevant data and the interpretation of this data, using the information

derived from the interpretation to have a tighter specification of the research question(s) and collection of further data, and writing up findings and conclusions.

4.3.1 Differences between qualitative and quantitative research designs

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:198), qualitative and quantitative research approaches are similar in sequence and method as both begin with the researcher stating a problem and formulating research questions then defines the population and the sample, collects and analyses data, and presents the results and conclusions. The fundamental differences between the qualitative and quantitative research approaches are the philosophical assumptions within which each approach operates and the way a researcher combines the various components or steps of the research process (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:198).

The following table summarises the specific differences between the qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Neuman 2000:88, 413; Silverman 2000:3-4; Mugenda and Mugenda 2003:200-204; Walliman 2005:205; Durrheim & Painter 2006:132; Babbie, Mutton, Vorster & Prozesky 2007:49; Flick 2011:56; Flick 2013:24; Willig 2013:24; Cooper & Schindler 2014:147).

Table 4.1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research approaches

Dimensions	Quantitative Approach	Qualitative Approach
Purpose	Predict and control by seeking causes and effects of human behaviour and build and test theory.	Understanding people's perceptions and interpretations deeply and build theory.
Reality	Reality is stable and is made up of unchanging facts resulting from quantifiable data. Argue for a single, objective reality which is tangible.	Reality is dynamic as it changes with changes in people's perceptions. Argue for intangible realities which exist as constructions only in the minds of people.
Values	Value-free where values can be controlled by methodological procedures.	Value-laden where values have an influence and should be understood and considered.
Focus	Particularistic where the researcher studies selected, predefined variables using experimental and quasi-experimental methods.	Holistic where the researcher seeks a complete picture of the phenomenon through multiple methods (triangulation).

Theory	Seeks to verify and test predetermined hypotheses and theories.	Seeks to discover theories and hypotheses from the data collected (grounded theory).
Method	Uses non-human instruments like pre-constructed tests, observational records and rating scales through social surveys, experiments, official statistics, structured observations and content analyses, with the researcher distancing himself/herself from study object.	Uses human beings as the primary data collection instruments using unstructured items with the researcher interacting with the participants.
Data	Objective and empirical data is obtained that is independent of people's perceptions.	Subjective data that is in form of words, material and photographs and is representative of people's perception is obtained.
Design	Determined before the study and is a linear (step-by-step) process starting from theory and ending with validation of the theory.	May evolve or adjust during the study and the steps are more interlinked as sampling decisions are taken during data collection and data analysis begins as data is collected.
Conditions	Research conditions are controlled where the involvement of the researcher is limited and controlled to avoid bias.	Research conditions are natural and the involvement of the researcher is high as he or she is a participant or catalyst.
Data analysis	Quantitative: Data is analysed using predetermined, specialised, standardised and statistical computer packages after all of it is collected and it yields descriptive and inferential statistics.	Non-quantitative and data collection and analysis are done simultaneously by coding it into themes and concepts.
Findings	Focuses on reliability and validity of the findings which are replicable.	Focuses on trustworthiness of the findings that are 'real', 'rich' and 'deep'.
Research reports	Provides a detailed description of the research problem, objectives, hypotheses and methods and results presented using tables and graphs.	Research reports are usually narrative and quote participants voices thereby providing rich descriptions of their behaviour and its context.

In view of the above discussion, the quantitative research approach was not appropriate as the purpose of this study was to obtain the personal opinions of the research participants.

4.3.2 Advantages of qualitative research

Several advantages of qualitative research can be identified and it is important for a researcher to examine these to justify choosing the qualitative research paradigm based on its perspective on the research questions and, by extension, the research topic. This section examines these advantages.

A study that adopts a qualitative research paradigm has the following the advantages. The flexible nature of qualitative research allows the researcher to adjust the research design to fit emerging situations or new knowledge and to be open to unexpected findings that may be important to the study (Flick 2011:56; Bryman 2012:403; Cooper & Schindler 2014:147). This flexibility also allows the researcher to change the research questions as the research develops (Bryman 2012:403). Qualitative research allows an elaborate description and explanation of the setting of the study, thus, enabling an in-depth understanding of the research questions (Bryman 2012:403). Studying people in their natural and social settings enables the qualitative researcher to derive original data (Berg et al 2012:18; Cooper & Schindler 2014:144). Qualitative research allows the researcher to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and their meaning of their daily lives (Berg et al 2012:18; Bryman 2012:380). Qualitative research provides a means of accessing unquantifiable knowledge about the study subjects that may not be accessible through other research methods (Bryman 2012:380; Cooper & Schindler 2014:147). Qualitative research focuses on an in-depth understanding of the issue being studied by studying a small sample, which also saves time and significantly cuts costs (Cooper & Schindler 2014:147). Analysing data from each interview immediately it is collected also saves time (Flick 2011:56). Qualitative research also provides insights needed to make expensive organisational decisions (Cooper & Schindler 2014:145).

4.3.3 Disadvantages of qualitative research

The qualitative research approach has the following disadvantages. Qualitative research is subjective as it relies on the researcher's often unsystematic views about what is significant and important to the study, and is, therefore, liable to human error and bias in data collection and interpretation (Bryman 2012:405; Cooper & Schindler 2014:144). It is also too difficult to

replicate a qualitative study as it is unstructured and often dependent upon the researcher's ingenuity where standard procedures are rarely followed (Bryman 2012:405). Problems of generalisations are inherent in qualitative research as the scope of the study is restricted due to the use of a small number of respondents in the sample and the non-random sampling method (Bryman 2012:405; Willig 2013:24; Cooper & Schindler 2014:145). Qualitative research also lacks transparency as it is sometimes difficult to establish what the researcher actually did and how he or she arrived at the conclusions (Bryman 2012:405). The non-quantitative nature of qualitative research means that it lacks statistics which most research funders are interested in (Cooper & Schindler 2014:147).

Despite these disadvantages, the qualitative research approach was employed in this study as its research objectives and research problem can best be achieved and addressed through a qualitative study as it focuses on subjective meanings of the participants and derives data that is in form of words. This approach was also found appropriate as it enables the researcher to interact with the participants during the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and the focus group discussions to get in-depth information.

4.4 SAMPLING STRATEGY

A sampling strategy involves determining the target population and the sample by deciding the number of participants, how many events to observe and how many records to inspect (Cooper & Schindler 2014:84). This section examines the unit of analysis, the target population, the accessible population, the sampling method and the sample for the purpose of this study.

4.4.1 Unit of analysis

A unit of analysis is also referred to as the sampling element, a population element, data collection units, unit of assignment or unit of allocation (Yin 2011:82; Cooper & Schindler 2014:338). A unit of analysis can be a person, a group, an organisation, a written document or an object that the researcher wants to get information from (Neuman (2000:200). Sekaran and Bougie (2013:104) argue that a unit of analysis is derived from the target population and is the

level of aggregation of the data collected during data analysis or what the researcher interviews, issues a questionnaire to, observes or conducts an experiment on.

According to Yin (2011:84), a unit of analysis in most cases occurs in nested arrangements where there may be two levels of data collection units: the broader level and the narrower level. The unit of analysis, at a broader level, is, in most cases geographical, organisational or social entities, whereas at the narrower level, the unit of analysis is usually the participant in the study as well as policies, practices or actions. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis was the individual, more specifically the principals of the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and the students of Ruiru Secondary School. Principals were included as they are the major decision-makers in the institutions and they decide, in consultation with the deputy principals and teachers, when and how to communicate with students. Principals are also the contact persons in their institutions and communicate with various stakeholders on behalf of the institutions. Therefore, they can provide important information about the communication that is undertaken with the institutional stakeholders and their information needs during student strikes. Principals were also included as they could provide valuable information about the risks posed by student strikes in the secondary educational institutions as they have experienced the same in their long service in the teaching profession. The students of Ruiru Secondary School were selected as they were available for the study. The input of the students was needed as they had been in the institution for periods ranging from one to four years. Therefore, they could provide information on issues relating to student strikes in this secondary educational institution to either confirm the principals' input or contrast it.

4.4.2 The population

A population, also called a sampling frame, is the totality of individuals, cases, events, documents, things or objects with common observable characteristics that are the subject of a study (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:9; Mugenda 2008:183; Walliman 2009:72). Cooper and Schindler (2014:338) corroborate this view by regarding a population as the total collection of elements about which the researcher wants to make inferences. Bhandarkar, Wilkinson, Laldas (2010:263) regard a population as observations with specific attributes, which a study should cover and which consist of the totality of the set objects with which the researcher is concerned

(Phophalia 2010:61). Mugenda (2008:183) regards a population or sampling frame as a list of ultimate sampling entities, and is a physical representation of the target population comprising all the units that are potential members of a sample. Nachmias & Nachmias (1996:179) define a population as the aggregate of all cases that conform to a designated set of specifications.

It is important to define and describe the population carefully to ensure clarity on whom or what is to be studied. The criteria used to include people, events or objects in the population should be clarified. The following population parameters were used in the eligibility criteria: the participants in the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews had to be principals of public secondary educaional institutions as these are directly involved in the day to day management of the institutions; the principals had to be working in the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County; and the participants in the focus group discussions had to be students of a public secondary educational institution in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County.

The following information about the public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County in Kenya was obtained by the researcher from the Mirangine Sub-County Education Office. These institutions include: Nyakiambi Girls Secondary School, Sabugo Secondary School, Kurungu Secondary School, Matindiri Secondary School, Ruiru Secondary School, Githima Secondary School and Gituamba Secondary School in Sabugo Location and Tumaini Secondary School, Rutara Secondary School, Ngorika Secondary School, Kanjuiri Secondary School and Mirangine Secondary School in Tumaini Location.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:10), there are two categories of the population: the target population and the accessible population.

4.4.2.1 The target population

The target population is also referred to as the 'universe' and is the cases, events, people, objects or records that contain the desired information and that can answer the research questions (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:10; Mugenda 2008:181; Cooper & Schindler 2014:84). The target

population in this study included all the 12 public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County listed above.

4.4.2.2 The accessible population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:10) explain that the accessible population is the population that a researcher can reach or access. There are factors that make it impossible to reach the entire population such as time constraints, long distances, and travelling and other costs. All the schools were accessible; hence the accessible population represented all the 12 secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County.

4.4.3 The sampling method and the sample

Bhandarkar et al (2010:262) regards sampling as selecting a portion of the population for a study. Phophalia (2010:61) regards a sample as a sub-set of a population that includes a selected number of individuals who are members of the population, or the points of data collection or cases to be included in a study, which could be a person, a document, an institution or a setting (Gibson & Brown 2009:56). Nachmias et al (1996:179) posits that sampling is important as it is impossible, impractical or extremely expensive to collect data from all the potential units of analysis. Bhandarkar et al (2010:286) and Cooper and Schindler (2014:338) agree by positing that sampling is less time-consuming as shorter time is used to reach the sample and collect data as opposed to the whole population, is less expensive to study as fewer people need to be reached and more attention is given to each response to check their accuracy. Sampling also has the following limitations. It demands great care and caution lest the results obtained are incorrect or misleading (Bhandarkar et al 2010:286). A large sample may be required if the characteristics to be measured occur rarely in the population (Bhandarkar et al 2010:286; Cooper & Schindler 2014:338). A sample may also hamper data analysis as there are not enough cases for breakdown tables and sub-classifications (Bhandarkar et al 2010:286).

4.4.3.1 Probability and non-probability sampling

A sample that a researcher is interested in collecting information from can be derived through either probability sampling or non-probability sampling. Probability sampling refers to the kind

of sampling where the elements of the population have some known, non-zero chance or probability of being selected a sample subjects (Neuman 2000:202; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:247; Cooper & Schindler 2014:343). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:45), the goal of probability sampling is to select a reasonable number of subjects, objects or cases representing the target population, and which representativeness can be generalised to that target population (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:45; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:247; McQueen & Knussen 2006:105).

Non-probability sampling, which is arbitrary and subjective, involves drawing a sample which has the same parameters and where the researcher predicts or controls the choice of units of analysis (Du Plooy 2001:106; Cooper & Schindler 2014:152, 343). Non-probability sampling is used when researchers are not interested in generalisability or representativeness of the sample but in obtaining some in-depth preliminary information in a quick and inexpensive way (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:50; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:248). In non-probability sampling, the unit in the population does not have a known or predetermined and equal chance of being selected as subjects as it does not have any probability attached to its being chosen as a sample subject (Neuman 2000:202; Du Plooy 2001:106; McQueen & Knussen 2006:106; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:248). Non-probability sampling employs strategies like convenience sampling, quota sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling (Neuman 2000:202; Du Plooy 2001:114; Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:50; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:252; Cooper & Schindler 2014:349). Purposive sampling was applied in this study and will be discussed in detail in the following section.

4.4.3.2 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling is also referred to as judgmental sampling (Nachmias et al 1996:184). It involves researchers selecting sampling units subjectively to obtain a sample that is advantageously placed or appears to be representative of the population being studied (Neuman 2000:203). Purposive sampling is used to obtain information from specific target groups who can provide the desired information either because they have it or because they fulfill some criteria set by the researcher (Nachmias et al 1996:184; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:252; Cooper & Schindler 2014:359). This sampling method is based on the assumption that if a researcher was to exercise good judgment and appropriate strategy, one could handpick the most appropriate

cases to include in the sample by collecting cases that are typical or are characteristic of the population being studied (Bhandarkar et al 2010:286; Flick 2011:76; Rapley 2014:54). The cases are informative due to their characteristics, roles, opinions, knowledge, ideas, experiences, perceptions or behaviour (Neuman 2000:203; Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:50; Mugenda 2008:183; Gibson & Brown 2009:56; Flick 2011:76; Cooper & Schindler 2014:152). The cases are chosen in a way that reflects the diversity of the population (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:270).

Yin (2011:88) regards purposive sampling as a deliberate process of selecting cases for study with the goal of capturing those that will yield the most relevant and plentiful data about the topic of the study as well as the broadest range of information and perspectives on the subject of the study. This process involves choosing or selecting the specific units of analysis from a larger population and determining the number of these units to be included in the study (Du Plooy 2001:191; Yin 2011:88). Du Plooy (2001:114) explains that a purposive sample is used by a researcher who possesses previous knowledge of the populations to arrive at a purposive known-group sample. Sampling involves first establishing the criteria for selecting cases *a priori* in relation to the research questions, identifying appropriate cases, then samples from those cases that have been identified (Rapley 2014:54).

Guided by the research objectives, purposive sampling is used in exploratory or formative studies to select unique cases that are informative to obtain new insights that would help in posing problems or formulating hypotheses for research, obtain ideas and experienced critical appraisals and not to generalise to the population (Neuman 2000:203; Bhandarkar et al 2010:287; Bryman 2012:418). Exploratory objectives can be achieved by studying a smaller sample as the intention is to gain insights into the phenomenon being studied (Du Plooy 2001:191).

Purposive sampling was used to derive the sample for this study. A purposive sample of 12 principals for the semi-structured interviews, one-on-one was drawn from the accessible population. All the principals from all the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-county were accessible and hence all of them were included in the sample. A purposive sample of 30 students from a total student population of 280 from Ruiru Secondary School was also

drawn for the five focus groups. Six students for the first focus group were drawn from a class population of 70 from the Grade 9 class; six students for the second focus group were drawn from a class population of 65 from the Grade 10 class; six students for the third focus group were drawn from a class population of 68 from the Grade 11 class; and 12 students for the fourth and fifth focus groups were drawn from a class population of 67 from the Grade 12 class. These students were purposively selected from the class population based on their performance in English examinations, according to the progress records, as the researcher assumed that these students could communicate well in the English language and, therefore, participate effectively in the focus groups.

4.5 DATA COLLECTION METHOD

The section will focus on elaborating the data collection methods employed in this study namely: survey research through one-on-one interviews and focus groups.

4.5.1 Survey research method

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:164) define a survey as an attempt to collect information from members of a population to determine the current status of that population regarding one or more variables. Survey research involves collecting information from several cases over a wide area (Walliman 2005:116). The purpose of a survey as to describe existing phenomena or explain or explore the existing status of a variable by asking individuals about their perceptions, attitudes, behaviour, experiences and values (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:165). Survey research is used to collect original data to describe a population which is too large to observe directly and it enables the collection of large amount of data from a sample of people or events in an expensive way (Du Plooy 2001:170; Walliman 2005:116). A survey involves the researcher sampling many respondents who answer the same questions to measure many variables and test multiple hypotheses (Neuman 2000:231). It requires the researcher to know the precise subject focus so as to formulate specific objectives, avoid unnecessary work and give accurate information (Walliman 2005:116).

