

**INFLUENCE OF STUDENT COUNCILS' INVOLVEMENT IN
POLICY FORMULATION ON MANAGEMENT OF
DISCIPLINE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
MANDERA SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, MANDERA COUNTY,
KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Statement of the Problem: Cases of student indiscipline have been on the rise in most secondary schools in Mandera South Sub-County. This surge in indiscipline is manifesting through notable strikes, bullying, arson, vandalism of school property, general refusal to follow school rules and regulations, and an increase in alcoholism among students.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of the study was to assess the influence of student councils' involvement in policy formulation on management of discipline in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub- County, Kenya

Methodology: Mixed methodology was applied and concurrent triangulation design. Target population was 245 respondents comprising of 35 principals, 175 Heads of Departments and 35 presidents of student councils. The researcher sampled 10 public secondary schools. Stratified sampling was used. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using linear regression analysis with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

Findings: The study established that cases of students' indiscipline are high. This is attributed to ineffective involvement of student council in key aspects of school management such as policy formulation.

Conclusion: The study concludes that increased involvement of student councils in school policy areas is significantly related to a decrease in the number of reported cases of student indiscipline. Specifically, for every additional policy area where student councils are involved, cases of indiscipline are expected to decrease by a factor of 1.900. This suggests that student participation in policy-making has a positive impact on student behavior. However, the study also acknowledges that student indiscipline is influenced by a variety of factors, not just policy involvement. Interviews with deputy principals indicate that student councils are often

involved in certain areas like school uniforms and meal planning, but less so in the formulation of school rules and regulations.

Recommendations: The study recommends that school management should enhance involvement of student councils in school policy formulation. They should also design training programmes meant to equip the student council leaders with appropriate leadership skills on ways of addressing student discipline. Equip student councils with the skills needed to effectively participate in policy-making through leadership training programs. It is important to involve other stakeholders like parents, teachers, and administrators in discussions about school policies. Schools to implement a feedback system where students can anonymously report how they feel about school policies.

Keywords: *Student council involvement, students' discipline, policy formulation, public secondary schools.*

INTRODUCTION

Discipline is an important component of students' behavior and without it a school cannot function well towards the achievement of its goals'. In the context of a school system, a disciplined student is one whose behaviours, actions and inactions conform to the predetermined rules and regulations of the school (Ali, Dada, Isiaka & Salmon, 2014). Cognizant of these assertions, Masitsa (2011) posits that students' discipline is widely acknowledged to be essential for creating a positive school climate conducive to sound learning outcomes. Acts of indiscipline among students especially at the secondary school is a universal challenge that is facing every school in all parts of the world. In this context, it is important to re-orient the role of the school governance and identify the forms of leadership actions, behaviours and practices that influence the main purpose of a school's mission, that of enhancing student learning through effective governance of students' discipline. This is achievable by students' councils' involvement in formulation of school policies.

Sound school policy development plays an essential role as a violence prevention and control tool. By anticipating safety problems and actively addressing them, schools increase their ability to avoid or respond to a crisis (CDC, 2018). Cognizant of these assertions, Huddleston (2014) posits that clearly articulated rules and policies, established through students' involvement and implemented fairly, will provide a solid foundation for a comprehensive approach to school safety. In a study conducted in Scotland, Maitles and Duechar (20013) indicated that a comprehensive approach to school safety involves meeting challenges on several fronts. School wide education and involvement of student council in formulating school policies such as diet, school uniform, trip regulations and co-curricular programmes prepare students to take careful action to avoid becoming either perpetrators or victims of violence.

Involvement of students provides essential resources and support. In the course of these activities, teachers and school leaders will face important legal questions that affect many lives (Maitles & Duechar, 2013). These questions centre on issues involving privacy and school records, discipline and due process (including zero tolerance policies), search and seizure, dress codes, security measures and school resource officers and general liability issues (Maitles & Duechar, 2013). These assertions attest to the fact that when appropriate measures are taken by involving students through their council in all these areas, the risk of violence at school or the effects of aftermath of violence will be minimized. McKenna (2016), in a study conducted in Germany, noted that clear and consistent policies, developed proactively by school officials, teachers, and students, will establish student expectations and promote a stable school setting, leading to a safe educational environment. At the same time, the philosophical outlook of any youth violence prevention effort is important to the results that are anticipated (McKenna, 2016). In other words, even while developing school policies and meeting legal requirements, schools, students, parents, teachers, and communities may reap what they sow. Policies set the tone of school administration and shape the culture of each classroom and schools. Accordingly, while it is important to focus on the legal implications and issues of school safety efforts, this must be balanced by a strong sense of fairness and concern for the levels of discipline, dignity and integrity of every member of the student council and school community.

