

**PARTICIPATION OF STUDENT COUNCILS IN ENHANCING EFFECTIVE
MANAGEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

School management is the exercise of power and authority to achieve set educational goals. In secondary schools, the students play a crucial role through the student leaders in complementing the school administration to enhance effective management. However following persistent student unrest in secondary schools in Kenya the Ministry of Education (MOE) reformed the student leadership from prefects who are appointed by teachers to student councils that are democratically elected by students. The study was conducted in Nyeri County of Kenya. It adopted a casual-comparative research design. The study was conducted in 24 boys and girls public boarding secondary schools that were identified using purposive sampling. The target population was 10,387 subjects that comprised of members of the student council, teachers, students and deputy principals. Using a purposive sampling technique 192 members of the student council was sampled to participate in the study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select 144 Form Three students in public boarding secondary schools to participate in the study. Using a purposive sampling technique 24 Form Three class teacher and 24 deputy principals were sampled to participate in the study. To ascertain reliability the instruments were pilot tested in two non co-educational public boarding secondary schools in Kirinyaga County. The reliability coefficient was estimated using Cronbach coefficient alpha. A coefficient value of 0.865 and was obtained from all research instruments. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 for Windows. Hypotheses were tested using t-test and multiple regression (r^2) statistics at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level. The study established that the student councils enhance effective management of non co-educational secondary schools in coordinating student activities

Key words: Management, student council, coordination, student activities

INTRODUCTION

Management ensures that the standards set in an organization for acquisition of raw materials, production process and dispensing of finished products is sustained (Drucker, 2008). Education management ensures that the human, financial and physical resources of a school are utilized for the realization of defined goals (Wehrich, Cannice, Koontz, 2008). The goals of education are designed to provide learners with relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes (Tableman, 2004). To realize these goals, education stakeholders ensures that there is effective planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling of both physical and human resources (Hoy & Miskel, 2001).

The management of secondary school is the responsibility of stakeholders (Black & Walsh, 2009). In Kenya education stakeholders include the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Board of Management (BOM), the school administration, Parent Association (PA), teaching and support staff, and student leaders (Republic of Kenya, 1999). The role of the stake holders' responsibility is to ensure that the curriculum, finances, human resources and the physical facilities are well managed in a school (Republic of Kenya, 2015). The school management then ensures that the internal management structure undertakes the necessary planning, implementation accompanied by a thorough monitoring and evaluation process to ensure that the ultimate goal of quality education for the children is realized (Wango, 2009). The school management also makes maximum benefit of the feedback they receive from the monitoring and evaluation process to fill gaps found for continuous improvement of the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2001). That implies that all stake holders are critical in enhancing the effectiveness of every institution.

The recognition of student leaders as critical stake holders is founded on their specific engagement, assignment and delegation of duties geared towards the effectiveness of the school management (Wango, 2009). The specific engagement of the student leaders' raises the self esteem enhances dissemination of ideals of diligence, fairness, peace and harmony to the students who form the fabric of a good society in the future (Kamuri, 2014). Student leadership therefore is an invaluable asset to the management of educational institutions (Stokes & Turnbull, 2008). Effective student leadership in secondary school management therefore is engaged in planning, organizing, directing and controlling students to conform to the school daily program (Gatabu, 2011). Internationally two models of student leadership are practiced in secondary school are the prefects who are appointed by teachers and student councils who are elected by students (Kelsey, 2011). However, irrespective of the model of student leadership, the expectation is to get a leader who could guide, direct and help the other students to reap the best of the affective, cognitive and psychomotor knowledge a school can offer.