Survey research can either be quantitative or qualitative and it follows a deductive approach by starting with a research problem and ending with an empirical measurement and data analysis (Neuman 2000:231). Survey researchers use a survey questionnaire or an interview schedule to measure the variables being studied by conducting telephone interviews, one-on-one interviews, focus groups, online surveys mail and administering self-administered questionnaires (Neuman 2000:231,249; Groebner et al 2011:9). A survey researcher pilot tests the questionnaire or the interview schedule to ensure clarity of questions and to explore the interpretations of these questions to see if the intended meaning was clear (Neuman 2000:232).

Despite the usefulness of the survey research method discussed above, it has several important limitations. It is dependent on the cooperation of respondents and if the procedures used are erroneous, the data collected may be inaccurate; it captures only what is known to the respondents; and requesting secret and personal information encourages incorrect answers (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:166).

This study used the survey research method to collect data from the 12 principals of the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews; and from the 30 students sampled from Ruiru Secondary School for the focus groups. The following section focuses on interviews as a data collection procedure.

4.5.1.1 Interviews

Qualitative studies can be undertaken through interviews which involve presentation of verbal stimuli to gather verbal responses to gain people's perceptions, beliefs, feelings, motivations, anticipations, future plans and past and private behaviours (Bhandarkar et al 2010:199). Du Plooy (2001:175) and Warren (2012:132) regard an interview as a transitory relationship between an interviewer and an interviewee, where the interviewer initiates the interaction and asks the interviewee questions although sometimes the interviewee questions whereas the interviewer answers. In an interview interaction, the interviewer asks questions, makes notes and/or records these responses using an audio or video tape, according to Du Plooy (2001:175).

Rubin and Rubin (2005:129) regard interviews as conversations that combine main questions, follow-up questions and probes. The main questions are formulated before the interview to ensure all aspects of the research problem are covered while follow-up questions ask for explanation about the themes, concepts or events introduced by the interviewee (Rubin & Rubin 2005:129). Probes help to keep the conversation on the topic, enable the achievement of the desired level of depth and probes for examples and clarifications (Rubin & Rubin 2005:129). Rubin, Rubin, Handakis & Piele (2010:221) state that interviews can be intensive and are used as qualitative techniques to answer 'why' and 'how come' questions and can be used to explore communication behaviours and attitudes.

a) Advantages and disadvantages of interviews

There are various advantages and disadvantages that are associated with interviews. Interviews allow one-on-one contact between the researcher and the research participant for longer periods; allow more questions than in survey questionnaires and gives the researcher control of the research situation (Neuman 2000:251; Nachmias et al 1996:237; Rubin et al 2010:221). One-on-one interviews, compared to self-administered questionnaires, usually yield a high percentage of returns or a higher response rate as almost everyone in the sample can be reached and is likely to respond, since the researcher reaches him or her personally (Neuman 2000:251; Nachmias et al 1996:237). Information derived from interviews tends to be more accurate than that derived through other techniques, as the interviewer can correct inaccurate or irrelevant answers (Bhandarkar et al 2010:203). Interviews allow the interviewer to collect important supplementary information like non-verbal information that helps in interpreting the verbal replies (Nachmias et al 1996:237). During interviews, the respondents are allowed enough time to acquaint themselves with the topic under investigation and the language of the interviewer can be adapted to the ability or educational level of the interviewee enabling the avoidance of misinterpretations or misleading questions (Bhandarkar et al 2010:204). One-on-one interviews allow for flexibility that ensure rich response material, for example, sandwiching sensitive questions in between less sensitive ones and changing the subjects or giving explanations (Bhandarkar et al 2010:204).

Despite the above advantages, several disadvantages can be associated with interviews. Interviews are more costly in terms of travelling, the time required to travel and undertake the

interviews especially if the sample is big, and the resources required to record and process the information collected (Neuman 2000:251; Nachmias et al 1996:237). Interviews are subject to interviewer bias, where the interviewer asks questions that lean on one side of the hypothesis (Neuman 2000:251; Nachmias et al 1996:237). The presence of the interviewer may inhibit free responses due to lack of anonymity or may over-stimulate the interviewee, who, in turn, may give imaginary information or answers to please the interviewer (Nachmias et al 1996:237). It is difficult to develop the rapport that is required to ensure a free flow of information between the interviewer and the interviewee (Bhandarkar et al 2010:205). Moreover, the data collected may be inaccurate and incomplete unless the interviewer is thoroughly trained and supervised (Bhandarkar et al 2010:205).

The above disadvantages can be sufficiently addressed by employing the following strategies. The interviewer should create a friendly atmosphere and build trust and confidence to ease any pressure on the interviewee that may hinder free expressions (Bhandarkar et al 2010:206). The researcher creates this kind of atmosphere by introducing self, explaining the purpose of the interview, clearing any doubts, stressing that the interview will remain anonymous and that the study is not a test but a way of gaining information about the study topic (Bhandarkar et al 2010:206).

b) Types of interviews

This section focuses on the three types of interviews namely: the structured, unstructured and semi-structured interviews.

- ### Structured interviews

A structured interview, also referred to as a standardised interview, is conducted when it is known at the beginning what kind of information is needed (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:119). It involves the use of a detailed interview schedule that is prepared prior to the interview and which contains fixed and closed-ended questions whose responses are limited to certain fixed, pre-designated alternatives like 'yes' or 'no' or a series of anticipated replies where a respondent picks one or more (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200). Berg and Lure (2012:108) concur with this view by stating that a structured interview uses a formally structured 'schedule' of interview questions

which are clearly specified. The researcher asks each respondent these questions exactly as worded and in the same question order, to give each respondent almost the same stimulus (Bryman 2012:470). A structured interview may also include open-ended questions but these and their order are pre-determined (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200). The interview guide is similar to a questionnaire and is used to guide the question order and the specific ways the questions are asked (Cooper & Schindler 2014:153). A structured interview involves using highly standardised techniques of recording to ensure all respondents answer the same questions and have a similar understanding of those questions (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200; Sekaran & Bougie 2013:119). Nachmias et al (1996:232) and Berg and Lure (2012:109) state that in structured interviews, the number of questions posed to each respondent is the same, underscoring the need of not presenting some respondents with additional questions. Structured interviews promote the standardisation of asking questions (and the language used therein), the recording of answers, reducing errors that could result from a variation of the questions, and giving ease, and greater accuracy of processing responses (Nachmias et al 1996:232). In structured interviews, the interviewer maintains neutrality hence interviewer bias is avoided (Cooper & Schindler 2014:153).

- *Unstructured interviews*

An unstructured interview, also referred to as an unstandardised interview, does not have a planned sequence of interview questions as the interviewers do not follow a system or a list of predetermined questions (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200). The objective of unstructured interview is exploratory to bring some preliminary issues about the research problem to the surface from an interview that is customised to each participant (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:118; Cooper & Schindler 2014:153). An unstructured interview involves the interviewer creating an atmosphere of trust, encouraging the respondent to talk about a particular topic, and discovering the respondent's ideas, views, suggestions and queries (Du Plooy 2001:178). This interview atmosphere enables the researcher to get insightful and in-depth information about the topic being investigated (Natascha 2010:44). Unstructured interviews are used where generalisability is not important as the researcher is only interested in exploring an issue (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:118).

In unstructured interviews, the interviewee is encouraged to relate their experiences freely and truthfully and give their opinions as freely as possible through spontaneous rather than forced, specific and concrete responses (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200). The interviewer is allowed much greater freedom to ask any supplementary questions or to omit some, change sequence and to offer clarifications and explanations (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200).

According to Nachmias et al (1996:232), Walliman (2005:284) and Babbie (2007:306), one-on-one unstructured interviews are interpersonal role situations or conversations, where an interviewer establishes a general direction for the conversation and pursues specific topics raised by the participants by asking respondents questions in a flexible manner. Bhandarkar et al (2010:200) and Rubin et al (2010:221) underscore this view by stating that this type of interview is characterised by greater flexibility of questioning the respondents to probe for attitudes and reasons. However, there are significant limitations that are associated with unstructured interviews. The flexibility that is associated with this type of interviews results in lack of comparability between one interview and another (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200). Unstructured interviews are time-consuming as only a small sample is covered within a specific time period; and the analysis of the unstructured responses is much more difficult and time-consuming than structured ones (Bhandarkar et al 2010:200, 201).

- *Semi-structured interviews*

A semi-structured interview, also called semi-standardised interview, can be defined as a one-on-one interview where the interviewer establishes the general direction of the interview and follows the topics raised by the participants Babbie (2007:306). Semi-structured interviews are more or less structured, allowing for flexibility of the wording of the questions and the deviation from the sequence of these questions during the interview, as well as the adjustment of the level of language when asking these questions (Flick 2011:112; Berg & Lure 2012:169). Semi-structured interviews also allow the interviewer to answer questions posed by the interviewee and make clarifications as well as probe or delete probes and prompt participants (Berg & Lure 2012:169). Greef (2005:292) states that a semi-structured interview is partially guided by predetermined questions and also includes questions that arise in the course of the interview and in between the interviews. The interview schedule in this case contains semi-structured or open-

ended questions to allow the participants the freedom to give subjective answers that enable the researcher to derive intensive information about the participants' opinions and perceptions (Babbie 2007:246; Flick 2011:113). The open-ended questions should allow room for specific and personal views of the interviewees and should be combined with more focused questions to get deep information about the issues being researched and introduce issues interviewees would not have mentioned spontaneously (Flick 2011:113). As the aim of a semi-structured interview is to obtain the individual views of the interviewees on an issue, the questions should initiate a dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee who are expected to reply as freely and as elaborately as possible (Flick 2011:112). Cooper and Schindler (2014:153) state that a semi-structured interview generally starts with a few specific questions and then follows the interviewee's tangents of thoughts.

Some important advantages can be attributed to one-on-one interviews. These interviews have a high response rate and permit many questions to be included in the interview schedule and the interviewer can also observe the surroundings for any relevant information (Neuman 2000:251; Singleton & Straits 2012:78). The interviewer can also pick up nonverbal cues from the participants and use non-verbal communication and visual aids (Neuman 2000:251). The interviewer is able to ask all types of questions including complex ones and also use extensive probes that derive more information from the participants (Singleton & Straits 2012:78). The researcher can adapt the questions as necessary, clarify issues and ensure responses are clearly understood by repeating or rephrasing the questions (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:124). However, one-to-one interviews are costly due to training, supervision and personal expenses, and are also prone to interviewer bias resulting from his or her appearance and tone of voice (Neuman 2000:251). Moreover, the wording of the questions may influence the participants in certain ways, according to Neuman (2000:251). One-on-one interviews are also prone to geographical limitations like harsh terrain and weather (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:124). Another significant disadvantage is that respondents might feel uneasy about the anonymity of their responses when they interact face to face with the interviewer (Sekaran & Bougie 2013:124).

In the first phase of this study, semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were used as the data collection method as these interviews enabled the researcher to interact with the participants,

pose questions, probe for more information and record this information verbally. A total of 12 semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were conducted with the 12 principals of the 12 secondary educational institutions in their respective workplaces in the institutions. During the interviews, the researcher visited each of these secondary educational institutions and requested for a suitable interview room free of noise and other distractions. Then, the researcher requested the respondent to attend the interview and explained that the interview would be recorded and notes taken as it proceeded. The interview responses were recorded verbatim using a recorder (Bryman 2012:208). The researcher also took notes of important issues as the interview progressed.

c) The interview schedule

This section will focus on discussing the interview schedule as a research instrument used to collect qualitative data (Du Plooy 2001:83). This interview schedule contained open-ended items to allow the respondents the freedom to elaborate on their responses while expressing their views. The interviewees were asked the same set of questions with follow-up, specifying, probing and interpreting questions added where necessary (Natascha 2010:45).

The interview schedule used to conduct the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews was divided into six categories. The first category included introductory questions that focused on obtaining the level of management experience of the participant by determining the level of experience as a principal and how long the participant worked at the particular educational institution. The remainder of the interview schedule included questions related to the proposed PCCP framework to determine whether the proposed theoretical principles of the framework resonate with practice. Firstly, questions were posed related to a situational analysis of the secondary educational environment in terms of the history of student strikes, the risks posed by these strikes, the means of communication used to communicate with students and with other school stakeholders, and the student grievances that can cause student strikes. Secondly, questions were asked to identify the strategic stakeholders and their perceived importance in the school. Thirdly, questions were posed to explore two-way symmetrical communication between the principals and the students as the most important strategic stakeholders and to explore the information needs of stakeholders during a student strike. Fourthly, questions were asked to establish how

principals attempt to reduce the probability of student strikes by exploring whether the principals have strategies in place to avoid student strikes, how the principals involve students in the changes intended in the institutions, how the principals address student grievances and if students are satisfied with the current practice, and the measures the principals take to avoid potential student strikes. Fifthly, questions were posed to determine whether principals prepare strategic stakeholders for possible student strikes.

The interview questions, together with a letter requesting participation and explaining the purpose of the study, were sent one week prior to the interviews to allow respondents adequate time to prepare for the interview and to secure an appointment on a specific and time.

d) Pilot testing the interview schedule

A pilot test can be conducted to detect weaknesses in design and instrumentation and/or to provide advance data for selection of a probability sample (Cooper & Schindler 2014:85). A pilot test of an interview schedule ensures that the interview questions operate well and that this research instrument as a whole functions well (Bryman 2012:263). Pilot testing an interview schedule also enables a solution to persistent problems that may emerge after a few interviews as well as provide interviewers with some experience in using the interview schedule and engender a sense of confidence in them (Bryman 2012:263). A pilot test also enables the identification of questions that make respondents feel uncomfortable and detection of any tendency for respondents to lose interest at certain points as well as to identify un-understood questions and those that are mostly omitted (Bryman 2012:263). A pilot test should draw participants from the target population and simulate the procedures and protocols designated for data collection (Cooper & Schindler 2014:85). For these reasons, a pilot test of the interview schedule was conducted with two participants from Sabugo Secondary School and Nyakiambi Secondary School as these institutions were easily accessible by the researcher. This pilot test involved the researcher interviewing the participants individually in their workplaces, recording these interviews using a smart phone while making notes on a notebook. After these pilot tests, the weaknesses in the interview schedule were identified and appropriate amendments were made. The interview schedule is attached as Addendum A.

The following section includes a discussion on focus groups which formed the second phase of the two-phased data collection strategy.

4.5.1.2 Focus groups

Gibbs (1997:1) regards a focus group as involving an organised discussion with a selected group of participants to get their viewpoints and experiences about a certain issue and to obtain several perspectives about that issue. According to Du Plooy (2001:178), a focus group is an interview conducted in small groups of between 6 and 12 participants to provide data that is rich in ideas as the participants are free to give their opinions about the topic under discussion. Barbour (2007:2) defines a focus group as a discussion where a moderator is actively encouraging and attentive to group interaction so as to identify differences in views, explore participants' views and what they emphasise.

According to Swart (2010:124), a focus group is characterised by several participants working together, the interaction among them and the presence of a moderator to guide the discussion using a research schedule. The purpose of focus groups is to identify participants' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions and to stimulate certain important viewpoints that are enabled by their interaction (Gibbs 1997:1; Swart 2010:124).

Focus groups can be used in exploratory studies, either as the main method or to complement other methods and can assist in exploring and generating hypotheses and develop questions or concepts for questionnaires and interview guides (Gibbs 1997:1; Du Plooy 2001:179; Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007:376). This view is corroborated by Have (2004:6) who posits that data from focus groups is based on their experiences regarding the issue being investigated. Focus groups can also be used to pilot test a new product as well as test the validity of a measuring instrument by using the group as an expert jury (Du Plooy 2001:179). Focus groups can also fulfill the following objectives (Gibbs (1997:1; Cohen et al 2007:376): generating data quickly and at low cost, finding out why an issue is important and what is important about it, revealing multiple understandings and meanings and consequently multiple explanations of participants' behaviour and attitudes, involving the participants in decision making processes and making them feel valued as experts, giving the participants a chance to work collaboratively with the

researcher, developing trust and, therefore, enable the group to explore solutions as a unit rather than as individuals and could become forums for change when participants experience a sense of emancipation through speaking out in public.

Focus groups stimulate and rely on interactions among the participants to generate more information and in-depth data than individual interviews (Stewart, Shamdasani, Ruok 2007:10; Cohen et al 2007:376). This data is generated by bringing out participants' spontaneous reactions and ideas and allowing the researcher to observe some group dynamics and organisational issues (Nielsen 1997:1). Interaction in a focus group is important as it enables participants to highlight their worldviews, the language they use about an issue and their values and beliefs about a situation (Nielsen 1997:1). The participants in a focus group are able to ask each other questions and reconsider how they understand their specific experiences thereby enabling data to emerge from the interaction (Nielsen 1997:1; Cohen et al 2007:376).