However, Pont, Moorman and Nusche (2014) argues that, by involving student council in formulating school rules and regulations, there is minimal excessive attention to wrongdoing and the minutiae of legal requirements, the paperwork, hearings, and compliance which may ultimately detract from the creative effort to build a more peaceful school. Pont et al (2014) further notes that a more secure school will grow from the sense of integrity, fairness, justice and cooperative effort exhibited by school principals, teachers, students and others in positions of leadership. These assertions attest to the fact that student council allows students to learn the essence of following school rules and policies and learn that justice is never about the effort to exact punishment and retribution, but rather that true justice is about working to repair a safe and secure vision for their school and creating healing, restoration, and peace, will build their sense of discipline, values, personal integrity, and accountability to the larger community.

In most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, involving students in the planning and policy development process presents a unique and wonderful teaching moment (Harper, 2003). In the end, policies and law are only guideposts for students' activity and cannot substitute for its basic humanity. In a study conducted in South Africa, Bush (2014) argued that involving

student council in deciding whether there should be a school uniform policy, diet types, co-curricular activities students need to undertake and their planning and school entertainment programmes is flows from the duties placed upon all school governing bodies by statute to ensure that school policies promote good behaviour and discipline amongst the pupil body. Such initiatives of student council's involvement in school policy formulation strongly play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone (Bush (2014). In Kenya, schools are in a sense mini-society with their own rules, norms and values and model a way of life, and are an arena for experiences which last a lifetime. In conjunction with the issue of increasing youth participation, there is need to be a dramatic change in the approach to education (Abwere, 2013).

There is an increasing interest in democratising education and in developing new ways of management based on collaboration and partnership. Abwere (2013) posits that a student council provides opportunity for students to engage in a structured partnership with teachers, parents and school managers in the formulation of regulations which guide the daily operations of their school and thus influence the behaviour of their students. In Mandera South Sub-County, rules exist in every school and function like miniature constitutions or codes of law. She also notes that there are prescriptions, legitimized by teachers, about how to behave in school situations, standards by which behaviour in school is judged to be appropriate, right and desirable, or inappropriate, wrong and forbidden. These rules are often intended to regulate or prevent all kinds of student conduct likely to disrupt activities, cause injury or damage school property, and for such rules to be effective, collaborative approach ought to be adopted in their formulation. However, Wanjiru (2011) has not interrogated how different school policies formulated through student council's involvement have ensured improved discipline.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Student council plays an important role in management of cases of indiscipline in schools. However, in Mandera South Sub- County, many secondary schools having been hit by a wave of indiscipline among students which is escalating rapidly with notable strikes, bullying, arson cases in schools, vandalism of school property, general refusal to follow school rules and regulations as well as increasing alcoholism. An increasing number of secondary school principals and teachers are reporting a wide range of potentially disruptive behaviors in the classrooms and around the schools. A report RoK (2012) shows that close to 49.2% of public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub- County have witnessed cases of students' strikes, violence, bullying and teenage pregnancy. This is in spite of the policies and the various

sessional papers that the Government has set up to mitigate the scourge of indiscipline. Despite these statistics, few empirical studies have interrogated the extent to which involvement of student councils in policy formulation influences management of discipline in public secondary schools; hence the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was guided by the following objectives;

- i. To assess the levels of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub- County.
- ii. To determine the influence of students' councils' involvement in policy formulation on management of discipline in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub- County;

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by the Group Decision-Making developed by Vroom and Yetton (in Caldwell, 2002). The model states that it is imperative that leaders develop a series of responses which range from autocratic to consultative styles and thus apply the leadership style which is most favourable to the decision situation. The model shows how leaders should approach group related decisions. According to the model, there is no leadership style which is appropriate for all situations. The normative model uses decision effectiveness to evaluate the effectiveness of an administrator. The model suggests that administrators should have the skills to apply five decision-making styles in a continuum from highly autocratic to highly participative.