In Kenya the MOE designed the student council as a representative structure through which students would partners with other stakeholders to enhance effective school management (KESHA/UNICEF, 2010). The student councils were expected to assist teachers to manage student activities, participate in the school decision making and student conflict resolution processes, and enhance effective communication between the students and the school administration and in the process effective school management, by eradicating student unrests and enhance individual academic achievement and realization of educational goals (UNICEF, 2010). All secondary schools were given a two years grace period from 2009 by MOE to implement the student councils policy. The student councils were implemented with enthusiasm in secondary schools that by the beginning of 2012, 77% of schools had transited from the prefects' student leadership to student councils leadership (Tirop, 2012). In Kenya the MOE designed the student council as a representative structure through which students would partners with other stakeholders to enhance effective school management (KESHA/UNICEF, 2010). The student councils were expected to assist teachers to manage student activities, participate in the school decision making and student conflict resolution processes, and enhance effective communication between the students and the school administration and in the process effective school management, by eradicating student unrests and enhance individual academic achievement and realization of educational goals (UNICEF, 2010). All secondary schools were given a two years grace period from 2009 by MOE to implement the student councils policy. The student councils were implemented with enthusiasm in secondary schools that by the beginning of 2012, 77% of schools had transited from the prefects' student leadership to student councils leadership (Tirop, 2012).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Effective student leadership is an indicator of dynamics school management that is noticed when leaders' participate in their respective roles to enhance institutional management. In addition effective student leadership is valuable for the improvement of schooling and protection of the rights of young people in general. Participation of students in schools leadership incubates the leadership necessary for transformation of the society and world communities at large. The introduction of student councils in secondary student leadership was expected to revolutionaries the management of secondary schools by making it effective in coordinating management of student activities. Besides, the introduction of elected student councils was expected to eradicate student unrests in public secondary schools. However the rising cases of student unrests in secondary schools in Kenya had put into question the effectiveness of student councils in enhancing school

management. This study therefore sought to determine whether participation of student councils enhance effective management in public boarding secondary schools.

OBJECTIVE

To determine whether participation of student councils in the co-ordination of students' activities enhance management of non co-educational public boarding secondary schools

HYPOTHESES

H₀1: There is no statistical significant difference between student councils participation in coordination of student activities and effective management of non co-educational public boarding secondary schools.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study has provided empirical information on the participation of student councils in enhancing effective management of boys' and girls' public boarding secondary schools. The information got from this study is useful to policy makers in the MOE interested in knowledge on participation of student councils in enhancing effective management of boys' and girls' public boarding secondary schools. The findings of this study also provide deep information to field officers in the MOE, principals and deputy principals, teachers and student of secondary schools on effective participation of student councils in the management of public boarding secondary schools.

LITRATURE REVIEW

The reforms in education management engineered to embrace more participation of students in the leadership of secondary schools student intended to replace the autocratic prefects system with an open, democratic and responsible student councils started in earnest in 1920's in USA (Cunningham, 2000). According to Dockrell (2004) student councils have been established in British, European and Asian secondary schools and are also fast spreading in Africa. The republic of Ireland has a union of secondary student councils formed in 2001, while Norway the law requires that all schools to set up student councils elected by the students (Critchley, 2003). In Kenya student councils were introduced in secondary schools in 2009 to help the MOE arrest the menace of student unrests (KESSHA (2010).

Studies by Freiberg and Stein (1999) established that giving students responsibilities and opportunities to lead other students contribute to the management of their school builds trust and confidence in young people. Delegating responsibilities to students signal that their roles are valuable, and transmit the expectation that they are capable of solving problem that contribute to promotion of a positive school management climate (Blum, 2005). Indeed according to Leithwood *et al.*, (2004), effective student council participation in school management contributes about 25% of the entire school leadership that makes it critical to the success of a school.

In Kenya student councils were expected to enhance secondary schools management by coordinating student activities, participating in school decision making, participating in conflict resolution between students and teachers and enhancing communication between the student and the school administration to assist eradicate student unrests in public boarding secondary schools (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

Student activities refer to what student do in school which includes and not limiting to sports, cleaning, preps, dishing meals, entertainment, washing, clubs and welfare support. Participation of student council in the management of student activities has been unique in many parts of the world (Farrant, 2004). In USA the Raising Student Voice and Participation is an organization that processes and frameworks for the development and implementation of student-led action projects such as environmental protection (NASSP, 2013). In Britain, the student councils have helped to improve the image of secondary school by leading other students to participate in social, cultural and co-curricular activities such as sporting competitions in their schools and local communities (Botti, 2010). In Singapore the student councils serve as welfare bodies responsible for organizing important events in the school such as prize and speech day (Fletcher, 2005).