Focus groups should be held in a neutral location to avoid negative or positive associations with a particular place, and this location should also enable the setting of a voice recorder (Gibbs 1997:1). Stewart et al (2007:89) states that the participants should sit around a table as it provides a sense of security for them, provides a sense of personal space, shields the legs of the females thereby eliminating distraction and provides a rest for the arms and hands. Stewart et al (2007:89) posits that the moderator should create a non-threatening and non-judgmental environment where participants feel free to express themselves openly. To begin the discussion, the group was briefed about the objectives and duration of the discussion to gain their informed consent (Du Plooy 2001:180). The moderator then introduced the discussion by explaining the objective of the focus group and informed the participants that there were no correct or incorrect answers, that it was in order for their viewpoints to differ and that they were free to speak without being prompted (Du Plooy 2001:179). To ensure anonymity of the participants and thereby promote frank discussion, the participants were requested to use their first names or pseudonyms to enable their identification when transcripts are coded and interpreted (Du Plooy 2001:179; Stewart et al 2007:90; Boateng et al 2016:122).

The role of a moderator in a focus group discussion is very important as he or she comes up with topics and questions that direct discussions (Du Plooy 2001:180). The moderator also ensures that the group stays on the topic so as to obtain useful information (Stewart et al 2007:89). Therefore, he or she should possess a good level of group leadership and interpersonal skills (Nielsen 1997:1). Although a focus group should be free-flowing and relatively unstructured, the moderator must follow a preplanned script of specific issues and keep the discussion moving without inhibiting the flow of ideas and comments as well as ensuring that all group members contribute to the discussion by avoiding a situation where one participant dominates the discussion (Nielsen 1997:1).

Du Plooy (2001:181) posits that the success of a focus group depends on the following factors: the date, day and time it is conducted; the nature of the setting; and the atmosphere of the conversation where the discussion should be allowed to flow naturally. Additionally, a successful focus group depends on the moderator's skills in listening, guiding the discussion and promoting interaction among the participants to cover the topics or issues; the moderator's ability to exercise self-control, avoid expressing personal opinions and commenting on responses; and the moderator's ability to regulate the discussion to avoid dominance by some participants. The gender, age, appearance and verbal skills of the moderator and the demographic characteristics of the participants are also significant and could have an impact on the success of the focus group.

The success of focus groups could be hampered by certain limitations. The number of topics covered may be limited, the inarticulate participants may feel intimidated and fail to discuss the issues adequately, the moderator has little control over the interaction and the data produced (Gibbs 1997:1; Cohen et al 2007:376). It is also difficult to get a representative sample for a focus group because of deficient oratory skills of potential participants and lack of confidence in speaking out in groups (Gibbs 1997:1; Cohen et al 2007:376). Lack of trust among the participants and towards the moderator and lack of confidentially of the discussion and anonymity of the participants are other factors that could hamper the drawing of a representative sample (Gibbs 1997:1; Cohen et al 2007:376). Focus groups could also face the challenge of scheduling a specific venue and time, transportation to the venue or travel costs of the

participants (Boateng et al 2016:120), as well as offering incentives like drinks and snacks and gift vouchers (Gibbs 1997:1). Focus groups are also not representative of the population because of the small numbers of participants involved and hence are limited in their ability to generalise findings to the population (Gibbs 1997:1, Cohen et al 2007:376). Lack of generalisability of the findings from focus groups is a disadvantage in qualitative research and results from its use of a non-probable sample either purposefully or a conveniently selected (Du Plooy 2001:180).

The limitations of focus groups were addressed by assuring the participants of their anonymity and that their responses will remain confidential. The challenge of scheduling a specific place and time as well as transportation was sufficiently addressed as the focus groups were scheduled during school days after classes.

Five focus groups involving six students per group were held in the school library which was regarded as a neutral location, was quiet and detached from the rest of school facilities and also enabled the setting of a voice recorder. The participants set around a table that provided a rest for their arms and hands, enabled verbal interaction, recording of the discussions and making notes by researcher. The focus groups were held in the following order: Group 1 composed of Grade 9 students, Group 2 composed of Grade 10 students, Group 3 composed of Grade 11 students, Group 4 and 5 composed of Grade 12 students. The proceedings were recorded using a smart phone and the researcher also took notes of important issues as the discussions progressed. The smart phone was preferred as it was readily available and it enabled listening to the conversations through the loudspeaker and the earphones for the purposes of transcription. The smart phone also enabled the storage of the data in a memory card.

a) The focus group guide

Du Plooy (2001:180) proposes that the researcher should identify topics and questions to direct the focus group discussions, and that these questions should be open-ended to allow for participants' points of view. The guide should also allow for follow-up questions when participants raise relevant topics (Du Plooy 2001:180). The guide used for the focus groups included the following topics of discussion to further explore the proposed PCCP framework in practice: duration of stay in school; history of strikes in schools; causes of strikes; reputational

damage occasioned by strikes; mediums of communication in schools; communication challenges between students and the principal; the most important strategic school stakeholder; and preparedness for student strikes. Additionally, the following elements of two-way symmetrical communication were proposed for exploration and included in the guide: collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, balanced dialogue, open communication, interdependency among stakeholders, timely feedback, negotiation, mutual understanding and truthfulness.

Various questions were posed to the participants of the focus groups to explore the topics. Firstly, general questions were posed to gauge the students' duration of stay in this school to determine if they would be informative of the various topics to be discussed. Secondly, questions were posed to explore the school environment for history of student strikes; causes of student strikes; the reputational damage caused by student strikes; the medium of communication preferred by students and the communication challenges students face when communicating with the principal. Thirdly, a question was posed to determine if students acknowledged the important role they play in a school as the most strategic stakeholder. Fourthly, questions were posed to explore the existence of the various elements of two-way symmetrical communication in the secondary educational institution to reduce the probability of student strikes. Lastly, questions were asked to determine if the secondary educational institution is prepared for student strikes.

The focus group guide was pilot tested with the first focus group, comprising six Grade 9 students, to test its applicability. Amendments to the guide were then made whereby some questions that were found to be repetitive were removed. The focus group guide is attached as Addendum B.

4.6 DATA ANALYSIS

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:203) regard data analysis as the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to a large amount of information collected. Rubin and Rubin (2005:201) regard data analysis as a search for patterns in data-recurrent behaviour, objects or body of knowledge and the interpretation of this pattern in terms of a social theory or the setting where it occurred. Data analysis can also be said to be the process of moving from raw data to evidence-

based interpretations by classifying, comparing, weighing and combining material from the data collected to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative (Rubin & Rubin 2005:201). According to Gibson and Brown (2009:6), data analysis involves going beyond the descriptions and systematically producing an account of key factors and relationships among them.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003:117), qualitative data analysis refers to a non-empirical analysis where the researcher analyses information in a systematic way to come up with useful recommendations from the patterns, trends and relationships of the information gathered. Gibbs (2007:2) posits that qualitative data analysis involves the transformation of a voluminous collection of qualitative data using analytic procedures into clear, understandable, insightful, trustworthy information. The accumulated data are organised and reduced to a manageable size, summaries and categories based on themes, concepts or similar features developed and patterns identified (Neuman 2000:415; Cooper & Schindler 2014:86). These are extracted from evidence to present a coherent, consistent picture, while interpretation of data involves giving them meaning, translating them or making them understandable to provide in-depth explanations (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:156, 203).

Rubin and Rubin (2005:202) explain that analysing interviews could proceed in two phases. Firstly, the researcher prepares transcripts, finds, refines and elaborates concepts, themes and events; then codes the interviews to enable the retrieval of what the interviewees said (Rubin & Rubin 2005:202). Secondly, the researcher can follow several paths, for example, compare concepts and themes across the interviews; or combine separate events to formulate a description of the setting to answer the research questions (Rubin & Rubin 2005:202). This study adopted thematic analysis as the data analysis method as elaborated in the following section.

4.6.1 Thematic analysis

Saldana (2009:3) and Howwit (2010:176) regard thematic analysis as the analysis of what is said to identify relatively broad themes which summarise and describe the content of the data. This data could be interview transcripts, participant observation field notes, journals, documents, literature, artifacts, photographs, video, websites and e-mail correspondence (Saldana 2009:3;

Howwit 2010:176). Data analysis refers to the process of analysing the data collected to examine commonalities, relationships, differences, repetitions of topics, missing data and theory-related material across a data set searching for aggregated themes within the data (Brown & Gibson 2009:127; Bryman 2012:579). Bryman (2012:578) regards thematic analysis as involving an identification and interpretation of the themes that emerge from data by, for instance, developing a matrix-based framework for ordering and synthesising data through constructing an index of central themes and subthemes represented in the matrix. Examining commonalities involves finding ways to put together all the examples from across a data set that can be assigned a certain category for further analysis whereas examining differences involves looking for distinctive features across a data set to find and analyse the peculiarities and contrasts within it (Brown & Gibson 2009:127). Examining relationships involves looking for relationships between the various elements of the analysis such as how different code categories relate to each other or how particular individual characteristics or differences relate to general themes. Chmiel and Maxwell (2014:26) regard thematic analysis as a categorising strategy that involves data reduction and analysis where data are segmented, categorised, summarised and reconstructed to capture the important concepts within the data set. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:93), thematic analysis is not a linear process where one just moves from one phase to another but is a recursive process where one moves back and forth throughout the phases.

A theme is a category identified by the analyst through the data and which relates to the research question and builds on the codes identified in interview transcripts (Bryman 2012:579). Willig (2013:58) defines a theme as a specific pattern of meaning found in the data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:82), a theme captures an important aspect in the data about the research question. A theme, a kind of coding category, has an internal connected structure which could be a relationship between two concepts or actions, a proposition or belief, a narrative or argument (Chmiel & Maxwell 2014:26). Themes are produced after thorough reading and rereading of the interview transcripts (Bryman 2012:579).

Saldana (2009:3) postulates that qualitative data analysis involves coding the data and defines a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data." A code is an

abbreviation or symbol applied to a segment of words in order to classify the words and is derived from the research questions, hypotheses, key concepts and important themes (Neuman 2000:415). A code is used by the researcher to retrieve and organise segments relating to a particular question, hypothesis, concept or theme to enable quick spotting, pulling out and clustering of these segments (Neuman 2000:415). Brown and Gibson (2009:133) propose two types of codes that are used in thematic analysis. *Apriori* codes are created prior to analysis to categorise general aspects of the research questions, whereas empirical codes emerge from the data after analysis starts. In qualitative research, a researcher organises the raw data into conceptual categories and creates themes or concepts to use in analysing the data (Neuman 2000:415). According to Lockyer (2004:138) and Gibbs (2007:4), coding is a systematic way to organise and manage data so as to condense extensive data sets into smaller analysable units. Coding involves creating categories and concepts from the data and making links between different parts of the data that have common properties thereby enabling the organisation, retrieval and interpretation of data (Lockyer 2004:138; Gibbs 2007:4).

Neuman (2000:415) proposes three kinds of qualitative data coding, where the researcher reviews the data on three occasions using a different coding each time and codes the same raw data in three phases. Open or initial coding involves the first attempt at data organisation and involves preparing transcripts of the interviews and reading through these transcripts thoroughly and reflectively to become familiar with them and to locate themes and assign initial codes or labels to reduce large data into categories (Neuman 2000:415; Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:203; Rubin & Rubin 2005:202; Gibbs 2007:50). Initial coding also involves breaking down data into discreet parts, examining them closely and comparing them for similarities and differences and categorising the data (Saldana 2009:81; Lockyer 2004:138). Axial coding is the second reading through the data and involves the researcher examining, reviewing, refining, relating and interconnecting the initial codes and preliminary themes and attempting to organise these themes (Neuman 2000:415; Gibbs 2007:50). During axial coding, the researcher reassembles the data by making connections between the codes identified during open coding and looks for categories of themes that form clusters, those that form sub-categories, those that combine into one general concept, or those that form a sequence (Lockyer 2004:138; Saldana 2009:159). Selective coding involves scanning the data and previous codes to select cases illustrating themes and making

comparisons and contrasts of these themes while confirming and explaining these relationships (Neuman 2000:415; Lockyer 2004:138). Selective coding also involves identifying the 'core' or 'central' category that ties together all other categories in the theory and relating it to other categories (Gibbs 2007:50). The last phase of data analysis involves evaluating the data to determine how it answers the research questions as well as interpreting the findings and drawing conclusions from the data analysed (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003:205).

4.6.1.1 Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure

This study used the following thematic analysis procedure as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006:93), who conceptualise six steps that a researcher takes the data through. The data from the interviews and the focus groups discussions were analysed separately as highlighted in the following discussion.

- **Step 1: Familiarising oneself with the data**

The first step of this thematic analysis involves the researcher immersing self in the data to know the depth and breadth of the content by reading the data repeatedly and actively to search for meanings and patterns, taking notes or marking ideas for coding, and verbatim transcription of the verbal data from the interviews (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher did an open coding of the recordings of the 12 semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with principals and the five focus groups discussions separately by listening to the interviews first and then the focus group discussions to get a feel of the responses from the participants. The researcher then listened to recordings of the interviews and the focus groups a second time while transcribing them by writing them on paper exactly as they were spoken by the research participants.

- **Step 2: Generating initial codes**

The second step of this analysis starts after the researcher has generated an initial list of ideas about what is in the data and what is interesting about them and involves the production of initial codes from the data (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). Manual coding involves the researcher writing notes on the texts being analysed to indicate potential patterns or to identify segments of data, and copying extracts of data from individual transcripts and collating them together under a

specific code in separate pages (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher first did a separate axial coding of the transcriptions by grouping similar responses from the interviews into one category based on the interview questions. The same was done with the transcriptions from the focus groups discussions based on the focus groups questions.

- **Step 3: Searching for themes**

The third step of this thematic analysis procedure involves sorting the different codes into potential themes and collating all the relevant coded data extracts within the identified themes and thinking about the relationship between codes, themes and the main themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher separately examined the categories formed from the responses from the interviews for the prevailing idea behind the responses and then assigned initial themes to these categories. The researcher also examined the categories formed from the responses from the focus groups discussions and assigned initial themes to these categories. During this process, the researcher also considered similar themes occurring in different categories formed from the responses from the interviews and from the focus group discussions as well as conflicting themes and the reason behind the disagreement.

- **Step 4: Reviewing themes**

The fourth step of this thematic analysis procedure begins when the researcher has devised a set of candidate themes; and involves refining those themes, discarding some themes, combining others or breaking others into separate themes (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). Braun and Clarke (2006:93) posit that the data within themes should cohere meaningfully and there should be clear and identifiable distinctions between themes. In this study, the researcher carefully re-examined the themes identified from the interviews and from the focus group discussions, rephrased them, shortened their wording and discarded the repetitive ones.

- **Step 5: Defining and naming themes**

This step involves identifying the 'essence' of what each theme is about and determining what aspect of the data each theme captures by writing a detailed analysis to identify the 'story' that each theme tells and how it fits into the broader overall 'story' of the data in relation to the research question (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). It also involves the researcher thinking about the

final names to give the themes whereby these names should be concise, punchy and should immediately give the reader a sense of what the theme is about (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher refined the themes from the interviews further by rephrasing some of them to better reflect the ideas behind the responses. The same was done with the themes from the focus groups discussions.

- **Step 6: Producing the report**

The final step of this thematic analysis procedure involves telling the complicated story of the data, which should be concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive and interesting and should, for example, use quotations to capture the essence of the point being made (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). This analysis should go beyond description and make arguments related to the research questions and the literature (Braun & Clarke 2006:93). In this study, the researcher described the findings under each theme identified from the interviews and from the focus groups discussions as they relate to a particular research question. In the description, direct quotations from some participants were included in the data analysis to capture important and interesting issues from the interviews and the focus groups discussions and to relate them back to the literature.

4.7 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH

Trustworthiness of research findings is emphasised in qualitative research, where qualitative researchers substitute reliability and validity with data trustworthiness (DeVault 2015:1). It involves a researcher persuading his or her audiences that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347). A qualitative study is trustworthy when it accurately represents the experience of the participant or data source and focuses on the context of data collection and the methods of data generation (Gibson & Brown 2009:60; Mabuda 2009:20). The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the study's findings are worth paying attention to and is important in evaluating its worth (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Polit & Beck 2012:430). Trustworthiness of a study involves establishing its credibility*,* transferability*,* dependability and conformability (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Mabuda 2009:20; Polit & Beck 2012:430; DeVault 2015:1; Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen & Kyngas 2014:1). To ensure trustworthiness, the analysis process and the

results should be described in sufficient detail to enable readers to have a clear understanding of how the analysis was done and its strengths and limitations (Elo & Kyngas 2008:112).