Thus, in this study, elaboration on the applicability of normative theory of group decision theory to the intended study on student councils' involvement in school management. The study was also guided the school management theory which was postulated by Kuo (2009). This theory addresses how managers and administrators relate to their organizations in the knowledge of its goals, the implementation of effective means to get the goals accomplished and how to motivate employees to perform to the highest standard. The rationale of using this theory in this study is that to enhance effective school management of students' discipline in public secondary schools, students' council ought to be involved in the management system.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mixed methodology was applied and concurrent triangulation design. Target population was 245 respondents comprising 35 principals, 175 Heads of Departments (HoDs) and 35 Presidents of Student Councils (PSC). The researcher sampled 10 public secondary schools.

Stratified sampling was used to create 5 different strata based on the number of zones in Mandera South Sub- County. From each zone, two principals, 11 heads of departments and 2 presidents of student council were selected using simple random sampling. This sampling procedure realized a sample of 10 principals, 55 HoDs and 10 PSC. Questionnaires were used to collect data from HoDs and PSC whereas interviews were used to collect data from principals. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using linear regression analysis with the help of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents the findings of the study based on the objective. It also outlines the methods of presentation of the study findings and discussions.

RESPONSE RATES

In this study, 175 questionnaires were administered to Heads of Departments whereas 35 questionnaires were administered to the Presidents of Students' Council. In addition, 160 HoDs and 32 PSC filled and returned their questionnaires. At the same time, 30 Deputy Principals were interviewed. This yielded response rates shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rates

| Respondents | Sampled Respondents | Those Who Participated | Achieved Return Rate (%) |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Deputy Principals | 35 | 30 | 85.7 |
| Heads of Departments | 175 | 160 | 91.4 |
| Presidents of Students' Council | 35 | 32 | 91.4 |
| Total | 245 | 222 | 90.6 |

Source: Field Data (2023)

From Table 1, Deputy Principals registered a response rate of 85.7%, Heads of Departments registered as well as the Presidents of Students' Council registered a response rate of 91.4%. This yielded an average response rate of 90.6%. This confirmed the findings of Creswell (2014) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for generalization of the outcomes to the target population.

Levels of Discipline among Students in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to assess the levels of students' discipline in public secondary schools in Mandera South Sub- County. Data were collected from Heads of Departments and Presidents of Students' Councils and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Views of Heads of Departments and Presidents of Student Councils on the Levels of Discipline in Public Secondary Schools

| Test Items | RESP. | Ratings | | | | |
|---|-------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | | SA % | A % | U % | D % | SD % |
| Students in secondary schools register low performance | HoDs | 51.5 | 10.5 | 7.5 | 20.5 | 10.0 |
| | PSC | 53.5 | 9.5 | 5.5 | 19.5 | 12.0 |
| Disciplinary cases in secondary schools are high | HoDs | 52.5 | 8.5 | 9.5 | 21.5 | 8.0 |
| | PSC | 50.5 | 6.5 | 8.0 | 15.5 | 19.5 |
| Students rarely finish their work in time | HoDs | 65.0 | 8.5 | 5.5 | 13.5 | 7.5 |
| | PSC | 48.5 | 11.5 | 4.5 | 30.0 | 5.5 |
| The number of students suspended or expelled have decreased | HoDs | 75.0 | 11.5 | 3.5 | 4.5 | 5.5 |
| | PSC | 52.5 | 12.5 | 9.5 | 19.5 | 6.0 |
| The number of strikes in secondary schools have increased | HoDs | 54.5 | 7.5 | 9.0 | 22.5 | 6.5 |
| | PSC | 50.5 | 10.0 | 8.5 | 23.5 | 7.5 |
| Students do not adhere to school rules and regulations | HoDs | 63.5 | 12.5 | 4.5 | 10.5 | 9.0 |
| | PSC | 45.5 | 9.5 | 5.5 | 30.0 | 9.5 |
| Students rarely manifest improved levels of hard work | HoDs | 50.5 | 7.5 | 3.5 | 31.5 | 7.0 |
| | PSC | 43.5 | 9.5 | 4.5 | 34.0 | 8.5 |
| There are many reported cases of students' absenteeism in secondary schools | HoDs | 52.5 | 7.5 | 3.5 | 29.5 | 7.0 |
| | PSC | 49.5 | 10.5 | 6.5 | 27.5 | 6.0 |
| There are many cases of teenage pregnancy amongst students in secondary schools | HoDs | 51.5 | 12.0 | 7.5 | 22.5 | 6.5 |
| | PSC | 54.5 | 13.5 | 3.5 | 14.0 | 14.5 |
| Students and their colleagues are often violent towards their peers | HoDs | 57.5 | 12.5 | 4.5 | 20.5 | 5.0 |
| | PSC | 40.5 | 7.5 | 9.5 | 31.0 | 11.5 |

