Impact of Student Leaders' Participation in School Peer Counseling Programs on Learners' Discipline in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

This paper focuses on student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs as a valuable strategy of student leaders' integration in school governance. Intensive involvement of student leaders in school peer counseling programs is a worthwhile link between the

students' body, teachers and the school administration. It is an opportunity for the student leaders to interact and share with the students' body as they air their views and concerns on academic and discipline issues in the school. Utilization of the information gathered from peer counseling forums by the school administrators in decision making translates to impressive learners' discipline and academic performance. The study was carried out in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County, Kenya to investigate the impact of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools. The study was guided by two objectives; to establish the status of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs and establish the impact on learners' discipline. The study embraced a descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were employed to get the Sample size. Data were collected using questionnaires for the students and teachers and interview schedules for the deputy principals, principals, Board of Management (BoM) chairpersons, and directors of private schools. Further, relevant documents were scrutinized for triangulation of the information provided by the respondents. The data collected was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21. The statistics were tabulated and subjected to regression analysis using ANOVA and coefficient models.

The study established student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs as a golden chance for student leaders to interact with fellow learners' as they express views and suggestions on school routines, rules, and regulations. Action on gathered information created a peaceful school environment suitable for mentoring learners .The result was improved learners' discipline. In contrast, student leaders who did not actively and openly interact with other learners missed an opportunity to gather information on learners' views and hence did not identify real issues affecting learners for the school administration action. The study concluded that participation of student leaders in school peer counseling was significantly higher at (p) 0.003 than student leaders not participating in school peer counseling programs (p) 0.047. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The study recommended that school principals and other school administrators should organize frequent school peer counseling programs and encourage student leaders and other learners to air their views.

Keywords: Participation, peer counseling, students, student leaders, learners' discipline

1. Introduction

The term "school governance" refers to the process by which school's leaders coordinate, direct, guide, and regulate the various initiatives of students and staff to achieve the school's stated goals (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). Schools Boards of Management (BOM), Parents Associations (PA), principals, deputy principals, teachers, support personnel, and student leaders are the major stakeholders involved in both public and private secondary school governance. Students' participation in the administration of the school refers to a thorough, organized framework of their involvement in the day-to-day management of both public and private secondary schools (Sushila, 2004).

There is increasing research evidence that student participation in school governance including their participation in school peer counseling programs and their ability to make and

carry out decisions about school day to day operations has favorable effects on their behavior, motivation, development, and academic performance (McGowan, 2010; Mitra &Serriere, 2012).

Kiprop (2012) argued students' and teachers' interactions with each other and with the administration, as well as the administration's treatment of students, are central to any discussion of students' school discipline. According to the author, it is challenging to build a shared set of values since the school administration's ideology, which is reflected in the cognitive and behavioral policy, may occasionally conflict with the beliefs of both the student body and the school administration. Sushila (2004) suggests involving students at multiple decision-making stages to solve this issue.

In addition, Santrock (2010) found that adolescent happiness was higher when teens interacted with their peers rather than adults. The researchers of this study contend that secondary school students in both public and private settings can greatly benefit from peer counseling as part of student leaders' involvement in school governance. Furthermore, peers are a crucial channel in addressing rising discipline concerns among students in both public and private secondary schools, as they help foster fellow students, share opinions and information, lead in assignments, and provide support to other students. Melgosa (2001) adds more support to the idea that children's and teenagers' group socialization is shaped more by peers than by parents. To feel accepted, the teenagers make efforts to conform to established norms. They seek affirmation from others in order to feel like a valued member of society. To effectively affect students' academic, social, and emotional behavior, schools should implement a robust peer counseling program.

Globally, several countries have adopted the aspect of engagement of students in school leadership with mixed results (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). Consequently, high school reform initiatives, particularly in the United States of America (USA), actively campaigned for schools' classical democratic tenets and offered students, parents, teachers, school management and members of society a more significant role in school administration as well as the decision-making practice. This has resulted in the heightened engagement of students in school governance (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). Many secondary schools in Kenya's public and private sectors today follow the practice of selecting students from the upper classes as prefects, in contrast to the norm in Britain and other Commonwealth countries. According to Njozela (2010), students at Melbourne High School in Australia demonstrated this type of student-led engagement in their leadership roles. It pioneered the concept of a Student Representative Council (SRC), through which students elect leaders to represent their interests at school board meetings and other forums. Learners' self-control will naturally improve as a result of this increased agency in matters directly affecting their time at school known as Teacher Collective Learning (TCL), this student-led approach to school administration is popular in Hong Kong. Student learning is maximized when they are actively engaged and serve as role models for their peers (Olsen & Burges, 2006). Many age ranges in Scotland have benefited from student involvement in school administration. For the most part, students would rather learn in settings where they can collaborate with their peers and even take charge of some of the activities themselves. Children in Scotland and the

