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Influence of Student Councils' Involvement in Implementation of School Rules and Policies among Students on Their Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of student councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and policies among students on their discipline in public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population was 30 public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County. Stratified random sampling was used to select a sample size of 108 students, 162 teachers and 28 principals. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect primary data. The questionnaires were also subjected to pilot test to ensure that research instruments were reliable. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences computer programme version 20.0. The results were presented in form of frequency tables and chi square tests. Chi square tests were used to show the relationship between the variables. The results of the study indicated that schools where a student council were not involved in implementing school rules was characterized by high levels of indiscipline than those that involved students in implementing school rules. It is also concluded that involving student council in implementing school rules influences students' discipline. It was recommended that student councils be involved in implementing school rules and policies. This will ensure that school rules and policies are implemented effectively.
Key words: *implementation, school rules, students, discipline, public secondary schools*

1.1 Introduction

The persistent waves of students' strikes in secondary schools in Kenya since independence continued to be witnessed hence the need to allow students to be heard through their representatives (Wachira, 2010 in Mukit,i 2014). There are many reasons advanced supporting the need for student councils. The major argument advanced being the need to change attitude towards youngsters and the need to promote student involvement in school governance (Keogh & Whyte, 2005).

Student councils' involvement in school governance entails active involvement in school based decision making. Within the newly emerging international focus on children's competence are calls for children to become active participants in the operations and management of primary schools. According to Davidsff and Lazarus (2007), administrative decentralization can be defined as a means of distributing authority to the different agencies, groups and stakeholders. This is based on the thinking that schools know their needs better and are in the best position to solve or manage their problems.

School management should take into consideration student opinions in establishing policies, which directly affect programs, activities, privileges and other areas of student concern. Student councils' under all roles given are on duty at all time in all places during their stay in school. They are believed to be models to other students therefore expected to ensure order and harmony among other students more especially on punctuality. In so doing they defend and enforce the school rules and regulations by being at the fore front and prepared to observe the set school rules and regulations (Mwikali, 2015).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Student indiscipline has been on a rise over the years in Kathonzweni Sub-County compared with the neighbouring sub-counties; as indicated by frequent strikes, student unrest and poor school performance (Kenya Ministry of Education, 2016).From the Kathonzweni District Education office report (July 2016) five schools within the district were involved in strikes, destruction of property hence closed indefinitely with others requiring law enforcers to guard the schools.

Mwiria and Ngethe (2007) analyzed the reforms in school governance but focused more on students' representations in governance with less emphasis on decision making process in Kenyan universities; the same can be applied in the secondary schools within Kathonzweni Sub-county, Makueni County. A study by Cook-Sather (2002) and Fletcher (2005), Bukaliya (2012) and Vundi, Majanga and Odollo (2014) advocate for student participation in decision making. From the past studies highlighted, the study identified conceptual gap and contextual gaps which the study filled by establishing the influence of student councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and policies among students on their discipline in public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County.

1.3 Objectives of the study

To examine the influence of student councils' involvement in decision making on student's discipline in public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County.

2.0 Literature Review
2.1 Students councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and policies and students discipline

Student participation in decision making refers to the work of student representative bodies such as school councils, student parliaments and the prefectural body. It is also a term used to encompass all aspects of school life and decision-making where students may make a contribution, informally through individual negotiation as well as formally through purposely-created structures and mechanisms.

Sithole (1998) affirms this by saying that students' involvement in formulation of school rules and regulations in school is viewed as total problem to the administrators, teachers, parents and the entire society. This is because student councils' are seen as immature and lacking knowledge that is necessary to running of a school.

Issues relating to the discipline of students have captured the ears of parents and other educational stakeholders (Ching, Jiar & Jaffri, 2015). A working student' councils should be active discussing various issues ranging from administration and discipline of students. It is advisable that school management should not infringe into the management of the students' councils (Huddleston, 2007).

Student council plays an exceptionally viable train in learning institutions. For example Christie et al (1998) noted that dynamic contribution of understudies in train process is seen as integral to having dependable outcomes. They include that co-making discipline arrangements add to possession for the understudies an impetus for long haul capable conduct. In think about examining disciplinary procedures utilized in Kenyan optional schools, Kiprop (2007) additionally found an extensive level of assention among her subjects on student participation disciplinary issues.