Credibility is the confidence in the truthfullness of the findings and their interpretations or the correspondence between the realities that exist in the minds of the participants and those that are attributed to them (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347). Credibility is established through prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy and peer debriefing and member checks (Polit & Beck 2012:430). Prolonged engagement involves staying in the field until data saturation is reached which counters distortions from researcher's impact on the context, limits researcher bias and compensates for effects of unusual or seasonal effects (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Mabuda 2009:20; Polit & Beck 2012:430; DeVault 2015:1; Elo et al 2014:1). Persistent observation involves consistently pursuing interpretations in different ways and analysing the data constantly and tentatively, looking for multiple influences and searching for what counts and what does not count (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Mabuda 2009:20; Polit & Beck 2012:430). Triangulation involves collecting information from different points of view to elicit various and divergent constructions of reality of a study's context by asking different questions from different sources using different methods (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Mabuda 2009:20; Polit & Beck 2012:430; DeVault 2015:1). Referential adequacy involves making available materials such as the research proposal, interview schedules (for both the pilot test and the actual study), audio recordings and transcriptions, and personal notes to document the findings (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Mabuda 2009:20). Peer debriefing involves a similar status colleague, who is outside the context of the study and who has a general understanding of the nature of the study and with whom one can review perceptions, insights and analyses (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347). Member checks involves going back to the source of the information and checking both the data and the interpretation so as to assess intentionality of the participants, correct errors, provide additional volunteer information, put the participants on record, create an opportunity to summarise data and assess the overall adequacy of the data (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Polit & Beck 2012:430; DeVault 2015:1). Credibility of this study was established by interviewing 12 participants in the one-on-one interviews and 30 participants in the focus groups. This sample size yielded adequate information to answer the research questions. These participants answered the same questions to ensure that they were exposed to the same stimulus.

Credibility was also established by searching for multiple meaning of the data when analysing and interpreting it. The materials used in the study, including the research proposal, interview schedules, personal notes and the recordings and transcriptions were made available to the supervisor and to any other person who might have been interested in scrutinising them

Transferability involves showing the extent to which the findings of a study can be applied in other contexts or with other participants (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Mabuda 2009:20; Elo et al 2014:1; DeVault 2015:1). Transferability is achieved through the application of the strategies of thick description and purposive sampling (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347). Thick description involves the researcher providing sufficient details of the data in context and reporting these data with sufficient detail and precision to allow the reader to make judgments about transferability (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; DeVault 2015:1). The content and structure of concepts should be presented in a clear and understandable way and the results reported systematically and carefully (Elo et al 2014:1). Purposive sampling enables transferability through the maximisation of the range of specific and varied information obtainable from and about the context of data collection by purposively selecting locations and participants that differ (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347; Elo et al 2014:1; DeVault 2015:1). Purposive sampling identifies participants who have the best knowledge about the research topic and a brief description of the sampling method should be provided to enable transferability (Elo et al 2014:1). Transferability of the findings of this study was established by sufficiently describing purposive sampling as the data collection method as well as thematic analysis as the method used to analyse the data. The reasons for selecting this sampling strategy, its principles and the criteria used to select the participants were explained clearly. The pilot tests also helped in determining if the interview questions were suitable for deriving rich data that answer the research questions. The researcher also provided representative quotations from different participants to show a connection between the data and the results, which were also reported systematically and carefully. Employing purposive sampling as the sampling method also contributed in establishing the transferability of the findings as the participants in the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews were principals and managers of secondary educational institutions and therefore could provide credible information about student strikes in those institutions. Additionally, purposive sampling enabled the transferability of the findings as the participants in focus groups were drawn from all the school grades. Therefore,

participants with differing opinions regarding the topics in the focus group guide were made available, and this contributed to extending the range of the information collected.

Dependability is the stability or consistency of the data over time and under different conditions when repeated and it involves providing readers with evidence that if a study were replicated with the same or similar participants in similar contexts, its findings would be repeated (Lincoln & Guba 1985:316). This involves an inquiry audit where an independent person examines documents like the research proposal, interview schedules and personal notes and assesses a running account of the process of the inquiry and attests to its dependability as well as examining the data, the findings, the interpretations and the recommendations and attests that it is supported by data and is internally coherent (Lincoln & Guba 1985:316; Mabuda 2009:21). Dependability of this study was established by availing adequate evidence that it was conducted. The evidence was in form of the research proposal, interview schedules, personal notes and the recordings and transcriptions and the dissertation, and was made available to the supervisor and to any other person who may interested in it.

Conformability refers to the degree of neutrality or the extent to which the findings of a study are shaped by the participants and not researcher bias, motivation or interest (Lincoln & Guba 1985:316; Polit & Beck 1995:255; Polit & Beck 2012:430). Elo et al (2014:1) explain that conformability is the objectivity or the congruence between two or more independent people about the data's accuracy, relevance or meaning, where the data accurately represent the information that the participants provided and that the interpretations of those data are not invented by the researcher. A conformability audit trail is undertaken by an auditor who examines the research proposal, pilot tests, interview schedules, recordings, transcriptions and field notes to determine if the conclusions, interpretations and recommendations can be traced to their sources and if they are supported by the inquiry (Lincoln & Guba 1985:347). The researcher should also provide representative quotations from the interviews to show a connection between the participants' views, the data and the findings (Polit & Beck 2012:430). To establish conformability in this study, the researcher made the above mentioned documents available to enable a conformability audit trail. Additionally, in the data analysis chapter, the

researcher also included direct quotations from different participants to show a connection between their views, the data and the findings.

4.8 SUMMARY

This chapter highlighted the methodology that was employed to explore the need for a PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County. This chapter began by discussing the interpretive research paradigm and exploratory research followed by the qualitative research design where the advantages of qualitative research design were emphasised. The sampling strategy that was adopted in this study was also discussed, where the units of analysis were identified as the 12 principals of the 12 public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County that were sampled for the interviews as well as the students of Ruiru Secondary School that were sampled for the five focus groups. The target population was identified as the 12 public secondary educational institutions in this Mirangine Sub-County, which was also the accessible population. Probability and non-probability sampling were also highlighted and purposive sampling identified as the sampling method used to derive the samples for this study.

This chapter also discussed the survey research method and the interview data collection method. Unstructured, structured and semi-structured interviews were highlighted and semi-structured, one-on-one interviews identified as the method that was used in the first phase of this study. Focus groups were also highlighted as the data collection method that was used in the second phase of this study. This chapter also proposed a pilot test of the interview schedule and the focus group guide. The trustworthiness of this study was also established.

Thematic analysis was identified as the data analysis method and Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis procedure highlighted as the procedure that was used to analyse the data from the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and the focus groups. The following chapter will focus on the data analysis of the data collected through the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and the focus groups. The following chapter will also focus on reporting of the findings thereof which will aid in building the proposed PCCP framework.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

"Whatever the reasons for a student strike and the mode of protest, the name of the school becomes tarnished in the eyes of the society. The reputation of the school gets damaged" - Interview participant

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on the methodological strategy required to address the research problem which was to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework as a measure to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County. This was done by exploring the proactive crisis communication strategies used in the institutions to avoid student strikes; exploring the risks posed by these strikes in the secondary educational institutions; and exploring the information needs of secondary school stakeholders during a student strike. As a starting point in addressing the research problem, literature on organisational communication, organisational crisis, crisis communication, proactive crisis communication, student strikes and the Kenyan educational environment were reviewed in chapters 2 and 3.

This chapter will address the following sub-problems and research questions in from a pragmatic perspective: *sub-problem 1*: to explore the risks posed by student strikes and *research question 1*: what are the risks posed by student strikes?; *sub-problem 2*: to explore the information needs of school stakeholders during student strikes and *research question 2*: what are the information needs of school stakeholders during student strikes?; and *sub-problem 3*: to explore proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions and r*esearch question 3*: do public secondary educational institutions have proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes? A two-phased qualitative data collection approach was adopted by, firstly, conducting 12 one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the 12 principals of the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and, secondly, five focus groups with the students of Ruiru Secondary School. Braun and Clarke (2006:93) thematic analysis procedure was used to analyse the interviews and the focus groups discussions. The relevant themes obtained as the findings from the interview questions and the focus groups

discussions were then discussed followed by an overview of the findings. The proposed PCCP framework was then included and each of its phases and the steps thereof discussed in detail.

5.2 REPORTING OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section will focus on reporting the findings of this study according to the sections of the interview schedule and the focus groups guide. Each section will also provide an elaboration of the questions posed per category and the various themes that emerged from the data analysis process.

5.2.1 Findings of the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews

The following section will present the findings of the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the principals of the 12 public secondary educational institutions in the Mirangine Sub-county.

5.2.1.1 Biographical information

All the principals indicated that they had adequate management experience where the participant with the least experience amounted to three years. This means that the research participants were well-versed with the operations of secondary educational institutions and could, therefore, provide reliable and in-depth information on student strikes. Despite this extensive experience by the participants in managing institutions, the literature on the system of educational administration in Kenya downplays the competence of principals in managing secondary educational institutions. According to the literature, this system is characterised by mismanagement of the institutions and a communication gap between the management and students. There is also a lack of professional growth and development, for example, in-service training of teachers to enable them to competently handle the numerous challenges evident in Kenyan secondary educational institutions. Principals also lack adequate managerial skills and knowledge to perform administrative duties as well as skills in planning daily routine activities, managing finances, human resources, communication, implementing educational policies and managing change, according to the literature. This study, therefore, proposes a PCCP framework

that could propose various strategies that principals could implement to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions.

5.2.1.2 Environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment

Under this section, the following themes were identified.

- **Theme 1: Causes of student strikes**

The participants regarded the following grievances as having the potential to cause student strikes: food quantity and quality, lack of learning resources and teachers, lack of co-curricular activities, imperiousness by the deputy principals and the principals, use of abusive language and harsh punishment by teachers and other social problems such as drug abuse by students. In relation to this, one participant stated that the contributors to student strikes are a "lack of resources like teachers, textbooks, uniforms, co-curricular activities, lack of sufficient and good food as they expect and lack of dialogue." A recurrent grievance that was mentioned by all the participants was food quantity and quality as encapsulated by a statement by one participant who said:

> One of those grievances is the meals; the way they are handled. Maybe the workers are not clean. Maybe the ratios are interfered with. That would be a major cause of strikes especially in day schools because their only meal they would say they have is lunch [*sic*].

Some of the grievances mentioned in this finding relate to those identified in the literature which mentioned banning of cell phones; avoiding mock examinations; extension of the term and authoritarianism by the administration that is characterised by lack of dialogue between students, teachers and the principals; and lack of acknowledgement of grievances. Notably, none of the participants indicated that the mock examinations done before the KCSE examinations could cause a student strike, although the Cabinet Secretary for Education has banned these examinations as it is indicated in the literature.

According to the literature on chaos theory, all activities in an organisation have the potential to affect other organisational activities and have the potential to create crises such as student strikes in that organisation. Therefore, the chaos theory advocates the monitoring of small changes in

the organisation and in its environment, interpreting their context and avoiding activities that could result in crises, for instance, student strikes. These views are shared by the literature on proactive crisis communication models. Fink's stage model of crisis management proposes an environmental scanning of an organisation's internal and external environments for negative messages that could point to a crisis such as a student strike. Mitroff's stage model of crisis management proposes the detection of signals in an organisation's environment which could point to a potential crisis, for instance, a student strike. Horsley and Barker's synthesis model for crisis management proposes the identification of potential crises from an organisation's environment and the determination of their impact on the organisation, which is line with this study's proposition for an environmental scanning of the secondary educational institution's environment for potential student strikes. This proposition also relates to the literature on proactive crisis communication that proposes scanning the organisational environment for issues that are possible crises and reducing the probability of their occurrence. Therefore, the PCCP framework should re-affirm the need for an environmental analysis to identify changes in a secondary educational environment that could cause student strikes as well as identify grievances by students before they escalate to student strikes. The literature on SCCT proposes the formulation of preventative measures that can be implemented to avoid a crisis. Specifically, SCCT proposes the development and linking of specific proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid specific potential crises. The PCCP framework should, therefore, propose that principals could formulate and implement specific proactive crisis communication strategies to address each potential grievance to avoid the occurrence of student strikes.

- **Theme 2: Frequency of student strikes**

The participants indicated that their institutions have experienced student strikes in the past. One participant stated: "of course we have such a history of student strikes". Additionally, all the participants have experienced student strikes in other secondary educational institutions they have worked in. As discussed in the literature, student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya are proliferating and are characterised by boycotts, students moving out of the institutions even at night, destruction of institutional property by burning dormitories, classes and laboratories and, in extreme cases, students lynching other students. This situation points to the unpredictable and disruptive nature of crises as proposed by the chaos theory which also

emphasises that organisational leaders should understand the organisational system, its variables and how these variables interact so as to avoid interactions that may result in crises. This study proposes that school principals could strive to understand the unpredictability that characterises student strikes; acknowledge the disruptions that these strikes cause to school activities and avoid interactions that could result in student strikes, thereby proactively avoiding them.

Despite the serious nature of student strikes, it was noted that some participants modulated the severity of these strikes by referring to them as 'student unrests' as evident in the following statements: "the word strike is quite strong but sometime last year, some students walked out (of school) but you cannot call that a strike", "maybe not a strike but a students' unrest", "an unrest of students expressing their discomfort with the change happened". These perspectives suggest that some principals do not consider the severity of these strikes and consequently do not take formal measures to avoid them. This underscores the need for a PCCP framework to avoid such student strikes.

- **Theme 3: Risks of student strikes**

The participants indicated that student strikes pose the following risks: loss of learning and teaching time; lack of safety of students and teachers; destruction of property; damage to reputation; declining performance in exams; depopulation of the institutions through transfers and low enrolments; and engendering a negative culture. This finding relates to the literature where it was found that student strikes sometimes result in destruction of property, loss of lives by students and interruption of programmes leading to loss of teaching and learning time, which negatively impacts on the delivery of quality education. A notable risk is the damage to reputation that one participant referred to as "loss of credibility of the school" and "mistrust among the stakeholders" Another participant indicated that regardless of the cause of a strike and the mode of protest, the reputation of the institutions becomes damaged. This finding relates to the literature that posits that crises interrupt the normal operations of an organisation and also damage its reputation and that of its stakeholders thereby risking its performance, future growth and even its survival. It is, therefore, evident that student strikes should be avoided by implementing measures to that effect, as proposed in the PCCP framework.

Theme 4: Lack of two-way symmetrical communication between students and principals

The participants stated that they used the following mediums of communication to communicate with the students: face-to-face communication in meetings; suggestion boxes; notice boards; communication through teachers; meetings with the student council and *ad hoc* meetings with individuals or groups of students. This finding relates to the literature on the challenges of the Kenyan education system that advocates the use of the suggestion box, school assemblies, house and class meetings, guidance and counselling and open days to communicate with students. Notably, some of these media of communication are one-way and asymmetrical, for example, the suggestion boxes and notice boards which do not allow balanced dialogue, negotiation and timely feedback as proposed in the literature on two-way symmetrical communication. Horsley and Barker's Synthesis Model for Crisis Management and the Proactive Process Model for PR Crisis Communication that were reviewed in the literature propose the establishment of various media of communication to communicate with stakeholders through two-way verbal communication. Consequent to the findings of this study and the literature, the PCCP framework should propose a mixed motive communication that combines two-way symmetrical communication through face-to-face communication between the students and the principals to address any grievances by students through dialogue, negotiation and timely feedback as well as one-way communication to and from students to avoid student strikes.

This study also reveals that most communication in these secondary educational institutions is scheduled when there is need and is not continuous, as stated by one participant: "we do *ad hoc* communication. That means I can move from the office and talk to the students without pre-arrangement." Another participant stated that "I have a prefects' body which I meet once in a while, and through which I communicate school policy on what I expect". Although these statements point to the accessibility of students, they also point to the lack of a balanced dialogue and a lack of collaborative problem-solving and decision-making between the principals and the students in the secondary educational institutions, which create an environment which is conducive for student strikes. The literature on proactive crisis communication proposes a focus on dialogue between an organisation and its stakeholders during the pre-crisis phase. Hence, there is a need for principals to meet and communicate with all the students (and not just the student council) by having planned meetings where students openly discuss the issues affecting

them and find solutions to these issues. Finding solutions to the issues affecting students is possible through collaborative problem-solving, as proposed in the literature on two-way symmetrical communication, and this could contribute to the avoidance of student strikes as proposed in the PCCP framework.