University of Edinburgh (2010) found that student councils helped re-motivate bored and disaffected students, leading to a more positive shift in school climate and even an uptick in academic performance (Duignan, 2006). In Brazil, public schools frequently employ student participation for decision-making (Ghanem, 2012). In Basic Education Schools (BES), parent and student councils have been developed to assist in making crucial educational choices in both public and private secondary schools. Gremio Estudantil, a method used in secondary schools, gives students a formal voice in administration and governance. This is similar to the student councils found in British schools, where student leaders sit on the council and are frequently contacted by the administration prior to important school decisions. The Gremio Estudantil is the students' primary channel for influencing faculty and administration (Ghanem, 2012). As students' ideas were taken into account, they became more self-controlled and did better in school.

Article 12, of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) entails policies and guidelines that encourage the participation of children at all levels (Lansdown, 2001; United Nations, 2009). Most UNCRC-signing nations have passed laws guaranteeing young people a voice in public policy debates. Some have created diagrams depicting the many perspectives of their students (United Nations, 2009). The European countries of Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, France, and Northern Ireland are among those mentioned (Hannam, 1998; Alderson, 2000). Student councils are established in Finnish schools (Shatilova, 2014) so that students can have a voice in school-wide decisions.

Despite universal support for student leaders' engagement in school governance, research undertaken in France, the United States, Spain, and the United Kingdom (UK) has regularly highlighted associated issues of decreasing degrees and forms of cruelty and indiscipline in schools (Kexar & Eckel, 2000). Therefore, it is important to establish a broad student leadership framework in which student leaders from all levels of education are implicated in school-based management in all aspects affecting the learners, especially in enforcing students' discipline with the intent of electronic media, print media, and the internet. Active student involvement in school leadership is a long-standing practice and policy in Africa. According to Duma (2015), the new democratic government in South Africa passed the South African Schools Act (SASA) in 1996, mandating that all public schools in the country have functioning School Governing Bodies (SGBs) democratically elected from among secondary school students, teachers, and parents. Researchers in South Africa have confirmed what many teachers and parents already knew: student discipline remains a major challenge (Du Preez & Roux, 2010). This is due to the participation of responsible student leaders in school administration. According to the Education Code of Conduct's user's guide directory in Namibia, students have a voice in school administration (Government of Namibia, 1993). Democratically elected school boards, made up of parents and teachers, represent students in both public and private schools. For example, Tanzania was one of the first African countries to allow students to have a voice in educational policymaking. The National Policy on School Councils (NPSC) details the composition and responsibilities of the councils present in each school. Indimuli (2012) argues in favor of this position, noting that the role of the prefect has evolved from that of a master to that of a bridge of communication amongst the student body

and the school administration. To that end, the Student Council is seen as a means by which students can have a voice in school administration, leading to the early identification of problems and, ultimately, better disciplinary practices among students. Both public and non-public secondary institutions are covered by the national policy. There is, however, no information comparing the benefits of student leaders' engagement in school governance on student discipline in public and private secondary schools. Kenyan education policy deliberations have highlighted student leadership positions in schools dating back to at least 1992, when the country approved a new democratic governance system in the aftermath of the establishment of multi-party politics. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association (KSSHA), and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MOEST) launched the Kenya Secondary School Student Council (KSSSC) Program in 2009. (The Republic of Kenya, 2010). The structure encouraged both public and private high school student leaders to participate. The KSSHA formally approved the student council that had been elected the previous year during the first-ever national student leaders' convention, held in Nairobi in 2009. KSSHA planned to progressively develop student councils with leaders elected directly by the students as a replacement for the ideal system, which most students perceived as the administration spying on them. While the function of the prefect changed from master to a medium of communication between school administration and students, Indimuli (2012) contends that the shift of student leadership from the prefect to a more genuine representation provided students a voice in their leadership. The 2013 Basic Education Act (BEA) also includes opportunities for student involvement in school management. While there has been a substantial advance toward student engagement in public and private secondary school administrative procedures in Kenya, practice and reporting on the ground vary, and as a result, incidences of indiscipline are still visible in the majority of Kenyan secondary schools. This study suggests that student leaders' engaging in school peer counseling programs in public and private secondary schools has a significant influence on learners' discipline.