Ching, Jiar and Jaffri (2015) conducted a study titled, instilling discipline on students through Social-Emotional Learning (SEL). Issues related to discipline were discussed in Malaysia and how SEL approach can used to address them. SEL approach was viewed as alternative way of cultivating morals among students. Otieno (2001) gives the following pieces of advice as regards the role of student councils with reference to discipline that classroom discipline is important for effective learning; and class student councils should ensure that students maintain silence while in class.

Sabitu (2014) did a study on students' assessment role in promoting discipline in Osun state, Nigeria. Data was collected from 500 students. Sabitu concluded that courses and seminars can be adopted in cultivating morals among students.
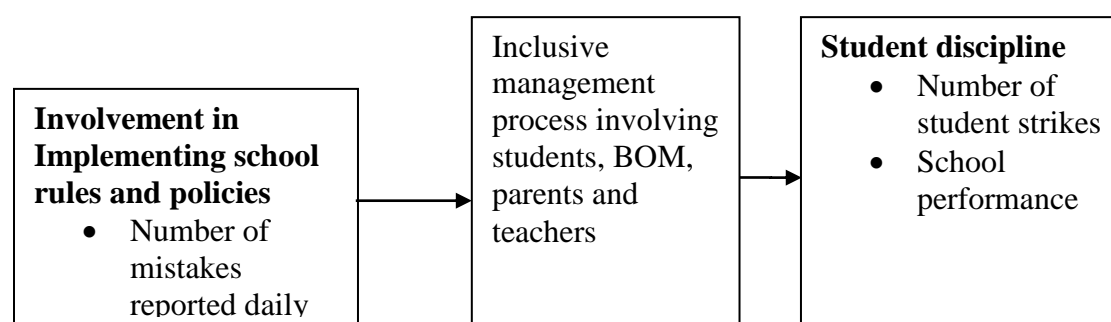
Otieno (2001) gives the following pieces of advice as regards the role of student councils with reference to discipline: all student councils should take collective action whenever they come across cases of indiscipline; student councils involved in school outings are responsible for the discipline of the party and that classroom discipline is important for effective learning; and class student councils should ensure that students maintain silence while in class.

2.2 Theoretical Background

This study is anchored on the Social Systems Theory. Social Systems theory elucidates key principles that can be employed at different disciplines of life. School system is a live and always changing institution. A school is comprised of other social institutions which include departments, committees and students' council experiencing continued interaction and interdependency amongst themselves. A learning institution is thus a system. This Theory was suitable the school was viewed to comprise other sub units like student councils, departments and the administrative unit interacting at different levels to bring about harmonious school management.

2.3 Conceptual framework

This is an analytical tool representing different variables that interact together at different levels resulting to a common output. A figurative illustration of the variables interacting is shown in figure 2.1.

Involvement in Implementing school rules and policies
- Number of mistakes reported daily

Inclusive management process involving students, BOM, parents and teachers

Student discipline
- Number of student strikes
- School performance

Figure 1: Student council practices and discipline

3.0 Research Methodology

A descriptive survey design was employed. The target population was 30 public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County, Makueni County. The study targeted a population of 1000 student representatives, 800 teachers and 30 principals. Stratification method was used to choose a sample size 108 student representatives, 162 teachers and 28 principals. Questionnaires and interviews were used to gather primary data. The researcher administered the questionnaires in person and the respondents given enough time to respond. The filled questionnaires were collected. Interview questions were read to the principals. Collected data (quantitative) was keyed in into SPSS software version 20.0. The results generated included average and deviations from the mean. The results were presented in frequency tables. The chi square tests checked the relationship of research variables. The chi square test was meant to compare the students' level of discipline between the schools which involve students in school governance and those that do involve students in school governance. Qualitative data gathered by use of interview guide was analyzed through content analysis and presented in prose form.

4.0 Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation
4.1 Instruments' response rate

The return rate provides a profile of study units that participated. The respondents of the study were teachers, student councils and school principals. The return rate is indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Response rate

Respondents category	Administered	Returned	Unreturned	Percentage returned
Teachers	162	134	28	82.7
Student representatives	108	104	4	96.3
Principals	28	28	-	100

The response rate for teachers was 82.7 percent; the response rate for student representatives was 96.3percent while the participation rate for principals was 100 percent. According Kothari (2004), a return rate of more than 50 percent is sufficient. Therefore, a response rate achieved for this study was adequate for analysis.

4.2 Student councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and student's discipline

The respondents were asked to establish the influence of student councils' involvement in decision making on student's discipline in public secondary schools. In most schools, prefects are involved in a number of governance roles such as supervising duties and ensuring that rules and regulations are followed. They are also given authority to punish wrong-doers (Shikami, 2006). The responses are presented in a five Likert scale and presented in Table 2. The choices were presented as (5= never, 4= rarely, 3= can't tell, 2 = frequently and 1= all the time.