- **Theme 5: Apathy towards the suggestion box**

The participants indicated that their institutions have suggestion boxes, where students are supposed to forward their suggestions, opinions and grievances to the principals as reviewed in the literature, which identified suggestions boxes as one of the media of communication that students use to communicate with the principal. Through the suggestion box, students forward their grievances, give suggestions and air their opinions on various institutional issues. However, some participants stated that the suggestion boxes are rarely used by the students while others stated that they were not in use. One participant indicated that "when the suggestion box is very publicly placed, some students shy away from giving their suggestions," while another participant stated that the suggestion box was not in use as "students put in a lot of rubbish". The apathetic attitude towards this medium of communication and its lack of use by the students suggest that they do not feel free to give their suggestions to the principals. This finding is supported in the literature which indicated that the nature of interaction between teachers and students is a master/servant, superior/inferior interaction, which hinders the students from freely expressing themselves thereby resorting to strikes to air their grievances. A lack of freedom by students to freely give their suggestions, coupled with the irresponsible use of the suggestion box identified above, go against the principles of open communication and truthfulness, which are elements of two-way symmetrical communication according to the literature. Due to the unpopularity of the suggestion box and to complement this medium of communication, this study suggests that principals could also emphasise other media of communication such as face-to-face communication with the students to discuss students' grievances and enable the principals to resolve issues in their institutions before they escalate to student strikes. Therefore, the PCCP framework should propose that principals could have face-to-face meetings with the students to discuss and resolve institutional issues as well as student grievances before they escalate to strikes.

- **Theme 6: Challenges of communicating with students**

The participants indicated that they experienced the following challenges when communicating with students: language barrier as the students speak in slang, students' limited understanding of and communication using English and the consequent lack of understanding between the teachers and the students. This finding relates to the literature which found that there is lack of dialogue and understanding between the students and their teachers. However, this finding is contrary to the literature on two-way symmetrical communication that proposes balanced dialogue and mutual understanding between an organisation and its stakeholders to discuss organisational issues and to find solutions to them as a way of proactively avoiding potential crises. Consequently, the proposed PCCP framework should suggest that principals could communicate with their students in a language they can understand, thereby engendering a mutual understanding with them to enable a resolution of issues before they escalate to student strikes.

5.2.1.3 Identification of school stakeholders

Under this section, the following theme was identified.

- **Theme 7: Students are the most important strategic stakeholders**

The participants identified the following as all the stakeholders in secondary educational institution: students; teachers; parents; school workers; Board of Management; Parents and Teachers Association; Ministry of Education officials; the Teachers Service Commission; donors/sponsors; local leaders and religious groups. Ten of the twelve participants referred to students as the most important stakeholder. On the contrary, two participants identified parents as the most important stakeholders as they supply the institutions with students and provide funding. The literature proposes a method of identifying stakeholders by determining whether they are directly or indirectly impacted by the operations of the organisation. In this regard, organisational stakeholders that are directly affected by the operations of an organisation are referred to as primary or strategic stakeholders and those indirectly affected as secondary stakeholders. In the findings, students and parents were identified as the primary stakeholders as they are directly affected by the operations of the institution. Notably, none of the participants identified teachers as primary stakeholders. The literature on two-way symmetrical

communication proposes interdependency among organisational stakeholders whereby stakeholders are united by common interests and each depends on the other to achieve both personal and organisational goals and each acts out of concern for the other. The proposed PCCP framework should suggest that principals could regard students as the most important stakeholder group and thereby focus on developing proactive communication strategies to address their grievances to avoid student strikes. The PCCP framework proposed that principals and their students could hold meetings and, through mixed motive communication, identify common goals and negotiate appropriate ways of working towards the achievement of these goals to avoid conflicts that could escalate to student strikes.

5.2.1.4 Reducing the probability of student strikes

The following themes were identified in this section.

- **Theme 8: Lack of interdependency among stakeholders**

The participants indicated that they held meetings with students to discuss institutional issues. It was evident that meetings were held with students only when the need arises in addition to the weekly assemblies. One participant stated:

> Twice a term I hold a meeting with the students on a Saturday evening. We sit with them; they give their views on what they would like.

Another participant stated:

> Once a term we have a (meeting) where students are supposed to freely air their grievances. In fact, we tell them, let the chairperson be the president of the student council and we do not want any teacher there. Just freely say what you want to see in school.

The participants also indicated that the students are free to give their opinions during these meetings. Open communication and interdependence among organisational stakeholders are proposed in the literature on two-way symmetrical communication as part of proactive crisis communication. In some secondary educational institutions, open communication is evident in the meetings between the students and the principals whereby the students are free to express

themselves; but interdependence among the students and the teachers is lacking as teachers are not involved in the discussions on student grievances despite them being primary stakeholders, according to the literature. The PCCP framework should propose that secondary educational institutions could have regular meetings with members of the student council and with all the students as often as possible; that these meetings could include the principal, the deputy principal, all the teachers and all the students to allow open communication among them where the students are allowed to give their opinions and suggestions and raise their grievances to avoid student strikes.

- **Theme 9: Absence of formal proactive crisis plans**

The participants indicated that they did not have formal plans detailing the measures taken to avoid student strikes. Lack of written plans to avoid student strikes is captured in a statement by one participant who said that:

> You know in life, it's not good to start from the point of expecting trouble. So we start optimistically that there will be no strike. We listen but we don't plan that there will be a strike.

Despite student strikes being very rampant in secondary educational institutions in Kenya as discussed in the literature, principals do not have formal plans to avoid these strikes as they hope that these strikes will not occur. A lack of a written plan means that principals do not have a document that serves as a reference point on the means to avoid student strikes in the institutions, which contributes to the proliferation of these strikes. As discussed in the literature, secondary educational institutions have taken various measures to manage student strikes, including having open fora between the students and the administration where students air their grievances and these grievances are addressed and resolved. Parents are also encouraged to participate in guiding, counselling and disciplining their children. However, these measures are not documented in a formal crisis plan as it is revealed in this study. Consequently, this study proposes that principals in secondary educational institutions could use the proposed PCCP framework to design a formal proactive crisis communication plan to avoid strikes.

- **Theme 10: Lack of student involvement in implementing institutional change**

Some participants stated that they involved the students in the changes intended in their institutions through meetings, where the changes are proposed and discussed. This is evident in a statement by one participant who said:

> There are changes that affect students and we involve them in that area. If a change is going to affect them, you tell them in advance and you have to consult them.

Another participant corroborated this view by stating:

> When there is change of programme, we have to inform them. In fact, we seek their opinions so that they are part of that change because if we do not involve them when making the changes, they may not accept those changes.

However, one participant indicated that some changes are not discussed with the students but are just communicated to them and the students must accept them. This finding relates to the literature that found that a lack of democratic leadership and communication among the head teacher, the teachers and the students is one of the causes of the rampant student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. This implies that the students are not involved in decision-making in their schools, which creates an environment for student strikes as the only avenue to raise their grievances. The PCCP framework should propose that principals could discuss the changes intended in the institutions with the teachers and the student council first and subsequently with all the students in meetings. These meetings should allow a mixed motive communication that is characterised by listening, dialogue, exchanging information and providing feedback and an opportunity to negotiate with the students to resolve conflicts and to promote mutual understanding among them to avoid student strikes.

5.2.1.5 Preparation for student strikes

Under this section, the following themes were identified:

- **Theme 11: Strike information needs of school stakeholders**

The participants identified the following as the information that the strategic stakeholders in a secondary educational institution request from the principal when a student strike occurs: causes

of the strike and possible solutions, safety of the students, destruction of property, why the strike could not be avoided, if the institution will be closed, and updates on student indiscipline. These are captured in the following statement by one participant:

> They want to know the cause and what has led to the strike. They want to know if there are damages, injuries, any destruction and later how the problem is going to be solved, the cost of the damages, when students are going to come back. They also seek to know if such a thing could not have been prevented.

This implies that the strategic stakeholders need to be provided with specific information about a student strike. The literature in proactive crisis communication proposes that organisations should have prepared information about a crisis and that this information should be communicated by the most senior person in that organisation to avoid contradictions. The PCCP framework should propose that principals could have the above information about a student strike ready for any stakeholder who enquires about it by preparing a document that captures this information. The principal could be the sole spokesperson of the institution or in his absence the deputy principal to enable a unified communication about the student strike.

- **Theme 12: Lack of preparedness for student strikes**

The participants indicated that they did not have a team to plan to avoid student strikes in their institutions. This was captured in a statement by one participant:

> We don't have a crisis team but the guidance and counselling committee can be expanded. If its mandate is expanded, it is possible to forestall student strikes.

The participants also stated that the strategic stakeholders like teachers, boards of management and parent and teacher associations are not trained on a student strike action plan, but are just advised by the principal and Ministry of Education officers on issues regarding student strikes. This relates to the literature where it was found that secondary educational institutions' managers lack adequate managerial skills and knowledge to perform administrative duties. This situation causes students to experience problems that could be avoided if the managers were adequately trained in institutional management, for example, preparing strategic stakeholders for student strikes. The literature on proactive crisis communication proposes a CCT whose mandate is to

implement a crisis communication plan (CCP) by identifying, isolating and managing the crisis, engaging in crisis communication with stakeholders and leading the organisation through the crisis. The PCCP framework should propose the formation of a CCT that is mandated to implement the framework to avoid student strikes. The CCT could be trained on the implementation of the proposed framework by a communication specialist, who will be expected to be well-versed with the various steps of the framework. The following section includes a summary of the main findings derived from the semi-structured one-on-one interviews.

5.2.1.6 Summary of the main findings from the interviews

An analysis of the semi-structured one-on-one interviews, coupled with the findings of the literature, revealed that student strikes in secondary educational institutions are common and are on the increase. These findings reveal that these strikes result from a diversity of student grievances and that the student strikes pose major risks to the operations of an institution as well as its infrastructure, performance and reputation. Despite the proliferation of student strikes, it was found that some secondary educational institutions had not experienced them, which pointed to the measures taken in these institutions to avoid strikes. This analysis also found that principals regard their students as the most strategic stakeholder group in secondary educational institutions, underscoring the need for a stakeholder focus on this group when formulating measures to avoid student strikes.

Two-way symmetrical communication between the students and the principals in the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County was also found to be lacking. This was evident in the use of one-way asymmetrical mediums of communication, for instance, the suggestion box and the notice boards. Contrary to the proposition in the literature that two-way symmetrical communication is the panacea for the avoidance of crises in organisations, this analysis found that at times organisational stakeholders prefer one-way communication to convey certain information to the management. The absence of two-way symmetrical communication in secondary educational institutions was also evident in the lack of interdependency among the students, teachers and the principal due to the exclusion of teachers in the meetings convened by the principal to discuss student grievances. Lack of student involvement in the changes intended in the secondary educational institutions before they were implemented also confirms this

absence of two-way symmetrical communication between the students and the principals. This study proposes a PCCP framework that posits a mixed motive communication between students, teachers and the principal to discuss institutional issues and address student grievances before they escalate to student strikes.

The interview findings also revealed that secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County lacked formal crisis communication plans to avoid student strikes despite these strikes being rampant in Kenya. It was also found that principals in Mirangine Sub-County are apathetic towards the suggestion box as a medium of communication used by the students to communicate their grievances. The principals also indicated that they experienced challenges when communicating with their students due to the students' incompetence in the use of English as a language of communication.

Lastly, the findings revealed a lack of crisis preparedness in secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County as evident in the lack of preparation for student strikes by strategic stakeholders as well as the absence of teams dedicated to the avoidance of crises. These findings underscore the need for a PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

The findings from the semi-structured one-on-one interviews with the principals of the secondary educational institutions will be supplemented with findings from the focus groups discussions. It was important to also obtain the viewpoints of the students regarding student strikes as they are a strategic stakeholder group in a secondary educational institution. It is also the students themselves who engage in strikes to express their discontent with various contentious issues in their institutions. Therefore, they could provide reliable information about their grievances, the shortcomings within the administration and the kind of communication interaction that exists between them and the administration. It was also important to follow up on various issues raised by the principals such as the media of communication preferred by the students to communicate their grievances and the language barrier between students, teachers and the principal. Other issues that needed to be followed up were if students acknowledge their role as the most important strategic stakeholders, if they are involved in the decision making process in their

institutions and the proactive measures taken to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions. It was also important to investigate if the students are prepared for student strikes and the information needs of parents about a strike. The following are the findings of the focus groups discussions.

5.2.2 Findings of the focus groups

This section will present the findings of the focus groups discussions with the students of Ruiru Secondary School. Five focus groups were conducted with six Grade 9 students, six Grade 10 students, six Grade 11 students, and two focus groups consisting of six students each from Grade 12 students. The findings were reported according to the sections of the focus group guide and the steps of the proposed PCCP framework by elaborating on the various themes that emerged from the data analysis process.

5.2.2.1 Biographical information

The participants in Focus Group 1 indicated that they were in Grade 9; those in Focus Group 2 in Grade 10; those in Focus Group 3 in Grade 11 and; those in Focus Groups 4 and 5 in Grade 12. With regard to the period of stay in Ruiru Secondary School, the Grade 9 students indicated that they had been in this school for one year; the Grade 10 students for two years; the Grade 11 students for three years and; the Grade 12 students for four years. This information reveals that the participants had been in this secondary educational institution for periods ranging from one year to four years and hence could provide in-depth information about the issues being investigated in this study.

5.2.2.2 Environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment

The following themes were identified in this section.

- **Theme 1: Absence of student strikes in one secondary educational institution**

The participants stated that they had never experienced a student strike in their institution. Despite this absence of student strikes in this institution, it is still a critical issue that needs to be investigated and avoided. In the literature, student strikes are seen to be proliferating as evident

in the high number of strikes reported in various secondary educational institutions in Kenya and the tragic nature of these strikes where a number of students have lost lives in a number of institutions. Additionally, the absence of student strikes in the institution under this study points to the measures taken in that institution to avoid the same. In the literature, it was pointed out that secondary educational institutions have taken various measures to manage student strikes by, for example, holding open forums between the students and the school administration where the students air their grievances and these grievances are discussed and addressed. This study proposes a PCCP framework that proposes various ways to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya.

- **Theme 2: Grievances that could cause student strikes**

The participants indicated that the following grievances could cause student strikes: lack of recreational activities, lack of learning resources, poor diet, transfer of teachers, failure to teach by teachers, conflicts with teachers, harsh punishments by teachers, mock examinations, and strict school rules. Notably, the participants indicated that the mock examinations are "difficult exams", "could predict KCSE performance" and that "mocks exams affect KCSE results". This implies that students hold the view that the mock examinations could be used in place of the KCSE, especially if this final examination is fraught with irregularities. In the literature, mock examinations were seen as one of the causes of student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya and this led to their ban by the Cabinet Secretary for Education. Chaos theory advocates for environmental scanning to identity issues within and outside the organisation that are potential crises and resolve these issues before they escalate to crises. Additionally, the various crisis communication models which include a pre-crisis phase, which were reviewed in the literature in section 3.3.1 and 3.3.3, advocate for crisis preparedness, prevention and planning through strategies like environmental scanning for warning signs, risk factors and issues that could escalate to crises. Hence, the PCCP framework should propose that the CCT could scan the school environment for issues that are potential student strikes and proactively resolve them before they escalate into strikes.

- **Theme 3: Changes could cause student strikes**

The participants indicated that the changes implemented in a secondary educational institution could cause student strikes and mentioned the following changes as having the potential to cause strikes: change of school uniform (dressing), change of diet, transfer of teachers, introduction of new school rules, requirement that girls should shave their hair, and change of programmes, such as arrival and departure times, and changes that interfere with their leisure time. These were evident in the following statements by the participants: "change of diet", "change of school programmes by being required to be in class when we are supposed in the field", "transfer of teachers", "change of time of arrival and departure from school", "change of uniform" and "introducing new rules and regulations" In the literature, chaos theory proposes the premise of predictability where an organisation has general trends and patterns, relies on an underlying order and existing conditions, which are readily disturbed by minor events or changes, which can affect the organisation in a major way causing very complex behaviours or outcomes. Chaos theory regards the changes in organisations that disrupt predictability as bifurcation which are the sudden, intermittent and divergent disruptions and changes in a formal system which alters the direction, character and/or structure of that system. Chaos theory also proposes that occurrences that seem far-removed, unimportant and unrelated may be relevant to a current issue and have some consequence. Therefore, chaos theory proposes that organisations should scan their environment for changes, understand these changes and avoid those changes that could cause crises. Additionally, the proactive crisis communication models discussed in the literature propose that crises present early warnings through repeated messages and therefore an organisation should scan its internal and external environments for risk factors and potential crises and find ways to reduce their probability and even avoid them. Therefore, the PCCP framework should re-affirm and re-emphasise the need for environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment to identify changes that can cause student strikes; engage the students on the need for these changes; or avoid the changes if they are not mandatory.