Key: RESP-Respondents; HoDs-Heads of Departments; PSC-Presidents of Students' Council

Table 2 shows that majority, 82 (51.5%HoDs) and 17(53.5%PSC) strongly agreed with the view that students in secondary schools register low performance as did 17(10.5%HoDs) and 3(9.5%PSC) who agreed. However, only a paltry 12(7.5%) of the Heads of Departments as well as 2(5.5%) of Presidents of Students' Council were undecided, 33(20.5%) of Heads of Departments as did 6(19.5%) of the Presidents of Students' Council disagreed whereas 16(10.0%) of Heads of Departments and 4(12.0%) of the Presidents of Students' Council strongly disagreed. Majority, 84(52.5%HoDs) and 16(50.5%PSC) strongly agreed with the view that disciplinary cases in secondary schools are high. At the same time, 14(8.5%) of the HoDs as did 2(6.5%) of the PSC agreed, 15(9.5%) of HoDs and 3(8.0%) of the PSC were undecided, 35(21.5%) of HoDs and 5(15.5%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 13(8.0%) of the HoDs as did 7(19.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. The study found that majority, 104(65.0%HoDs) and 16(48.5%PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that students rarely finish their work in time as did 14(8.5%) of the HoDs and 4(11.5%) of the PSC agreed, 9(5.5%) of HoDs and 2(4.5%) of the PSC were undecided, 22(13.5%) of HoDs and

10(30.0%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 12(7.5%) of the HoDs as did 2(5.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. Majority, 120(75.0% HoDs) and 17(52.5% PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that the number of students suspended or expelled have decreased. A paltry 19(11.5%) of the HoDs and 4(12.5%) of the PSC agreed, 6(3.5%) of the HoDs and 3(9.5%) of PSC were undecided, 7(4.5%) of HoDs and 6(19.5%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 9(5.5%) of the HoDs as did 2(6.0%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. Majority, 87(54.5% HoDs) and 16(50.5% PSC) strongly agreed with the view that the number of strikes in secondary schools have increased, 12(7.5%) of the HoDs and 3(10.0%) of the PSC agreed, 15(9.0%) of the HoDs and 3(8.5%) of PSC were undecided, 36(22.5%) of HoDs and 8(23.5%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 11(6.5%) of the HoDs as did 3(7.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the assertions of Kauchak (2011) that infractions in most secondary schools include assault, arson, fighting, theft and vandalism, destruction of school stores, administration blocks, libraries, harassment, riots, rape and loss of lives.

These findings also corroborate the assertions of Ramani (2012) that, although, the Ministry of Education made a move to curb the destructive tendencies in schools by enacting the Children's Act, 2001 which provides that a child should be entitled to protection from physical and psychological abuse by any person, the unrest in schools is still being reported in large numbers. Despite these contradictions among Heads of departments, students' councils and deputy principals, cases of students' strikes and riots have been on the rise. Majority, 102(63.5% HoDs) and 15(45.5% PSC) strongly agreed with the view that students do not adhere to school rules and regulations. 20(12.5%) of the HoDs and 3(9.5%) of the PSC agreed, 7(4.5%) of the HoDs and 2(5.5%) of PSC were undecided, 17(10.5%) of HoDs and 10(30.0%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 15(9.0%) of the HoDs as did 3(9.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed.

Majority, 81(50.5% HoDs) and 14(43.5% PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that students rarely manifest improved levels of hard work. 12(7.5%) of the HoDs and 3(9.5%) of the PSC agreed, 6(3.5%) of the HoDs and 2(4.5%) of PSC were undecided, 51(31.5%) of HoDs and 11(34.0%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 11(7.0%) of the HoDs as did 3(8.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. Most, 84(52.5% HoDs) and 16(49.5% PSC) strongly agreed with the view that there are many reported cases of absenteeism in secondary schools, 12(7.5%) of the HoDs and 4(10.5%) of the PSC agreed, 6(3.5%) of the HoDs and 2(6.5%) of PSC were undecided, 47(29.5%) of HoDs and 9(27.5%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 11(7.0%) of the HoDs as did 2(6.0%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. In addition, 83(51.5% HoDs) and 18(54.5% PSC) strongly agreed with the view that there are many cases of teenage pregnancy