2. Method

2.1 Purpose of the Study

This research sought to determine how student leaders' involvement in school peer counseling programs affected the behavior of secondary school students in both public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-County.

2.2 Objective of the Study

The study's goals were as follows:

i) To ascertain the extent of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos sub-County.

ii) To evaluate the impact of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-County.

2.3 Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was being tested in the study:

H0₁: Student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs does not significantly influence learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos Sub County

2.4 Review of Related Literature

In the 1970s, the government of Kenya mandated the inclusion of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools. During this time, when urbanization and education were undermining traditional family bonds, the services were implemented (Nasibi, 2003). Due to rising issues including drug and alcohol addiction, immoral behavior, exam cheating, high school dropout rates, and student unrest, the government has recently increased funding for guidance and counseling programs in secondary schools (Mathenge, 2008; Opondo, 2008). The G & C handbook recommends that secondary school principals facilitate student voice through forums such as open-floor conversations, formal meetings, peer counselor sessions, and suggestion boxes (Republic of Kenya, 2001). However, the vast majority of students in secondary schools, the scarcity of professional teacher counselors, the intensity of instructors' workloads, and the complexity of the socioeconomic and technological issues result to large groups of guidance and counseling sessions. For secondary schools to overcome this obstacle, peer counselors are trained to work alongside the school counselors. Under adult supervision, students who have undergone peer counseling training are able to provide their fellow students with a listening ear, moral and emotional support, and information about available options for action (Deutsch & Swartz, 2002). Due to the ever-changing nature of education and the myriad challenges faced by many public and private secondary school students, peer counseling has emerged as an essential and vital component of today's secondary schools. Since there is typically just one teacher counselor for every 1,000 students in public high schools, the need for student-to-student counseling services is undeniable. Peer counselors' influence on students' behavior in both public and private secondary schools has not been substantially questioned, despite the fact that researchers, teachers, and other relevant parties have learned the significance of peers as the key socialization agents among teens. In peer counseling, members of a group who share a common interest are enlisted to help one another by putting their skills to good use. Without the help of experts or higher-ups in the organization or institution, they may be able to pacify, comfort, befriend, mediate, and reconcile disgruntled parties (Arudo, 2006). Based on the hypothesis that people of similar characteristics and age have a greater ability to regulate the actions of others around them, the study suggests that student discipline can be enhanced through peer counseling sessions at school (Betty, Kiprop, & Bomett, 2011).

To effectively affect students' academic, social, and emotional behavior, schools should implement a robust peer counseling program. In elementary school or indeed the first few years of high school, peer-led, school-based interventions have the potential to reach a significant number of young people at a time when risk behaviors are either or not yet beginning or are just being explored, according to Ebreo (2002). Backing up this claim is

research by Baginsky (2000), which found that with the help of peer counselors, students' behavior improves across the board in secondary school. Allen (2010) claims that student managers run the homework club and organize activities including one-on-one mentorship, peer mentoring, and reading assistance groups. These authors claim that teacher counselors' time is limited by their heavy teaching workloads and other tasks in the school setting and that student leaders and other students should be included in the administration of peer counseling programs to make up for this. However, the evaluated studies did not quantify the prevalence of peer counselors, the extent to which student leaders engage in peer counseling, its effect on students' disciplinary practices, or the degree to which public and private schools differ in these respects. The goal of this study was to examine the learners' disciplinary practices of public and private secondary schools in Machakos Sub-county, Kenya, in terms of the extent of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling sessions.

3. Research Methodology

In this research, a wide variety of survey methods were employed. There were a total of 44 public secondary schools and 14 private secondary schools in the target demographic. Second, the entire secondary school population in the Machakos sub county was included in the survey: 300,029 students in public secondary schools and 185,651 in private. All of the public and private secondary school teachers (a total of 1943) participated in the research. In addition, the research focused on 14 private secondary school deputy principals, 14 private secondary school principals, and 14 private secondary school BOM chairs. The research used basic random selection to select a group of students to participate, and probability sampling to select teachers from the selected institution. All 22 schools' BOM chairs/directors, school heads, and deputy principals were identified through a census survey of their respective school populations. After that, there were a total of 704 individuals present, including 16 BOM chairs (representing public secondary schools), 6 directors (representing private institutions), 22 principals, 22 deputy principals, 110 teachers and 528 students representing both public and private secondary schools.