- **Theme 4: Reputational risk of student strikes**

The participants postulated that student strikes could negatively affect the reputation of a school making a school unpopular with students leading to mass transfer and low enrolments of

students. This is evident in the following statements by the participants: "a student strike leads to unpopularity of the school" [*sic*] and "there is a negative attitude towards a school that is prone to strikes". The literature regards an organisation's reputation as the stakeholders' collective judgement of a particular organisation and its performance in its area of operation. Therefore, crises damage the reputation of an organisation and that of its stakeholders thereby risking its performance, growth and even its survival. The PCCP framework will propose ways of avoiding student strikes so as to avoid the related reputational risk to secondary educational institutions.

- **Theme 5: Preference for the suggestion box**

The participants indicated that they would want the principal to use the following media to discuss school issues: meetings with the principal, communication through the student council, and communication through 'friendly' teachers. Additionally, the participants indicated that they would prefer to use the suggestion box to forward their grievances to the principal as "students may fear telling the principal something directly." The participants stated that they felt free to use the suggestion box to communicate with the principal as "there is no fear when presenting grievances" through the suggestion box. This means that the suggestion box, as a medium of communication, enables open communication by the students, although it can only allow for one-way asymmetrical communication. This is contrary to the proactive crisis communication literature that advocates for two-way symmetrical communication to avoid crises in organisations. Despite its one-way asymmetrical nature, the literature mentions the suggestion box as one the mediums that students in secondary educational institutions in Kenya use to communicate to the principal. The PCCP framework should propose a mixed motive model of communication that combines meetings with the students and other mediums, for instance, the suggestion box, notice boards and assemblies to enable the students to not only forward their grievances but also communicate any issues affecting them.

- **Theme 6: English: a barrier to communication**

The participants mentioned that in their communication, they experience a language barrier between them and the principal as the students are not well versed in English. Therefore, the participants suggested that the principal should use Kiswahili (a local language) to communicate

with the students as indicated in the following statements: "students should be allowed to communicate in a language they know like Kiswahili", "students should be allowed to raise their grievances in a language they can communicate well in like Kiswahili." This is contrary to the literature that mentions that the Kenyan education system prioritises English above Kiswahili and the indigenous languages by making English the language of instruction and communication in secondary educational institutions. In addition, the literature also mentions a lack of communication skills by institutional managers as one of the problems affecting educational institutions in Kenya. Therefore, the PCCP framework should propose that principals could encourage the students to communicate with them in their preferred language, besides English. This would create understanding between them and ensure that students communicate their grievances to the principal without hindrances, thereby contributing to the avoidance of student strikes.

5.2.2.3 Identification of stakeholders in secondary educational institutions

Under this category, the following theme was identified.

- **Theme 7: Students as strategic stakeholders**

The majority of the participants identified students as the most important stakeholder group in a secondary educational institution and appreciated the important place the students hold in these institutions. This was evident in the following response: "The students are the most important stakeholders". However, one participant regarded the deputy principal as the most important stakeholder as evident in the following statement: "The deputy principal in the most important as he is in charge of discipline". The literature identified the students as one of the stakeholder groups in a secondary educational institution besides teachers, parents, government officials, donors/sponsors, local leaders and the community. Therefore, the PCCP framework should propose that principals could regard students as the most strategic stakeholders in a secondary educational institution so as to underscore the importance of engaging them in a mixed motive communication to avoid student strikes in the institutions.

5.2.2.4 Reducing the probability of student strikes in secondary educational institutions

In this section, the following themes were identified:

- **Theme 8: Lack of collaborative problem-solving between strategic stakeholders**

The participants indicated that the principal had taken measures to avoid student strikes in their school by "implementing rules and regulations", "guidance and counseling of students", "listening to student grievances" and "addressing student grievances". However, they stated that they were not involved in coming up with the measures as evident in the following statement: "Some students are not involved in developing the measures to avoid student strikes". This lack of involvement draws attention to a lack of collaborative problem-solving between the principal and the students. This finding corroborates the literature that indicates that students in Kenyan educational institutions are excluded from participating in the management of their institutions and they, therefore, feel ignored and their grievances are not acknowledged. The literature posits that collaborative problem-solving, a proactive crisis communication measure, is one of the elements of two-way symmetrical communication that could contribute to the avoidance of crises in organisations. Therefore, the PCCP framework should propose that the principal could implement a mixed motive communication by holding meetings with the students to discuss their grievances and collaboratively find solutions to these grievances as well as one-way meetings with students to avoid student strikes.

- **Theme 9: Lack of collaborative decision-making between strategic stakeholders**

The participants indicated that they did not hold meetings with the principal to discuss issues affecting them; that the principal implements changes in the school without consulting them; and that they do not negotiate with the principal on their grievances and the proposed changes in the school. The participants stated that they felt "ignored", "discriminated", "humiliated", "betrayed" and that they have "no right of expression". These statements suggest a lack of balanced dialogue, negotiation and collaborative decision-making between the principal and the students. In accordance with the proactive crisis communication literature, balanced dialogue, negotiation and collaborative decision-making are important elements of two-way symmetrical communication. The literature further indicates that this kind of communication should focus on generating dialogue as opposed to just disseminating information to persuade stakeholders. The absence of balanced dialogue, negotiation and collaborative decision-making creates a situation where crises proliferate. The literature also indicates that most students and teachers attribute

student strikes to a lack of dialogue between the school administration and the students, whereby the administration rarely listen to student grievances as they believe that students cannot offer any solutions. This leads to tension, stress and misunderstandings and, consequently, to frustration and violence. Notably, although students would want to communicate with the principal through meetings, in some instances they still would want to use one-way asymmetrical communication mediums like the suggestion box to forward their grievances to the principal, as it had been found earlier, since the users of this medium remain anonymous. This contradicts the literature that proposes open communication in two-way symmetrical communication among stakeholders as way of avoiding crises. Hence, the PCCP framework should propose a mixed motive model of communication that encompasses one-way asymmetrical, such as the suggestion box and two-way symmetrical communication like meetings with the students to dialogue and negotiate on student grievances and on the changes proposed in the institution so as to reach a consensus on these changes before they are implemented thereby avoiding student strikes.

- **Theme 10: Lack of open communication among strategic stakeholders**

The participants indicated that they would not want the teachers to be involved in the meetings between them and the principal as some of their grievances implicate the teachers. This is evident in the following statements: "students may fear to express their grievances when teachers are there", "students can fear saying something to the principal when teachers are there" and "teachers are sometimes the problem". These statements suggest a lack of open communication among the students, the teachers and the principal which create an environment that is conducive for student strikes. The literature on proactive crisis communication expounds on open communication among stakeholders as an important element of two-way symmetrical communication that could contribute to the avoidance of crises in organisations as the stakeholders are able to discuss organisational issues freely. The PCCP framework could propose the implementation of a mixed motive communication in secondary educational institutions whereby the principal, the teachers and the students hold joint meetings to discuss student grievances openly to avoid student strikes.

- **Theme 11: Lack of timely feedback on student grievances**

The participants indicated that the principal takes too long to give feedback on their grievances as evident in the following statement: "it takes long for the principal to address our grievances" and "sometimes they ignore our grievances". These statements suggest a lack of timely feedback from the principal regarding student grievances. The participants also indicated that the principal should hold meetings with them often, preferably monthly or twice a term. The literature refers to timely feedback as an element of two-way symmetrical communication that could contribute to the avoidance of crises as issues, risks and threats are identified and managed early before they escalate to crises. Hence, the PCCP framework could propose that the principal could address student grievances in time to avoid situations where the students feel that they are being ignored which could lead to student strikes.

- **Theme 12: Lack of mutual understanding and truthfulness between strategic stakeholders**

The participants indicated that sometimes there is a lack of understanding between the students and the principal about some issues in the school. The participants also stated that the principal is sometimes not truthful in the communication with the students. This finding is evident in the following statements: "the principal may be hiding something from the students" and "the promised changes are never implemented by the principal." The literature refers to mutual understanding and truthfulness as elements of two-way symmetrical communication that could contribute to the avoidance of crises through two-way ethical communication to enable mutual understanding among stakeholders. The literature also proposes two-way symmetrical communication to generate understanding among organisational stakeholders and to send information to them to persuade them to adopt certain perspectives. The PCCP framework could propose that principals could implement mixed motive communication with their students to understand the issues that affect these students and that they should always be truthful when communicating with them as a way of avoiding student strikes.

5.2.2.5 Preparation for student strikes

In this section, the following themes were identified.

- **Theme 13: Strike information needs of parents**

The participants indicated that their parents would ask for the following information about a student strike: causes of the strike, destruction of property, closure of the institution, injuries to students, students who led the strike and resolution of the strike. These were evident in the following statements: "cause of the strike", "destruction of property", "injuries caused to students", "leaders of the strike", "closure of the school" and "measures taken to avoid strikes". The proactive crisis communication literature posits that an organisation should be ready with the most current information about a crisis lest it is perceived by its stakeholders to be ignorant of the crisis. The literature also proposes that a good proactive crisis communication plan should have different kinds of information ready for different stakeholders and that this information should be provided to these stakeholders even before they request it. The PCCP framework could propose that the crisis communication team (CCT) could have this information ready for any stakeholder who would inquire about it. Additionally, the CCT could design a strike information system that can send SMS messages with information about a student strike to all the strategic stakeholders in a secondary educational institution.

- **Theme 14: Lack of crisis preparedness in secondary educational institutions**

The participants stated that there they had never received any prior instructions on what to do when a strike occurs. All the participants responded with an emphatic "no". The crisis communication literature and SCCT proposes crisis communication training, simulations and crisis drills for organisational stakeholders to enable them to appropriately respond to crises and handle enquiries about crises from other stakeholders as well as the protection of stakeholders from harm. Hence, the PCCP framework could propose that the CCT could prepare students for strikes by instructing them on what to do when a strike occurs to ensure that those who do not support the strike do not participate in it and to avoid injuries and/or death of the students.

This following section summarises the main findings of the focus groups discussions with the students of Ruiru Secondary School.

5.2.2.6 Summary of the main findings of the focus groups

The focus groups revealed that the secondary educational institution in the study had taken some measures to avoid student strikes as evident in the absence of strikes since the participants indicated that they had never experienced a strike in this institution. It was also found that the following grievances by students could cause student strikes: transfer of teachers, failure to teach by teachers, harsh punishments by teachers, conflicts with teachers, mock examinations, poor diet, strict rules, lack of learning resources, and lack of recreational activities. This finding suggests that if these grievances are left unaddressed they could create a situation where student strikes proliferate. The findings also revealed that a negative reputation resulting from student strikes makes an institution unpopular leading to mass transfers and low enrolments of students which consequently affects the operations of the institution.

The findings also revealed that students prefer to use a mixed motive communication using mediums like the suggestion box to communicate their grievances to the principal due to its anonymity, which enables them to communicate their grievances without fear, as well as meetings to discuss and resolve the grievances. It was also found that using English as the language of communication between the students and the principal creates a barrier to communication and that the students would prefer to use Kiswahili to communicate with the principal.

From the focus groups, it was also evident that the various changes introduced in the school could cause student strikes especially when the students are not involved in the change process by being consulted before the changes are implemented. It was also found that there were no meetings between the students and the principal to discuss school issues. These findings points to a lack of balanced dialogue, negotiation and collaborative decision-making. The focus groups also found that the students were not involved in coming up with measures to avoid strikes suggesting that there was a lack of collaborative problem-solving. It was also found that the students would prefer the teachers not to be invited in the meetings held to discuss student grievances. This shows to a lack of open communication among the students, teachers and the principal. This lack of balanced dialogue, negotiation, open communication and collaborative problem-solving and decision-making suggest a lack of two-way symmetrical communication

between the principal and the students to discuss school issues and student grievances to avoid student strikes.

The focus groups also revealed a lack of timely feedback on student grievances which could lead to strikes as evident in the participants indicating that the principal took too long to give feedback on student grievances. The discussions also revealed a lack of mutual understanding and truthfulness as the participants indicated that there lacked understanding between the students and the principal and because the principal sometimes did not tell truth regarding institutional issues. Lack of timely feedback, mutual understanding and truthfulness suggested a lack of two-way symmetrical communication between the students and the principal.

Lastly, it was evident from the focus groups that the secondary educational institution in the study lacked crisis preparedness specifically for student strikes as the participants stated that they had never received any instructions on how to respond to strikes. It was also found that stakeholders would need to be provided with the following information regarding a student strike: cause of the strike, destruction of property, closure of the institution, injuries to students, leaders of the strike, and how the strike would be resolved.

5.3 OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

This section summarises the main findings obtained from this study as they are addressed in the proposed PCCP framework. The following table summarises the findings:

Table 5.1: Summary of the main findings

SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS
ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
Grievances that could cause student strikes • Poor diet, lack of learning resources and teachers, lack of recreation, imperiousness by the management, abusive language and harsh punishments by teachers, drug abuse by students, mock examinations, failure by teachers to teach, strict school rules and changes introduced in the school.

Frequency of student strikes in secondary educational institutions • Student strikes are proliferating in Kenya. **Absence of formal plans to avoid student strikes** • Secondary educational institutions lack formal plans to avoid student strikes.
Risks of student strikes in secondary educational institutions • Loss of learning and teaching time, lack of safety of students and teachers, destruction of school property, declining performance in exams, mass transfers and low enrolments of students, a negative culture and reputation**.**
Use of the suggestion box in secondary educational institutions • The suggestion box is a one-way asymmetrical medium of communication preferred by students to communicate grievances but shunned by the principals.
Challenges of communicating with students • Use of slang by the students and incompetent use of English by students lead to a lack of understanding between the students and the principal.
IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS
Students as the most important strategic stakeholders • Students are the most strategic stakeholders which underscores the need for more focus on this stakeholder group to avoid student strikes.
REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF STUDENT STRIKES
Lack of two-way symmetrical communication between students and principals
• Lack of interdependency among students, teachers and the principal as teachers are excluded from the meetings to discuss student grievances. Students are also not involved in the implementation of the changes that affect them.
• Lack of collaborative problem-solving between the principal and the students as the latter are not involved in formulating measures to avoid student strikes.
• Lack of balanced dialogue, negotiation and collaborative decision-making between the principal and the students: absence of meetings with the students to discuss issues affecting them; the principal implements changes in the institution without consulting the students; and the principal does not negotiate with the students on their grievances and the proposed changes in the institution.
• Lack of open communication among the students, teachers and the principal when discussing student grievances as the students would not want their teachers to attend meetings to discuss their grievances.
• Lack of timely feedback from the principal regarding student grievances as the principal takes long to respond to these grievances.
• Lack of mutual understanding and truthfulness between the students and the principal regarding some issues in the institution.
PREPARATION FOR STUDENT STRIKES
The information needs of strategic stakeholders about a student strike • Cause of the strike, possible solutions, safety of the students, destruction of property, why the strike could not be avoided, updates on student indiscipline and closure of the institution. **Lack of preparedness for student strikes** • Secondary educational institutions do not have teams to proactively plan to avoid student strikes. • Strategic stakeholders are not trained to respond to student strikes.

Based on these findings and insights from the literature, this study proposes the following PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions. This framework addresses the above findings and proposes ways of avoiding student strikes in the institutions.

5.4 A CONCEPTUAL PCCP FRAMEWORK TO AVOID STUDENT STRIKES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN KENYA

The proposed conceptual PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya is a culmination of the review of the relevant literature and the findings of this study. These findings were integrated in the framework to amend the preliminary propositions that were made on how proactive crisis communication can be used to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions. It is grounded on the chaos theory and SCCT and also borrows principles from the various proactive crisis communication models that were reviewed in the literature. This framework proposes a process which could be followed by principals to avoid student strikes by emphasising on a mixed motive model of communication with the students to enable the identification and resolution of problematic issues before they escalate to student strikes. As stated in the literature, the best crisis is the one that is avoided, but as it is impossible to completely avoid crises, organisations design crisis plans to respond to crises. The following conceptual PCCP framework illustrates the various phases and steps that a secondary educational institution can take to avoid student strikes. The proposed framework is graphically depicted in Figure 5.1:

PHASE 1: THE FOUNDATION OF THE PCCP FRAMEWORK

STEP 1: ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING OF SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT
- CCT to scan the secondary educational environment and get feedback from the student council on issues that are potential student strikes like the contentious changes, an escalation of student grievances and indiscipline.
- CCT to scan the secondary educational environment for issues that make it susceptible to student strikes like the language barrier and lack of understanding among students, teachers and the principal which affects their communication.