amongst students in secondary schools, 19(12.0%) of the HoDs and 5(13.5%) of the PSC agreed, 12(7.5%) of the HoDs and 1(3.5%) of PSC were undecided, 7(22.5%) of HoDs and 5(14.0%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 11(6.5%) of the HoDs as did 5(14.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. Majority, 92(57.5% HoDs) and 13(40.5% PSC) strongly agreed with the view that students and their colleagues are often violent towards their peers. 20(12.5%) of the HoDs and 3(7.5%) of the PSC agreed, 7(4.5%) of the HoDs and 3(9.5%) of PSC were undecided, 33(20.5%) of HoDs and 10(31.0%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 8(5.0%) of the HoDs as did 4(11.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. In summary, these findings indicate that indiscipline has become a serious issue in public secondary schools. Many students have manifested incidences of indiscipline in one way or another and have thus become a national concern to education stakeholders. Cases of students' destructive tendencies in schools are on the rise which subject others to physical and psychological abuse. In other words, cases of students' indiscipline in secondary schools are still being reported in large numbers.

Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the deputy principals also indicated that performance of students has gone down. On further probing, Deputy Principal, DP1, noted:

In my school, academic performance of students has gone down in the recent past. Compared with the national aggregate, my students have manifested low academic performance

However, on their part, the deputy principals responded on the contrary by stating that secondary schools witness cases of indiscipline, but in the magnitude being implied. Deputy Principal, DP2, observed:

Inasmuch as there have cases of students' indiscipline, the levels are still not very high to warrant high reportage

Deputy principals concurred with the view that, in many cases, students do not finish their class assignments and have had to undergo numerous forms of punishment. Deputy Principal, DP3, admitted:

In my secondary school, cases of students not finishing their class assignments have been on the rise. We handle several cases of students failing to undertake teachers' assignments on a weekly basis. Sometimes, we send them home to bring their parents or guardians

However, on the question of strikes, deputy principals refuted claims that the number of strikes has increased in secondary schools. Deputy Principal, DP4, noted:

In my secondary school, there are few cases of indiscipline. We have not witnessed cases of student riots and school arsons.

On adherence to school rules and regulations, deputy principals also expressed similar views.

Deputy Principal, DP5, observed:

Failure to follow school rules and regulations as the most common form of indiscipline many students are punished of

However, they refuted claims that students rarely manifest improved levels of hard work.

Deputy Principal, DP6, indicated:

Our students work hard and strive to register impressive grades in internal and national examinations

On absenteeism, they also responded in favour of the view that there are many reported cases of absenteeism in secondary schools. Deputy Principal, DP7, noted:

Cases of students' absenteeism from school or coming to school late are matters we have to deal with every time. Some students even absent themselves from school for almost a week for no apparent reason

Deputy principals with majority echoing similar sentiments. They indicated that students have manifested several cases of indiscipline. Deputy Principal, DP8, admitted:

In my secondary school, we have had to handle disciplinary cases about students' violence against each other. In most cases, students engage in fights amongst themselves or sometimes bully their junior colleagues

These qualitative results affirm the fact that students' indiscipline has become a serious issue in public secondary schools. Many students have manifested incidences of indiscipline in one way or another and have thus become a national concern to education stakeholders. Cases of students' destructive tendencies in schools are on the rise which subject others to physical and psychological abuse. In other words, cases of students' indiscipline in secondary schools are still being reported in large numbers.

Student Councils' Involvement in School Policy Formulation and Management of Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools

The study sought to examine the extent to which student councils are involved in policy formulation and how such involvement influences management of students' discipline in public secondary schools. Descriptive data were collected from Heads of Departments and Presidents of Students' Councils and results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Views of Heads of Departments and Presidents of Student Councils on Student Councils' Involvement in School Policy Formulation