Table 2: Student councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and student's discipline

Role	all the time	frequently	Can't tell	Rarely	Never	Mean	SD
Implementation of school rules and policies	5.2%	5.2%	7.5%	39.6%	42.5%	4.1	1.1
Reviewing existing rules and policies	11.2%	14.9%	11.9%	28.4%	33.6%	3.6	1.4
Formulating school policies to guide students	10.4%	11.9%	13.4%	30.6%	33.6%	3.6	1.3
Representing other students in school discipline committee	12.7%	9.0%	2.2%	33.6%	42.5%	3.8	1.4
Implementing school policies	3.0%	5.2%	17.2%	34.3%	40.3%	4.0	1.0
Petitioning administration on behave of students	6.0%	11.9%	13.4%	28.4%	40.3%	3.9	1.2
Involvement in punishing students	5.2%	4.5%	7.5%	32.8%	50.0%	4.2	1.1
Average						3.9	1.2

Table 2 showed that majority of the respondents (82.1%) indicated that student councils were not involved in the implementation of school rules and policies. The results also showed that majority of the respondents (62. 0%) felt that students' councils were not involved in reviewing existing rules and policies. The results also showed that majority of the respondents 64.2 percent of the respondents indicated that student council is not involved formulating school policies to guide students.

Student councils play a very effective discipline in schools. For instance, Christie et al (1998) noted that involvement of students in discipline process is an avenue to harmony in schools. Kiprop (2007) acknowledged that student leaders participated in enforcing school rules. On a likert scale, the mean response was 3.6 which means that majority of the respondents were not agreeing to the statements in the questionnaire. The deviation from the mean was 1.4 meaning that the responses were clustered around the mean response. The average mean of 3.6 and standard deviation of 1.4 indicated that there was a high variation in the responses from the respondents with regard to student councils' involvement in decision making and students' discipline.

A Chi square test for independence between student councils' involvement in the implementation of school rules and student's discipline was conducted. Student councils' involvement in implementation of rules was categorized into those schools that involve students in implementing rules and those schools that do not involve students in implementing school rules. This was tabulated against students' level of discipline that was categorized into high indiscipline cases and low indiscipline cases. Table 3 shows how student level of discipline was evaluated against student council involvement in implementing school rules.

Table 3: Chi square test for independence between student councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and student's discipline

		Students discipline High indiscipline cases	Low indiscipline cases	Chi-square (p value)
Implementation of school rules	Students not involved in the implementation of school rules	102	1	
	Students involved in the implementation of school rules	5	26	101.781 (0.000)

A school where a student council is not involved in implementing school rules was characterized by high levels of indiscipline than those that involved students in implementing school rules. Result findings indicated that, there were high indiscipline cases when student council was not involved in implementing school rules as indicated by 102 respondents as compared to 5 respondents who indicated that student councils are involved in implementing school rules. Further, student indiscipline cases were low when student council was involved in implementing school rules as indicated by 26 respondents as compared to only 1 who indicated that students are not involved in implementing school rules. The study findings were statistically significant

supported by a chi square of (λ =101.781, p=0.000). These findings therefore imply that involving student council in implementing school rules influences students' discipline.

5.0 Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary of the Study

The main objective was to establish the influence of student councils' involvement in implementation of school rules and policies among students on their discipline in public secondary schools in Kathonzweni Sub-County. Chi square test for independence results (λ=101.781, p=0.000) indicated that schools where a student council is not involved in implementing school rules was characterized by high levels of indiscipline than those that involved students in implementing school rules. The study findings were statistically significant. These findings therefore imply that involving student council in implementing school rules influences students' discipline.

5.2 Conclusions

From the results, it can was concluded that involving student council in implementing school rules influences students' discipline. They are involved in ensuring that school rules are implemented effectively.

5.3 Recommendations for the study

It is recommended that student council be involved in implementing school rules and policies. This will ensure that school rules and policies are implemented effectively.

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Appendix I: Map of Kathonweni Sub County

Makueni County:Gini Coefficient by Ward

Location of Makueni County in Kenya

Legend

County Boundary

Gini Coefficient

- 0.60 - 0.72
- 0.48 - 0.59
- 0.36 - 0.47
- 0.24 - 0.35
- 0.11 - 0.23

0   15   30   60 Kilometers