STEP 2: IDENTIFICATION OF STAKEHOLDERS
- Identify stakeholders as the students, parents, teachers, and board of management, education officers, the community and the local leaders.
- Position students as the most strategic stakeholders to underscore the need to involve them in a mixed motive communication to avoid student strikes.

PHASE 2: REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF STUDENT STRIKES

STEP 3: REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF STUDENT STRIKES
- Understand that strikes are unpredictable and acknowledge their disruptive nature.
- Appreciate that small changes or errors in an institutional system could have serious and negative consequences like student strikes.
- Cultivate interdependency among the principal, teachers and students by identifying common goals and negotiating appropriate ways of working towards the achievement of these goals to avoid conflicts that may escalate to student strikes.
- Avail communication mediums like the suggestion box for students to communicate their grievances to the principal; notice boards and assemblies for teachers and the principal to communicate institutional issues to the students.
- Communicate with the student through meetings to dialogue and negotiate on their grievances; address all grievances by discussing appropriate solutions through collaborative problem-solving and provide timely feedback and solutions to the grievances. Through open communication and collaborative decision-making, hold meetings with the students to dialogue on the proposed changes in the institution and reach a consensus before implementing them.
- Communicate with the students in their preferred language as the situation demands to cultivate mutual understanding among the principal, teachers and students.

PHASE 3: PREPARATION FOR STUDENT STRIKES

STEP 4: PREPARING STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS FOR STUDENT STRIKES
- Form a CCT with the members derived from the strategic stakeholders. A communication specialist to train the CCT on the implementation of the PCCP framework. The CCT to share out various roles.
- The CCT to scan the secondary educational environment for issues that are potential student strikes.
- The CCT to train students and teachers to prepare them for strikes and avoid bodily harm when it occurs.
- The CCT to design a strike information system to send SMS messages with information about a strike to all the strategic stakeholders. The CCT to have ready information on a student strike for any stakeholder who needs it.
- The principal to be the sole spokesperson, or in his absence the deputy principal, to enable a unified communication about the strike.
- Incorporate the lessons learnt from student strikes into crisis planning and preparation.
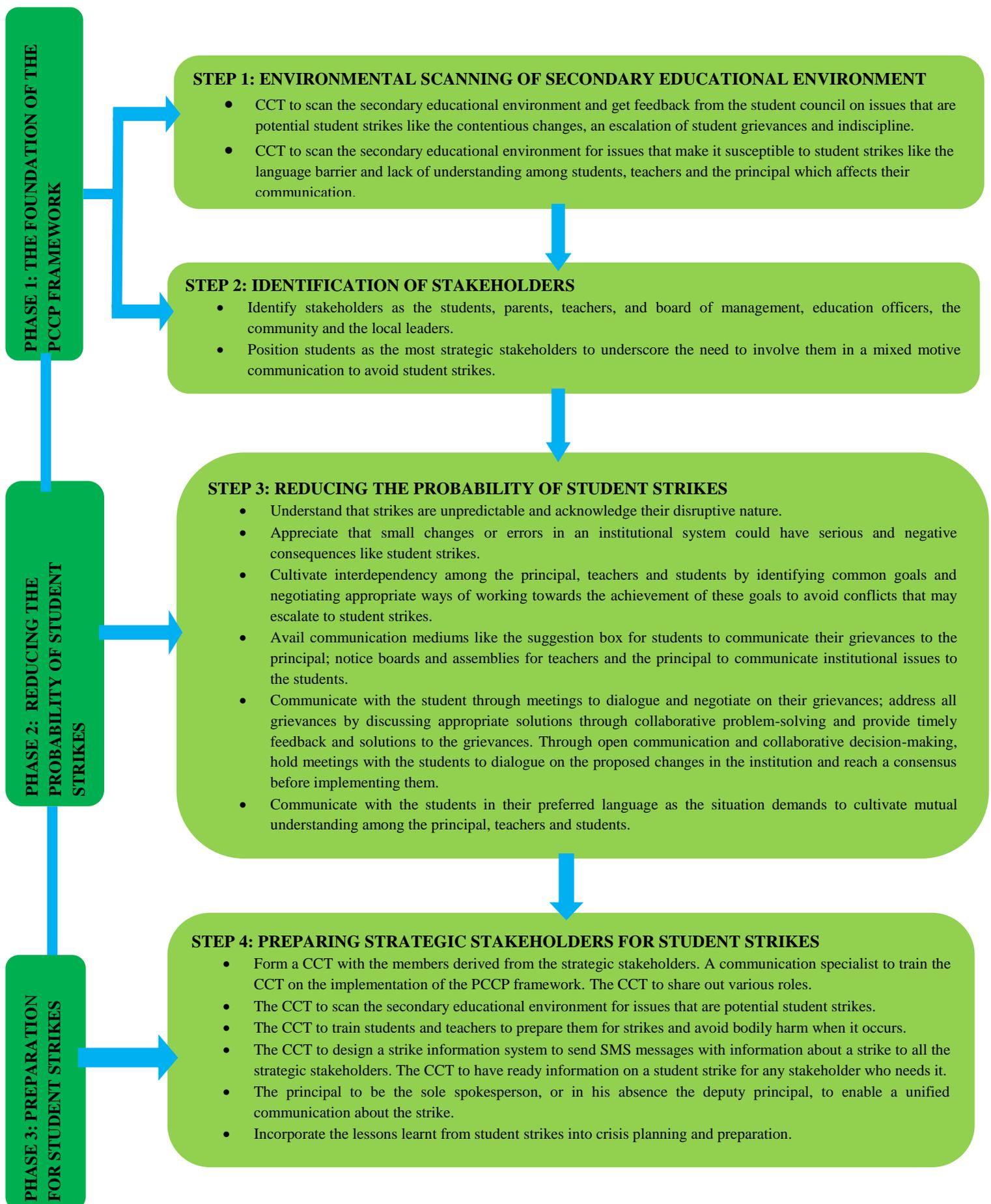
Figure 5.1: The PCCP framework

The following section will explain the phases and steps of the PCCP framework outlined in Figure 5.1.

5.4.1 THE PHASES AND STEPS OF THE PCCP FRAMEWORK

This section expounds on the phases and steps of the proposed PCCP framework. The following is an elaboration of the various activities to be undertaken under each step of the proposed PCCP framework.

5.4.1.1 Phase 1: The foundation

The first phase of the framework serves as the foundation and is conceptualised in two steps. This phase serves as the basis of proactive crisis communication with the students to avoid student strikes. It proposes that the CCT could scan the secondary educational environment for issues that have the potential to evolve to student strikes, identify student grievances and changes in a secondary educational environment that could cause strikes, identify early signs of student strikes and other issues that makes an institution susceptible to student strikes like a language barrier and lack of understanding between the students and the teachers and the principal. This phase also involves identifying the strategic stakeholders and positioning the students as the most strategic stakeholder.

- *Step 1: Environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment*

This step of the framework proposes environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment by the CCT for issues that are potential student strikes. For example, the grievances about inadequate and poor quality meals, lack of learning resources and teachers, lack of co-curricular activities, abusive language by teachers, harsh punishments, imperiousness, and drug abuse. The CCT also needs to determine if these issues have the potential to escalate to strikes and collect constant feedback about institutional issues from the strategic stakeholders. The CCT will also scan the secondary educational environment for issues that make it susceptible to student strikes like the language barrier and the misunderstanding between the students and the teachers and the principal resulting from the use of slang by students as well as their lack of competence in using English language. The CCT will, through observation and getting feedback

from the student council, also identify early signs of student strikes such as an escalation of student grievances and indiscipline, boycotting classes, duties and meals.

- *Step 2: Identification of stakeholders*

This step of the framework involves the CCT identifying the stakeholders that they will involve in mixed motive communication as part of proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes. These stakeholders will be identified by determining how they are impacted by the operations of an organisation whereby strategic stakeholders will be the individuals or entities who take part in the daily operations of a secondary educational institution. Strategic stakeholders will be identified as the students, parents, teachers and the board of management. Students will be identified as the most important strategic stakeholder group and the implementation of this framework in secondary educational institutions will focus on communicating with them through mixed motive communication.

5.4.1.2 Phase 2: Reducing the probability of student strikes

The second phase of the PCCP framework represents its third step and it provides guidelines on ways to reduce the probability of student strikes in secondary educational institutions by proposing various proactive crisis communication activities.

- *Step 3: Reducing the probability of student strikes*

The third step of this framework proposes guidelines to reduce the probability of student strikes namely: understanding the unpredictability that characterises student strikes, acknowledging their disruptive nature, and appreciating that small changes or errors in an institutional system that could lead to student strikes. This step also proposes cultivating interdependence among the principal, teachers and students by identifying common goals and negotiating appropriate ways of achieving these goals to avoid conflicts that may escalate to student strikes. In addition, this step proposes meeting with the students to dialogue and negotiate on their grievances, discuss appropriate solutions to these grievances through collaborative problem-solving and provide timely feedback on the solutions to the grievances. This step also posits holding meetings with the students to dialogue on proposed changes in the institution through open communication and to reach a consensus on these changes through collaborative decision-making before

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implementing them. Further, this step suggests making available communication media like the suggestion box for students to communicate their grievances to the principal and notice boards and school assemblies for teachers and the principal communicate to the students. This step also proposes cultivating mutual understanding among the principal, teachers and students by communicating with the students in their preferred language to avoid misunderstanding that could lead to student strikes.

5.4.1.3 Phase 3: Preparation for student strikes

The second phase of this PCCP framework represents its fourth step and proposes preparing key stakeholders for student strikes by forming a CCT, training this team to implement this framework and having information about an ongoing strike ready for stakeholders.

- *Step 4: Preparing key stakeholders for student strikes*

This step proposes preparing the strategic stakeholders for student strikes. It proposes the formation of a CCT composed of one teacher from the guidance and counselling team, one teacher from the disciplinary team, the deputy principal and the principal, one member of the board of management, one member of the parents and teachers association, and two members of the student council. This step also proposes that the CCT could be trained by a communication specialist on the implementation of this framework. After constituting the CCT, the members will share out the various roles that will come with the implementation of this framework. Additionally, this step suggests that the CCT could train the strategic stakeholders to prepare them for strikes. This step also proposes that the CCT could design a strike information system to send SMS messages with information about a strike to all the strategic stakeholders. Further, this step proposes that the CCT could have information about a student strike ready for any stakeholder who enquires about it, and that the principal could be the sole spokesperson or in their absence the deputy principal, to enable a unified communication about the student strike.

The following section includes a summary of this chapter.

5.5 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on reporting the findings of this study by discussing the findings of the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and the focus groups discussions based on the respective themes, followed by a graphic illustration of the proposed PCCP framework and an elaborate discussion of its phases and steps. The following are the main findings of this study, which were used to revise the framework.

This study identified the following risks of student strikes in secondary educational institutions: safety of students and teachers, loss of learning and teaching time, destruction of property, declining performance in examinations, depopulation, low enrolments, engendering a negative culture, and damage to reputation. Due to these risks, this study proposed the PCCP framework to avoid student strikes.

Face-to-face communication, use of suggestion boxes and notice boards, communication through teachers, meetings with the student council, and ad hoc meetings were identified as the mediums of communication the principals use to communicate with students. The suggestion box was found to be unpopular among the principals, since they stated that some students used it irresponsibly. However, the students preferred the suggestion box to communicate with and to forward their grievances to the principal. The PCCP framework proposed mixed motive communication that includes mediums like the suggestion box, notice boards and assemblies and meetings with the students in to discuss institutional issues and student grievances to avoid student strikes.

This study identified the following as the student grievances that cause student strikes: food quality and quantity, lack of learning resources and teachers, lack of co-curricular activities, imperiousness by the principal and deputy principal, use of abusive language by teachers, harsh punishments and drug abuse. This finding was integrated in the proposed PCCP framework which suggested addressing student grievances to avoid student strikes. This study identified language barrier resulting from the use of slang, lack of competence in English and misunderstanding as the challenges principals experience when communicating with students. This finding was integrated in the PCCP framework which proposed communicating with

students in the language they prefer and communicate well in to create mutual understanding among them and avoid misunderstanding that could result in student strikes.

Stakeholders in secondary institutions were identified by this study as the students, teachers, board of management, parents and teachers association, Ministry of Education officials, Teachers Service Commission, sponsors, local leaders and religious groups. Students were identified as the most important strategic stakeholders. This finding was integrated in the PCCP framework, which proposed that the principal will position the students as the most important strategic school stakeholders in order to underscore the need of communicating and discussing institutional issues with them to avoid student strikes.

This study also found that there was a lack of two-way symmetrical communication between principals and students as most of the communication in the secondary educational institutions was one-way from the principals to the students to pass information. Additionally, there was a lack of interdependence between the students, the teachers and the principal in some institutions as the teachers were excluded from meetings held to discuss student grievances. There was also a lack of open communication as the students did not feel free to communicate their grievances to the principal in the presence of the teachers. This finding was integrated in the PCCP framework which proposed that principals could hold meetings with students and teachers to freely discuss institutional issues, student grievances and the changes proposed in the institution and to reach a consensus to avoid of student strikes. This study also found that in some of the secondary educational institutions, principals involved students in the changes intended in the institutions but in the majority of the institutions, the principal just communicated these changes to the students without discussing these changes with them. This study also found that secondary educational institutions lacked written plans to avoid student strikes but some institutions take some measures to avoid strikes. It was also found that the principal did not respond to students' grievances in time, is not truthful when communicating with the students, and that the strategic school stakeholders were not trained on what do when a strike occurs. These findings suggest a lack of two-way symmetrical communication due to a lack of collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, balance dialogue, negotiation between the students and the principal as well as a lack of timely feedback on student grievances. This finding was integrated in the PCCP

framework which proposed mixed motive communication that encompasses both one-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical communication between the students and the principals to communicate institutional issues and to discuss the proposed changes in their institutions which would consequently contribute to the avoidance of student strikes.

This study also found that when a student strike occurs, the strategic stakeholders require the principal to provide them with information about the causes of the strike and possible solutions, the safety of the students, if there is destruction of property, if the institution will be closed, updates on student indiscipline, and why the strike could not be avoided. This finding was integrated in the PCCP framework which proposed that the principal could have this information ready for any stakeholder who may ask for it.

These findings meet the research problem which was to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework as a measure to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County by exploring the proactive crisis communication strategies used in the institutions to avoid student strikes, exploring the risks posed by student strikes in the secondary educational institutions, and exploring the information needs of strategic stakeholders during a student strike. The findings reveal a lack of two-way symmetrical communication between the students, teachers and principals that would contribute to the avoidance of student strikes, and a preference for one-way communication by students in some situations. Secondary educational institutions also lacked formal plans to avoid student strikes. Therefore, a need for the PCCP framework that proposes various proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes is underscored in this study.

The following chapter focuses on the conclusion and a summary of the main findings, the limitations and the strengths of this study and recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

"Crisis management needs evidence-based crisis communication guidance grounded on empirical research rather than personal preference" (Coombs 2007:163).

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study addressed the research problem which was to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework for the secondary educational environment as a proactive measure to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County in Kenya. This was done by addressing the sub-problems and research questions that guided this study namely: *Sub-problem 1*: to explore the risks posed by student strikes; *research question 1*: what are the risks posed by student strikes? *Sub-problem 2*: to explore the information needs of strategic stakeholders about a student strike; *research question 2*: what are the information needs of strategic stakeholders during student strikes? *Sub-problem 3*: to explore proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions; *research question 3*: do public secondary educational institutions have proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes? These sub-problems and research questions were addressed through an environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment for issues that could cause student strikes and for the means principals communicate with their students. In addition, this study explored the various measures principals take to reduce the probability of student strikes, how secondary educational institutions prepare for student strikes and the information needs of strategic stakeholders about a strike. The research problem emanated from arguments that proactive crisis communication in organisations could contribute to the prevention of crises in those organisations through scanning of the workplace environment for possible crises, reducing the likelihood of their occurrence, and preparing strategic stakeholders for crises to enable control when they occur.