| Test Items | RESP. | Ratings | | | | |
|---|-------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| | | SA % | A % | U % | D % | SD % |
| Student councils in secondary schools rarely participate in designing school uniforms | HoDs | 75.0 | 11.5 | 4.5 | 7.5 | 1.5 |
| | PSC | 87.5 | 7.5 | 1.1 | 3.1 | 0.8 |
| Student councils in secondary schools are rarely involved in planning and choosing school diets | HoDs | 65.0 | 10.5 | 3.0 | 11.5 | 10.0 |
| | PSC | 75.0 | 17.1 | 1.2 | 3.2 | 3.5 |
| Students' councils are rarely involved in formulation of school rules and regulations | HoDs | 75.0 | 10.5 | 2.5 | 9.0 | 3.5 |
| | PSC | 62.5 | 19.8 | 2.8 | 10.2 | 4.7 |
| The number of trips students in secondary schools participate in rarely depend on the student councils | HoDs | 88.5 | 2.5 | 1.5 | 4.5 | 3.0 |
| | PSC | 62.5 | 9.9 | 3.7 | 13.7 | 10.2 |
| Student councils organise co-curricular activities and encourages participation in the same | HoDs | 65.5 | 11.5 | 4.0 | 13.0 | 6.0 |
| | PSC | 75.0 | 10.9 | 3.6 | 15.9 | 4.6 |
| Student councils plan tournaments amongst students in their schools and other schools | HoDs | 70.0 | 15.5 | 4.5 | 7.0 | 3.5 |
| | PSC | 62.5 | 19.8 | 2.8 | 10.2 | 4.7 |
| Student councils rarely decide on the number of co-curricular activities the students should take part in | HoDs | 65.0 | 20.5 | 3.5 | 7.5 | 3.5 |
| | PSC | 55.5 | 19.5 | 4.5 | 13.5 | 7.0 |

Key: RESP-Respondents; HoDs-Heads of Departments; PSC-Presidents of Students' Council

Table 3 shows that majority 120(75.0%HoDs) and 28(87.5%PSC) strongly agreed with the view that student councils in secondary schools rarely participate in designing school uniforms as did 19(11.5%HoDs) and 2(7.5%PSC) who agreed. However, only a paltry 7(4.5%) of the HoDs as well as 1(1.1%) of PSC were undecided, 12(7.5%) of HoDs as did 1(3.1%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 2(1.5%) of HoDs and 1(0.8%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted in Scotland in which Maitles and Duechar (2006) established that involvement of student council in formulating school policies such as school uniform prepare students to take careful action to avoid becoming either perpetrators or victims of violence. This indicates that policy formulation revolving around school uniforms is a key and sensitive issue whose design, color and shape require involvement of education and school stakeholders including student councils to avert incidences of indiscipline.

Majority, 104(65.0%HoDs) and 24(75.0%PSC), strongly agreed with the view that student councils in secondary schools are rarely involved in planning and choosing school diets. At the same time, 176(10.5%) of the HoDs as did 6(17.1%) of the PSC agreed. However, 5(3.0%) of HoDs and 1(1.2%) of the PSC were undecided, 18(11.5%) of HoDs and 1(3.2%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 16(10.0%) of the HoDs as did 1(3.5%) of the PSC strongly disagreed.

These findings further lend credence to the assertions of Maitles and Duechar (2006) that involvement of student council in formulating school policies such as diet and feeding programmes and schedules, equally, prepare students to take careful action to avoid becoming either perpetrators or victims of violence. This implies that diets for students are a critical component of any well-functioning secondary school. Failure to adhere to nutrition standards and methods of preparation above board may lead to serious cases of violence, strikes and disruptions amongst students.

The study also revealed that majority 120(75.0%HoDs) and 20(62.5%PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that student councils are rarely involved in formulation of school rules and regulations as did 17(10.5%) of the HoDs and 6(19.8%) of the PSC agreed, 4(2.5%) of HoDs and 1(2.8%) of the PSC were undecided, 14(9.0%) of HoDs and 3(10.2%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 6(3.5%) of the HoDs as did 2(4.7%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. This however, contradicts the assertions of Pont et al (2008) that, by involving student council in formulating school rules and regulations, there is minimal excessive attention to wrongdoing and the minutiae of legal requirements, the paperwork, hearings, and compliance which may ultimately detract from the creative effort to build a more peaceful school. Such an approach provides an environment of less concern with blame, punishment and legal wrangling. These findings point to the fact that school rules and regulations are the epicentre of reducing cases of indiscipline. Despite their uninvolved in design such rules and regulations, it is incumbent upon secondary schools to involve the student councils from the point of formulation to implementation.