Teachers and students completed surveys, administrators, BOM chairs, and directors of private schools were scheduled for interviews, and relevant documents were analyzed to gather data. Data from the students and teachers were gathered using personally given questionnaires.

Through comparison studies on the topic, analysis by specialists in comparative education, and questionnaire testing, the research tools' content validity was established. Cronbach's alpha and SPSS V21 were used to determine the instruments' reliability after the experimental research was completed. The alpha index number, which can be between 0 and 1, indicated how consistent the measured traits were. A higher score indicated a more professionally made Likert scale. The scholar would infer that the instruments were reliable enough for the study if their alpha values were higher than the relevance level (0.7).

4. Research Findings

The study's first objective was to establish the status of student leaders' participation in

school peer counseling programs on the degree of discipline among students in secondary school. The study evaluated the extent of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs, as well as the influence of this participation on learners' disciplinary ranking, for better comprehension.

4.1 Analysis of Students' and Teachers' Views on the Extent of Student Leaders' Participation in School Peer Counseling Programs

The students and teachers were asked to respond to statements related to student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs. They were requested to indicate their responses as; EP=Extensive participation, MP=Moderate participation and NP=No participation. The students and teachers views on their level of agreement with statements regarding student leaders' participation in school governance were summarized in Table 1

Table 1. Students and teachers views on the extent of student Leaders' Participation in school peer counseling programmers

	Extent of Participation	Students				Teachers			
		Public		Private		Public		Private	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
The school administration controls peer counseling sessions	No participation	61	16.1	14	9.7	0	0	4	14.3
	Moderate participation	77	20.8	42	29.2	8	11.1	14	50.0
	Extensive participation	237	63.1	88	61.1	64	88.9	10	35.7
Students leaders control peer counseling sessions	No participation	89	23.7	14	9.7	16	22.2	5	17.8
	Moderate participation	99	26.3	38	26.4	46	63.9	8	28.6
	Extensive participation	188	50.0	92	63.9	10	13.9	15	53.6
Students leaders freely share their concerns without fear of victimization	No participation	98	26.1	46	31.9	24	33.3	4	14.3
	Moderate participation	232	61.7	54	37.5	36	50.0	9	32.1
	Extensive participation	46	12.2	44	30.6	12	16.7	15	53.6
All students free to share their concerns	No participation	250	66.5	10	6.9	46	63.9	3	10.7
	Moderate participation	78	20.7	38	26.4	18	25	11	39.3
	Extensive participation	48	12.8	96	66.7	8	11.1	14	50.0

Statistics presented Table 1 shows that 63.1 percent and 20.8 percent of learners at public secondary schools said that administrators had substantial and limited control over the

school's peer counseling programs, while 16.1 percent claimed that administrators had no control over the program. Similarly, 61.1 percent and 29.2 percent and 9.7 percent of those in private schools said that the school administration had substantial, little and no control respectively over the peer counseling programs.

Another 50.0 percent of secondary school students in public institutions said that student leaders had considerable influence over school peer counseling sessions, while 26.3 percent thought that they had moderate authority over them, and 23.7 percent indicated that they had no control at all. In line with this, student leaders dominated peer counseling sessions, according to 63.9 percent, 26.4 percent and 9.7 percent of students in private secondary schools had considerable, moderate and no control respectively on school peer counseling programs. Further, 12.2 percent of secondary students in private schools and 61.7 percent of those in public schools said that student leaders disclosed their issues during peer counseling sessions at their schools, while 26.1 percent said they were not involved. Similar percentages (30.6 percent) of teenagers in public schools and somewhat higher percentages (37.5 percent) of secondary school students attending private institutions agreed that student leaders felt at ease addressing delicate topics and concerns during these informal group sessions.

Finally, only 12.8 percent of secondary school students in private institutions and 20 percent of those in public ones reported that all students were honest about their problems during peer counseling sessions. Six percent reported no free student involvement, whereas sixty-seven percent of public secondary school students and twenty-four percent of private secondary school students, respectively, said that all students openly shared their problems during peer counseling sessions.

The results suggest that both public and private secondary schools welcomed student leaders into peer counseling programs, with the latter showing a greater involvement rate. These findings corroborate those of a research by Santrock (2010), which found that teenage happiness was higher when teens spent time with their friends and communicated more often with their peers than with adults. Similarly, a greater proportion of students in private secondary schools than in public secondary schools reported being involved in peer counseling programs and freely communicating issues there. The findings appear to provide an explanation for why private schools often report more well-behaved students than public secondary schools. Students are able to voice their opinions, sentiments, and worries in a safe space thanks to peer counseling programs at schools. Teachers and the school administration can address new areas of concern and implement effective solutions thanks to the data made available.