This study focused on secondary educational institutions due to the escalation of student strikes and because proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in these institutions in Kenya has not been researched. The purpose of the study was, firstly, to explore the proactive crisis communication measures used in public secondary educational institutions to avoid student

strikes, to explore the risks posed by student strikes in the institutions, and to explore the information needs of strategic stakeholders during student strikes. Secondly, based on the findings from these research sub-problems and from the literature, this study proposed a new, customised PCCP framework to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Kenya. The research problem was addressed by firstly reviewing the existing literature on crisis communication in general and then specifically on proactive crisis communication. This was followed by a two-phased study that was conducted in practice through semi-structured, one-on-one interviews with the principals of all the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County in Kenya and through focus groups with the students of Ruiru Secondary School.

The study revealed an absence of proactive crisis communication measures to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and this was addressed by proposing a customised PCCP framework for these institutions. This framework borrowed principles from the literature on proactive crisis communication, the chaos theory and SCCT and from various proactive crisis communication models which were combined to produce a unique framework that was customised for the secondary educational environment. The PCCP framework proposed various proactive measures that can be undertaken by principals to avoid student strikes, beginning with an environmental scanning of the secondary educational environment to identify issues that are potential student strikes. The PCCP framework proposed an identification of the strategic stakeholders in the secondary educational institutions and positioning students as the most strategic stakeholder that the principal will involve in proactive crisis communication to address student grievances to avoid student strikes. Further, PCCP framework proposed reducing the probability of student strikes by discussing institutional issues and the proposed changes and addressing student grievances through mixed motive communication characterised by balanced dialogue, open communication, timely feedback, interdependence and mutual understanding between the students, teachers and the principal. The PCCP framework also proposed preparing the strategic stakeholders for student strikes by forming a CCT and training the CCT to implement the PCCP framework. The PCCP framework also proposed designing a strike information system to send SMS messages with information

about a strike to all the strategic stakeholders and to have ready information on a student strike for any stakeholder who might enquire about it.

The following section provides an overview of the chapters and the contribution of each chapter to the research problem.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

Chapter one laid the ground for this study by elaborating on the context of the study and on the research problem; by reviewing the existing literature; and by proposing a methodological framework for collecting and analysing the data for this study. Chapter two reviewed more literature on crisis, crisis communication, proactive crisis communication, student strikes as crises and the characteristics of the Kenyan education and partly addressed the following sub-problem: the risks posed by student strikes in secondary educational institutions. Chapter three reviewed the relevant crisis communication theories and models and partly addressed the following sub-problem: the proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions. Chapter four expounded on the methodological framework for collecting and analysing the data and proposed semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and focus group discussions as the data collection method and thematic analysis as the data analysis method thereby contributing to addressing the research problem by providing a method for collecting and analysing the data. Chapter five provided an analysis of the data collected from the semi-structured, one-on-one interviews and the focus group discussions. This data addressed the research problem which was to explore the need for a customised PCCP framework as a proactive measure to avoid student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County.

6.3 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The following aspects are considered as the main findings in addressing the research problem and the various sub-problems and research questions.

6.3.1 The risks posed by student strikes

This study found that student strikes in secondary educational institutions present the following risks: safety of students and teachers, destruction of property, loss of learning time, damage to reputation, and decreased student enrolment. It was also found that the following student grievances could cause student strikes: food quality and quantity, lack of teachers and learning resources, lack of co-curricular activities, imperiousness by the management use of abusive language and harsh punishments by teachers, drug abuse by students, and changes introduced in the institutions.

6.3.2 The information needs of strategic stakeholders during a student strike

This study found that strategic stakeholders ask for the following information from the principal about a student strike: causes and solutions, student safety, if property has been destroyed, why the strike could not be avoided, closure of the institution, and updates on student indiscipline. Therefore, this study proposed a strike information system where information about a student strike could be prepared and made readily available for any strategic stakeholder who may request it. This system would also send SMS about a strike to all the strategic stakeholders.

6.3.3 The proactive crisis communication strategies to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions

This study found that principals used the following means of communication to communicate with students: face-to-face communication in meetings, suggestion boxes, notice boards, communication through teachers, meetings with the student council, and *ad hoc* meetings with individuals or groups of students. The suggestion box, a one-way asymmetrical means of communication, was found to be unpopular amongst the principals but was preferred by the students to communicate their grievances to the principal as it would accord them anonymity. This study also found that secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County lacked formal plans to avoid student strikes. Consequently, two-way symmetrical communication between the principals and the students was also found to be lacking as evident in the lack of balanced dialogue, open communication, interdependency, truthfulness, mutual understanding, negotiation, timely feedback and collaborative decision-making and problem-solving. This study

also found that there was a lack of student involvement in the changes intended in the secondary educational institutions as the students were not consulted on the changes before they were implemented. Therefore, this study proposed a PCCP framework that posited mixed motive communication through meetings as well as through the suggestion box and notice boards to discuss the changes intended in the schools, to address student grievances, to communicate to the students, and to get feedback on various institutional issues from the students to avoid student strikes. Lastly, it was also found that students are not trained on how to respond to student strikes which pointed to lack of crisis preparedness in secondary educational institutions. This study therefore proposes the formation of a CCT to train the students on how to respond to student strikes and to implement the PCCP framework.

6.4 LIMITATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

Several limitations were identified in this study. Firstly, the findings of this study could not be generalised to the target population due to the use of non-probability sampling to draw the samples for this study. The 12 principals who were purposively sampled and interviewed were not representative of all the principals of all the secondary educational institutions in Kenya. Similarly, the students of Ruiru Secondary School who were purposively sampled and included in the focus group discussions were not representative of all the students of all the public secondary educational institutions in Kenya. Thus, the study was only limited to Mirangine Sub-County. Secondly, only Ruiru Secondary School agreed to participate in the focus group discussions, leaving out the other 11 public secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County. Thirdly, the students of Ruiru Secondary School who participated in the focus groups indicated that they had not experienced a student strike and, thus, only gave their perspectives on the various issues captured in the research questions. Fourthly, two-way communication is regarded as a normative ideal in an environment with many-to-many communication brought about by interactive technologies like the social media. However, two-way symmetrical communication was explored in this study as secondary educational institutions in Kenya are still slow in adopting computer and internet technologies that would enable many-to-many communication. Fifthly, the proposed PCCP framework provided guidelines on various ways of avoiding student strikes but secondary educational institutions would need to customise this

framework to their specific situations when implementing it to make it responsive to their specific needs for proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes.

The following contributions of the study could be identified. Firstly, this study extended the body of knowledge on crisis communication by focusing on proactive crisis communication to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions as such a study has not been done before. Hence, this proposition is unique and serves as a contribution to crisis communication literature. Secondly, this study proposed a new PCCP framework for avoiding student strikes which is customised to the secondary educational environment thereby making the applicability of the recommendations easier. Thirdly, this study provided a foundation for a further exploration of how proactive crisis communication using interactive communication technologies could be used to avoid organisational crises.

6.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Firstly, future research could focus on how proactive crisis communication using interactive communication technologies could be used to avoid organisational crises. Secondly, a study could be done on how the establishment and maintenance of stakeholder relationships with all the strategic stakeholders in secondary educational institutions could contribute to the avoidance of student strikes. Thirdly, a case study could be done on how proactive crisis communication could be used to avoid the perennial and often violent and destructive student strikes in public universities in Kenya. Lastly, the PCCP framework could further be explored with a larger sample that covers all the 47 counties in Kenya or a longitudinal case study to implement the proposed PCCP framework.

6.6 SUMMARY

This study is derived from the current situation of student strikes in Kenya where an escalation of incidents of student strikes in secondary educational institutions was witnessed in 2016 and several cases reported in 2017. This study focused on exploring the proactive crisis communication measures to avoid student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County; exploring the risks posed by student strikes; and exploring the

information needs of strategic stakeholders during a student strike. This problem was addressed by reviewing the relevant literature and by conducting a study through semi-structured, interviews one-on-one with the principals of all the secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County and through focus group discussions with the students of Ruiru Secondary School.

This study also proposed the implementation of proactive crisis communication in secondary educational institutions by proposing the PCCP framework that is customised to the secondary educational environment in Kenya. The framework proposed a scanning of the secondary educational environment to identify issues that are potential student strikes and student grievances that could cause strikes. The framework also proposed the identification of secondary school stakeholders and regarding students as the most important strategic stakeholders. The PCCP framework also proposed ways of reducing the probability of student strikes in secondary educational institutions by engaging the students in mixed motive communication through balanced dialogue, open communication, negotiation, mutual understanding, truthfulness, interdependency, timely feedback and collaborative decision-making and problem solving. The framework also proposed ways of preparing for student strikes by forming a CCT, training of this CCT to implement the framework and having information about a student strike ready to cater for stakeholders' enquires. This study proposes that the implementation of this PCCP framework could greatly contribute to the avoidance of student strikes in secondary educational institutions in Mirangine Sub-County in Nyandarua County in Kenya.

> "Proactive crisis communication is the process of scanning the workplace environment for possible crises, reducing the probability of their occurrence and preparing key stakeholders for a crisis" (Swart 2010:72).

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ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A: THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTRODUCTION TO INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Literature on crisis communication posits that proactive crisis communication can be implemented in organisations to avoid organisational crises occasioned by organisational misdeeds and mismanagement. Organisations need to proactively and continuously communicate with their strategic stakeholders through mixed motive communication to identify issues in their environment that are potential crises and resolve them before they escalate to crises. There has been a proliferation of student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya. These strikes disrupt the operations of these institutions; lead to destruction of property and also damage the reputation of the affected institution. This necessitates proactive crisis communication to avoid them.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

The following questions will serve as an introduction to the interview and will also explore the participant's years of experience in school management.

1. For how long have you worked as a Principal?
2. For how long have you as a Principal in this school?

ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING OF SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Environmental scanning refers to an analysis of an organisation's internal and external environments for issues that are potential crises and for warning signs of crises. This study posits that secondary educational institutions could scan their environment for issues that are potential student strikes. The following questions will explore the various issues in a secondary educational environment that could cause student strikes.

3. Has this school ever experienced a student strike?
4. Which risks do student strikes present to this school?
   (Explore risks to life, property and school reputation)
5. Which means of communication do you use to communicate with students?
6. Is there a suggestion box in this school?

7. If yes, is it in use?

8. Which student grievances have the potential to cause student strikes?

9. What challenges do you experience when communicating with secondary school students?

IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS

Strategic stakeholders are the individuals or groups who directly impact or are impacted by the operations of an organisations and whose contribution that organisation depends on for existence. Secondary educational institutions need to identify their strategic stakeholders so as to communicate with them through a mixed motive communication to avoid student strikes. The following questions will explore who the stakeholders in a secondary educational institution are as well as the most important stakeholder group in these institutions.

10. Who are the stakeholders in this school?

11. Who do you regard as the most important stakeholders in this school?

REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF STUDENT STRIKES

Literature on crisis communication proposes that proactive crisis communication could be implemented in organisations to avoid organisational crises by engaging the strategic stakeholders in a mixed motive communication through collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, balanced dialogue, open communication, negotiation; and ensuring interdependency, mutual understanding, truthfulness and timely feedback among strategic stakeholders. The following questions will explore the measures principals take to reduce the probability of student strikes occurring in their institutions.

12. Do you hold meetings with students to discuss issues affecting them?

13. How often do you hold these meetings with students?

14. Are the students free to speak out during these meetings?

15. Have you ever tried to proactively plan to avoid a student strike?

16. If yes, is this plan written down and available?

17. Do you involve the students in the changes intended in this school?

PREPARING STAKEHOLDERS FOR STUDENT STRIKES?

Proactive crisis communication literature proposes that organisations should have ready information about a crisis and that they should provide their stakeholders with this information to inform them of the crisis and what the organisation is doing to control it. The following questions will explore if secondary educational institutions are prepared for student strikes.

18. Have you ever formed a team to plan how to avoid student strikes?
19. Are school stakeholders trained on what to do when student strikes occur?
20. During a student strike, what information would school stakeholders ask for?
    (Explore information regarding causes, damages, closure of school and return date)

ADDENDUM B: THE FOCUS GROUP GUIDE

INTRODUCTION TO FOCUS GROUPS GUIDE		
Literature on crisis communication posits that proactive crisis communication can be implemented in organisations to avoid organisational crises occasioned by organisational misdeeds and mismanagement. Organisations need to proactively and continuously communicate with their strategic stakeholders through a mixed motive communication to identify issues in their environment that are potential crises and resolve them before they escalate to crises. There has been a proliferation of student strikes in public secondary educational institutions in Kenya. These strikes disrupt the operations of these institutions; lead to destruction of property and also damage the reputation of the affected institution. This necessitates proactive crisis communication to avoid them.		
GENERAL QUESTIONS		
TOPIC	**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**	**NOTES**
	The following questions will serve as an introduction to the focus group discussion and also determine if the students have been in that school long enough to be able to provide adequate information about the various issues being explored in this study.	
Duration of stay	1. In which grade are you? 2. For how long have you been in this school? 3. Are you on transfer from another school?	
ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING OF THE SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT		
Environmental scanning refers to an analysis of an organisation's internal and external environments for issues that are potential crises and for warning signs of crises. This study posits that secondary educational institutions could scan their environment for issues that are potential student strikes. The following questions will explore various issues in a secondary educational		

environment that may make them susceptible to student strikes.		
TOPIC	**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**	**NOTES**
History of strikes	4. Have you ever experienced a student strike?	
Causes of strikes	5. Which student grievances could most likely cause strikes? Do you think mock examinations can cause student strikes?	
	6. Can changes implemented in this school cause student strikes? Which changes can cause strikes?	
Reputational damage	7. How do student strikes affect school reputation?	
Communication medium	8. How would you prefer the principal to communicate with you about school issues? Between meetings and the suggestion box, which medium would you prefer?	
Communication challenges	9. Which challenges do you experience when communicating with the principal?	
	10. Does inadequate English affect communication between you and the principal? What should be done about this?	

IDENTIFICATION OF STRATEGIC STAKEHOLDERS

Strategic stakeholders are the individuals or groups who directly impact or are impacted by the operations of an organisations and whose contribution that organisation depends on for existence. Secondary educational institutions need to identify their strategic stakeholders so as to communicate with them through a mixed motive communication to avoid student strikes. The following question will explore if students acknowledge the important role they play in their institution as the most important strategic stakeholder.

TOPIC	**DISCUSSION QUESTION**	**NOTES**
Most important stakeholder	11. Who do you regard as the most important stakeholders in this institution?	

REDUCING THE PROBABILITY OF STUDENT STRIKES

Literature on crisis communication proposes that proactive crisis communication could be implemented in organisations to avoid organisational crises by engaging the strategic stakeholders in a mixed motive communication through collaborative decision-making and problem-solving, balanced dialogue, open communication, negotiation; and ensuring interdependency, mutual understanding, truthfulness and timely feedback among strategic stakeholders. The following questions will explore the various measures principals take to avoid student strikes in their institutions.

TOPIC	**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**	**NOTES**
Collaborative problem-solving	12. Are there measures in this school to avoid student strikes? Are you involved in coming up with these measures?	
Balanced dialogue	13. Do you hold meetings with the principal to discuss issues affecting you?	

Open communication	14. If 'yes', do you freely discuss the issues affecting you during these meetings?	
	15. Do you feel free to communicate to the principal through the suggestion box?	
Interdependency among stakeholders	16. During these meetings, are the teachers involved? Should teachers be present during the meetings?	
Timely feedback	17. How long does it take for the principal to address your grievances?	
	18. How often should meetings between the principal and the students be held?	
Collaborative decision-making	19. Does the principal consult you about the changes that affect you in this school?	
	20. Are there times the principal comes up with changes in this school without consulting you? How do you feel about it?	
Negotiation	21. Do you negotiate with the principal on your grievances and the proposed changes in this school?	
Mutual understanding	22. During your communication with the principal, do you understand each other?	
Truthfulness	23. Is the principal always truthful when communicating with you? How about you?	

PREPARATION FOR STUDENT STRIKES

Proactive crisis communication literature proposes that organisations should have ready information about a crisis and that they should provide their stakeholders with this information to inform them of the crisis and what the organisation is doing to control it. The following questions will explore if schools are prepared for student strikes.

TOPIC	DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	NOTES
Preparedness for strikes	24. What information would your parent ask for after a strike? 25. Have you ever received instructions on what to do when a strike occurs?	