Majority 142(88.5%HoDs) and 20(62.5%PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that the number of trips students in secondary schools participate in rarely depend on the student councils. A paltry 4(2.5%) of the HoDs and 3(9.9%) of the PSC agreed. At the same time, 2(1.5%) of the HoDs and 1(3.7%) of PSC were undecided, 7(4.5%) of HoDs and 26(13.7%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 5(3.0%) of the HoDs as did 3(10.2%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. These findings lend credence to the assertions of Maitles and Duechar (2006) that involvement of student council in formulating school policies such as trip regulations also prepare students to take careful action to avoid becoming either perpetrators or victims of violence. Most, 105(65.5%HoDs) and 24(75.0%PSC) strongly agreed with the view that student councils organise co-curricular activities and encourages participation in the same. 18(11.5%) of the HoDs and 4(10.9%) of the PSC agreed. At the same time, 6(4.0%) of the HoDs and 2(3.6%) of PSC were undecided, 21(13.0%) of HoDs and 5(15.9%) of the PSC

disagreed whereas 10(6.0%) of the HoDs as did 2(4.6%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. Majority 112(70.0%HoDs) and 20(62.5%PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that student councils plan tournaments amongst students in their schools and other schools. 25(15.5%) of the HoDs and 4(9.8%) of the PSC agreed. At the same time, 7(4.5%) of the HoDs and 1(2.8%) of PSC were undecided, 11(7.0%) of HoDs and 3(10.2%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 6(3.5%) of the HoDs as did 2(4.7%) of the PSC strongly disagreed. Majority 104(65.0%HoDs) and 18(55.5%PSC) of the respondents strongly agreed with the view that student councils rarely decide on the number of co-curricular activities the students should take part in. 33(20.5%) of the HoDs and 6(19.5%) of the PSC agreed. At the same time, 6(3.5%) of the HoDs and 2(4.5%) of PSC were undecided, 12(7.5%) of HoDs and 4(13.5%) of the PSC disagreed whereas 6(3.5%) of the HoDs as did 2(7.0%) of the PSC strongly disagreed.

These findings lend credence to the findings of a study conducted in South Africa in which Bush (2007) argued that involving student council in deciding on the types and number of co-curricular activities students need to undertake and their planning and school entertainment programmes is flows from the duties placed upon all school governing bodies by statute to ensure that school policies promote good behaviour and discipline amongst the pupil body. According to Bush (2007), such initiatives of student council’s involvement in school policy formulation strongly play a valuable role in contributing to the ethos of a school and setting an appropriate tone.

These findings thus point to the fact that co-curricular activities and other tournaments form part and parcel of the student learning process and thus effective planning by involving student councils is key to their success. To further ascertain the extent to which student councils’ involvement in policy formulation influences students’ discipline in public secondary schools, data were collected on the number of policy areas where student councils are involved and the number of cases of students’ indiscipline. Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Number of Policy Areas where Student Councils are Involved and the Number of Reported Cases of Students’ Indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools

| Number of Policy Areas where Student Councils are Involved | Number of Reported Cases of Students’ Indiscipline |
|---|---|
| 1 | 10 |
| 2 | 7 |
| 3 | 5 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 2 |

Source: Field Data (2023)

Table 4 indicates that secondary schools which involve student councils in many aspects of policy formulation register cases of indiscipline compared to their counterparts which rarely involve student councils in various aspects of school policy formulation. In other words, secondary schools which involve student councils in school uniform policy formulation, diet selection, setting of school rules and regulations and planning co-curricular activities tend to have fewer cases of students' indiscipline and vice versa.

Inferential Analysis

To further verify the relationship, the results in Table 4 were subjected to linear regression analysis and results are shown in Table 5

Table 5: Relationship Between Number of Policy Areas where Student Councils are Involved and the Number of Cases of Students' Indiscipline in Public Secondary Schools

| Model | Unstandardized | | Standardized | t | Sig. |
|---|----------------|------------|--------------|--------|------|
| | Coefficients | | Coefficients | | |
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 (Constant) | 11.300 | .635 | | 17.793 | .000 |
| Number of School Policy Areas where Student Councils are Involved | -1.900 | .191 | -.985 | -9.922 | .002 |

a. Dependent Variable: Number of Reported Cases of Students' Indiscipline

Source: SPSS Generated (2023)

Table 5 shows linear regression analysis which generated a linear model of the form; **Number of Reported Cases of Students' Indiscipline = 11.300 – 1.900Number of School Policy Areas where Student Councils are Involved**. These results from the linear regression equation indicates that the coefficient for number of students' indiscipline cases attributed to the number of school policy areas where student councils are involved is -1.900. This implies that for every increase in the number of secondary school policy areas where student councils are involved, the number of reported cases of students' indiscipline is expected to decrease by a factor of 1.900 (negative coefficient). The value 11.300 indicates that students' indiscipline is not only dependent on involvement of student councils in school policy formulation, but a multiplicity of inherent factors such as home dynamics and personal upbringing. In other words, inadequate involvement of students in school policy formulation is just, but, an additional factor to already existing cases of students' indiscipline. Similarly, from the results in Table 5, the p-value, 0.002 is less than 0.05, that is, a low p-value ($0.002 < 0.05$) further indicates that there is significant influence, though negative, of involvement of student councils in school policy formulation on students' discipline in secondary schools.