According to KESSHA (2010) student councils should assist in preparation, organization and facilitation of school functions like sports days and prize giving and speech days which are instruments of conserving school culture (Ramsey, 1999). The student councils should also supervise programmed academic activities left behind by teachers and ensure they are done as expected (Tikoko & Kiprop, 2011). Further, the class secretaries should control noise and create orderliness in the classrooms during preps for the benefit of all (Otieno, 2010). The entertainment secretary ensures that halls are ready and equipment is working before the scheduled programs start to avoid wastage of time (Njozela, 2016). In the proposed study the researcher will establish the effectiveness of student council in enhancing the management of student activities in boys and girls public boarding secondary schools.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the conceptual framework, student leadership that present the student councils is the independent variable while participation in the management of public boarding secondary schools is the dependant variable.

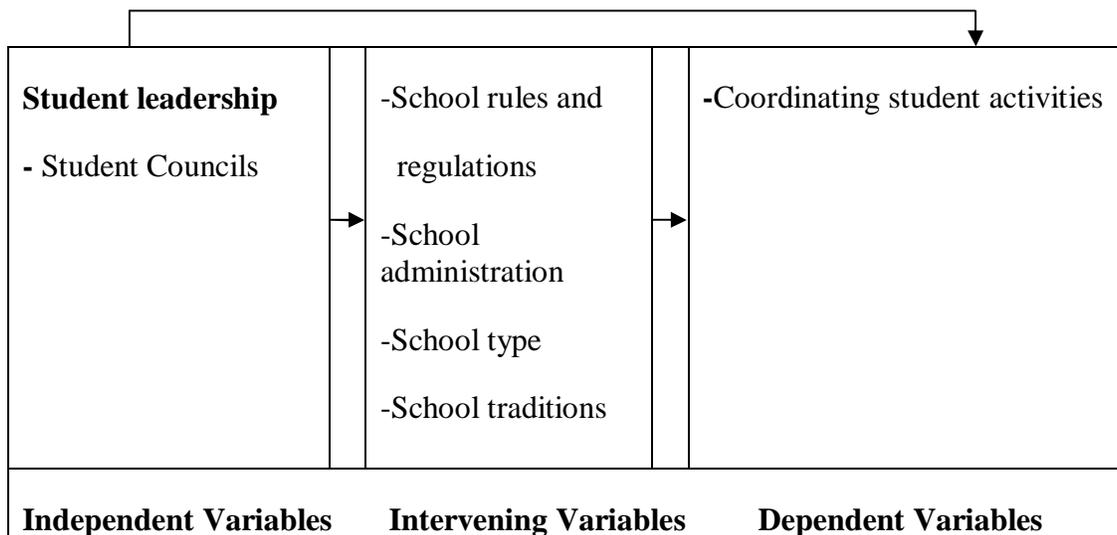


Figure1. Conceptual framework on participation of student councils in enhancing effective management of secondary school.

The conceptual framework, Figure 1 indicates that the student councils participate in enhancing effective school management. The participation of students' councils in the management of secondary schools is moderated by school rules and regulations and the school administration and the school type which is either boys or girls as they participate in coordination of student activities, decision making, student conflict resolution and communicating with the students and the school administration.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used the causal-comparative research design because the researcher wanted to compare the relationships between variables and determining the current status of the phenomenon under study without manipulation of variables. In that regard the comparison between student councils in boys' and girls' public boarding secondary schools in the coordination of student activities. The casual-comparative research design was chosen for this study because it allowed comparison of the current status of the participation of student councils in enhancing effective management in non co-educational public boarding secondary schools.