Thematic Analysis

During the interviews, the deputy principals refuted the claims that student councils are rarely consulted in designing school uniforms. On further probing, Deputy Principal, DP9, noted:

In my school, student council is ever involved in matters concerning school uniforms to be adopted or changed. For example, in sports, my student council is often tasked to collect views of fellow students on sports' attire, color, shape and design which interest them.

This indicates that policy formulation revolving around school uniforms is a key and sensitive issue whose design, color and shape require involvement of education and school stakeholders including student councils to avert incidences of indiscipline. Many deputy principals, however, stated that, in most cases, students are involved in choosing school diet and meal preparations. Deputy Principal, DP10, observed:

Despite the fact that every school has a caterer or cateress who is in charge of school meals and diets, students are often represented through the dining hall prefect and other prefects on duty who must ascertain the quality of meals prepared before being served to the students.

Despite the contradicting views from heads of departments, student and principals, diets for students are a critical component of any well-functioning secondary school. Deputy principals concurred with the view that, in many cases, students find rules and regulations already formulated when they join form one and are contained in the admission letters. Deputy Principal, DP11, observed:

Student councils rarely take part in formulation of rules and regulations, but are part of the implementers by ensuring that none of their colleagues flout any

These findings point to the fact that school rules and regulations are the epicentre of reducing cases of indiscipline. Despite their uninvolvement in design such rules and regulations, it is incumbent upon secondary schools to involve the student councils from the point of formulation to implementation. The deputy principals who noted that many school trips are organized by the student councils themselves before forwarding their budgets to school management. Deputy Principal, DP12, observed:

Many trips, be it academic symposiums or co-curricular, are planned by the students through their student councils.

The deputy principals also responded in favor of the view that organization of co-curricular activities is mostly tasked to the student councils. Principal, DP13, reported:

Student councils are often in charge of planning and organizing any co-curricular activity which students need to participate in. This is coordinated through schools' game captains

These mixed findings further point to the fact that co-curricular activities and other tournaments form part and parcel of the student learning process and thus effective planning by involving student councils is key to their success. This further affirms that, for effective school management, different school policies should be formulated by involving student council's involvement to ensure effective management of students' discipline.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Drawing from the above findings, it is evident that cases of students' indiscipline are high. The study also found that student councils are rarely involved effectively in such activities as policy formulation despite the fact that secondary schools which involve student councils in many aspects of policy formulation register fewer cases of indiscipline compared to their counterparts which rarely involve student councils in school policy formulation.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that increased involvement of student councils in school policy areas is significantly related to a decrease in the number of reported cases of student indiscipline. Specifically, for every additional policy area where student councils are involved, cases of indiscipline are expected to decrease by a factor of 1.900. This suggests that student participation in policy-making has a positive impact on student behavior. However, the study also acknowledges that student indiscipline is influenced by a variety of factors, not just policy involvement. Interviews with deputy principals indicate that student councils are often involved in certain areas like school uniforms and meal planning, but less so in the formulation of school rules and regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that school management should enhance involvement of student councils in school policy formulation. This can include areas beyond uniforms and meal planning, such as academic policies, safety guidelines, and discipline procedures. They should also design training programmes meant to equip the student council leaders with appropriate leadership skills on ways of addressing student discipline. Equip student councils with the skills needed to effectively participate in policy-making through leadership training programs. This can help them make more informed contributions. Conduct regular evaluations to measure the impact of student council involvement on student discipline and other aspects of school life.

This can help in fine-tuning policies for better outcomes. Involve other stakeholders like parents, teachers, and administrators in discussions about school policies. A more holistic approach could yield better results in maintaining discipline. Implement a feedback system where students can anonymously report how they feel about school policies. This can offer another way to gauge the effectiveness of involving student councils in policy-making.

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