SAMPLING PROCEDURES AND SAMPLES SIZE

Sampling is the process of selecting a representative group from the target population to participate in the study to be used in generalization of results (Mugenda & Mugenda (1999). The sample size of 370 was acceptable for a population of 10,387 as per the recommendations of Kathuri and Pals (1993) shown in Appendix N. This study comprised of 384 respondents that included 192 student council members, 144 Form three students drawn from a sampling frame of 10387 students from all the 71 non co-educational secondary schools in Nyeri County. Further, 24 Form three class teachers and 24 Deputy Principals from the sampled schools were also included in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

According to Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012) Analyzing data in qualitative study involves analyzing, synthesizing and reducing the information obtained from various sources into a coherent description of what has been observed and discovered for the purpose of making deductions and inferences. To realize that, the researcher recorded, coded and organized the data for analyses using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Computations were made for the data using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 for windows. The descriptive statistics used were frequencies and percentages. Statistical tests of significance were determined using t-test to test hypotheses at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance and regression.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An objective one was formulated in the study that sought to determine whether there is any significant difference in the participation of student councils in coordination of students' activities to enhancing management of boys' and girls' public boarding secondary schools. The responses were coded from the questionnaire as 5-Strongly Agree (SA), 4- Agree (A), 3- U- Undecided, 2- Disagree and 1- Strongly Disagree. The responses were computed in percentage. Table 6 presents percentage description of respondents'.

The objective one of the study required responses on the participation of student council in the coordination of student activities to enhance the management public boys and girls boarding

secondary schools. The data of the respondents on each item of the respective questionnaires was extracted and presented in Tables 1.

Table 1

Participation of Student Councils in Coordination of Student Activities

Student Activities	SA	A	U	D	SD
Organize student in dining hall	51	39	4	5	1
Organize cleaning of dining hall	58	36	1	2	3
Organize cleaning of houses	50	36	4	7	3
Coordinate cleaning of classrooms	36	31	3	7	3
Organize house competitions	32	29	7	20	11
Report student discipline	30	45	12	9	4
Coordinate cleaning of compound	50	42	3	4	1
Team work with students	38	37	8	8	9
Plan programs for students	14	28	17	25	16
Investigate violation of rules	29	39	12	10	9
Motivate students	28	34	14	14	10
Maintain students discipline	44	43	6	6	3
Mentors students	27	41	14	10	8
Present students issues to admin	56	31	3	4	5
Inducts new students	30	34	11	11	4
Total %	39%	38%	8%	9%	7%

Information in Table 1 shows the response of the respondents on the selected items of student activities. In the response, 39% of the participants in the study Strongly Agreed, 38% Agreed, 8% were Undecided, 9% Disagreed while 7% Strongly Disagreed that student council participate in the coordination of students activities in public boarding schools. A total of 175 Form Three students participated in the study. Their responses were analyzed and their percentages were presented in Table 2

Table 2

Respondent Consensus on Student Council on Participation in Coordination of Student Activities

Students Activities	SA		A		U		D		SD	
	Girls	Boys								
Organize student in dining hall	50	52	40	38	6	4	5	5	1	1
Organize cleaning of dining hall	58	59	37	35	1	1	1	3	3	3
Organize cleaning of houses	55	57	31	32	5	5	6	7	3	4
Coordinate cleaning of classrooms	53	46	35	37	3	6	6	7	1	5
Organize House competitions	24	40	30	28	7	8	25	15	14	9
Report student discipline	37	22	45	46	10	16	7	10	1	6
Coordinate cleaning of compound	53	47	43	42	3	3	1	7	1	2
Team work with students	39	37	35	39	9	9	8	9	11	7

Plan programs for students	12	15	29	27	19	16	26	24	13	19
Investigate Violation of rules	34	25	37	42	10	15	11	10	8	9
Motivate students	31	25	30	37	13	13	14	13	12	10
Maintain students discipline	46	39	43	42	6	6	3	8	1	5
Mentors students	28	27	37	44	16	12	9	11	9	6
Present students issues to admin	59	51	32	31	3	4	2	6	5	8
Inducts new students	31	29	30	38	13	10	13	8	13	15
Total Percentage	41%	42%	36%	34%	08%	07%	09%	10%	06%	07%

Results in Table 2 present comparison of the respondents' consensus on student council participation coordination of student activities in boys and the girls public boarding secondary schools. The results show percentage response between the boys and the girls does not show a lot of difference. That implies that the participation of student councils in boys and girls in coordination of student activities to enhance school management is almost the same. As result comparison of students' means and standard deviations of the respective items on coordination of student activities in schools was determined and the results were presented in Table 3.

Table 2

Student Council Members Participation in Coordination of Student Activities

Student Activities	Boys			Girls		
	N	Mean	St-Dev	N	Mean	St-Dev
Organize student in dining hall	81	1.46	0.77	84	1.53	0.84
Organize cleaning of dining hall	81	1.41	0.78	84	1.42	0.76
Organize cleaning of houses	82	2.14	1.14	84	2.70	1.35
Coordinate cleaning of classrooms	82	1.63	0.83	83	1.46	0.77
Organize House competitions	82	2.00	1.26	84	1.44	0.70
Report student discipline	81	2.04	0.97	81	1.69	0.83
Coordinate cleaning of compound	82	1.46	0.65	82	1.37	0.48
Team work with students	81	1.59	0.77	84	1.76	1.00
Plan academic programs for students	81	1.35	0.81	81	1.34	0.65
Investigate Violation of rules	82	1.39	0.78	80	2.10	1.20
Motivate students	80	1.92	1.05	83	2.09	1.17
Maintain students discipline	81	1.48	0.61	84	1.47	0.68
Mentors students	81	1.96	1.00	82	2.08	1.15
Present students issues to admin	79	2.64	1.33	83	2.98	1.19
Inducts new students	81	2.13	1.37	83	2.33	1.36
Mean		1.77	0.94		1.85	0.94

The results in Table 3 show that 82 boys who are members of the student council participated in the study and obtained a mean of 1.78 with a Standard Deviation of 0.94. The 84 girls who were members of the student council participated in the study. They obtained a mean of 1.85 and a standard deviation of 0.94. Further analysis necessitated the establishment of difference in

percentages of responses on coordination of student activities between boys and girls. The results are presented in table 4.

Table 4

Percentage Responses on Coordination of Students Activities in Boys and Girls Public Boarding Secondary Schools

Consensus	Percentage %	%Percentage
	Boys	Girls
Strongly Agree	28	27
Agree	35	40
Undecided	8	8
Disagree	15	14
Strongly disagree	12	11
Total	100	100

Data in Table 4 reveals that majority of the students, 63 % boys and 67% girls agreed that student councils effectively participate in the management of student activities in public boarding secondary schools. It was also revealed those 8% boys and 8 % girls' undecided while 15% of the boys and 14 % of the girls disagreed. Only 12% of the boy and 11% of the girls who participated in the study strongly disagreed that the student councils effectively participate in the coordination of student activities in public boarding secondary schools drawn from six sub counties in Nyeri County. In order to establish whether the difference in responses was significant, an independent sample t test was computed and the results were presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Independent Sample t-test for Student Council Participation in the coordination of student Activities

Variable	N	Mean	St. Dev	t	P
Management of student activities	M 155	4.539	1.69	0.282	0.610
	F 151	3.734	1.92		

Results in the Table 5 reveal that the mean of boys was 4.53 and that of girls was 3.73 with a standard deviation of 1.69 and 1.92 respectively. It is also deduced that the difference between means of the boys and girls was not statistically significant, $t(1, 354) = 0.282$, $P = 0.61$. Therefore hypothesis one which stated that there is no statistical significant difference in the effectiveness of student council participation in management of student activities between boys' and girls' public boarding secondary schools is accepted at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. This implies that majority of both boys and girls who participated in this study agreed that the student councils effectively participated in the management of student activities includes but not limited to sports, cleaning, preps, dishing meals, entertainment, washing, clubs and welfare support. In this study, it was established that student councils have help to improve the image of their school by leading other students to participate in social, cultural and co-curricular activities such as sporting competitions in their schools and local communities.

In USA, Truss (2006) established that student councils help the school management to achieve standards with the help students due to strong influence, service and inclusion in management of student. Studies conducted in South Africa on the role of the student council linked to the day-to-day running of the school to student leaders who have authority to exercise leadership in supervision, discipline of students, and organization of student activities (Carr, 2005).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher made the following conclusions. The participation of student councils in coordination of student activities enhances effective management of non co-educational public boarding secondary schools in Nyeri County. The study established that student councils are effective in coordinating student activities in boarding, dining hall, sports, cleaning, entertainment, clubs and welfare which are critical in the effective management of non co-educational public boarding secondary school. However, student councils perform poorly in planning programs for students in both boys and girls public boarding secondary schools.

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