In public secondary schools, Table 4.1 indicates that 88.9 percent and 63.9 percent of teachers, figure out school management has substantial influence over peer counseling programs. Similarly, among teachers at private secondary schools, 35.7 percent believed that school administration extensively controlled peer counseling programs, 50.0 percent believed that school administration moderately controlled peer counseling programs, and 14.3 percent indicated that school administration had no control over peer counseling programs. Furthermore, 13.9 percent and 63.9 percent of public secondary school instructors stated that

student leaders extensively and somewhat managed peer counseling programs in secondary schools, with 22.2 percent suggesting no student leaders' influence on peer counseling programs. Similarly, 53.6 percent of instructors at private secondary schools said that student leaders had substantial influence over peer counseling programs, whereas 28.6 percent held that opinion. Only 17.8 percent of teachers reported that no such programs existed at their schools. Teachers at 16.7 percent of public secondary schools and 50.0 percent of private secondary schools said that student leaders readily discussed their issues during peer counseling programs, while 33.3 percent reported no engagement.

Teachers at private secondary schools were split between 53.6 percent believing that student leaders openly discussed their issues during peer counseling programs and 32.1 percent believing the opposite. Finally, just 11.1 percent and 25 percent of instructors in public secondary schools respectively believed that all students intensively and somewhat discussed emerging issues during peer counseling programs, with 63.9 percent reporting students did not freely share their worries during peer counseling. Similarly, in private secondary schools, 50.0 percent and 39.3 percent of instructors said that all students extensively or somewhat communicated their issues during peer counseling programs, while just 10.7 percent indicated that no free student sharing of concerns took place during sessions. Baginsky's (2000) research, which found that peer counseling contributes to a notable improvement in the conduct of secondary school students, was cited by the instructors as supporting the students' claims.

The results indicate that both public and private secondary schools welcomed student leaders to participate in school peer counseling sessions, with private schools showing a greater participation rate than public schools. Similarly, a greater proportion of students at private secondary schools reported participation in peer counseling sessions and freely voicing their worries than students in public secondary schools. Peer counseling sessions give a safe space for students to share their thoughts and feelings with their peers, which may help explain why private schools often have better student discipline than public schools. The private school directors, vice principals, principals, and BOM chairs all agreed with the students' and teachers' points of view during the interviews. Public and private secondary school principals and vice principals were unanimous in their approval of and gratitude for student leaders who participated in school peer counseling sessions. Document analysis showed that most schools provided functional peer counseling sessions, an opinion echoed by BOM chairpersons, private school directors, deputy principals, and principals. Most schools made the calendar of peer counseling sessions available in the minutes of staff meetings, and some even publicly displayed the specific days and hours for these sessions. Guidance and counseling department programming provided more specific information, including session frequency and methods of delivery. All of the replies from BOM chairs were nearly identical to the principals' report, showing that the BOM members heavily relied on the principals as a source of information. Teachers and administrators in both public and private secondary schools benefited from the data available to them since it allowed them to more effectively to address the problems of concern and implement the necessary procedures to improve student discipline.

4.2 Analysis of Students' and Teachers' Views on the Influence of Student Leaders' Participation in school Peer Counseling Programs on Learners Discipline

Investigating how student leaders' attendance at peer counseling meetings at both public and private secondary schools affected students' behavior was important with regard to their involvement in peer counseling sessions. In order to better understand how student leaders' involvement in peer counseling sessions affected their efforts to improve students' behavior, the study asked students, teachers, deputy principals, and principals for their opinions. The replies they provided are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Students, teachers and administrators views on the Influence of students' leaders' participation in Peer counseling programs on learners' discipline

	Students				Teachers				Deputy principals				Principals/Directors			
	Public		Private		Public		Private		Public		Private		Public		Private	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No influence	2	0.5	0	0.0	1	1.3	0	0.0	4	26.7	3	50.0	5	33.3	3	50.0
Low influence	18	4.9	8	5.5	3	4.2	4	14.3	6	40.0	3	50.0	6	40.0	3	50.0
Moderate influence	80	21.2	42	29.2	30	41.7	8	28.6	5	33.3	-	-	4	26.7	-	-
High Influence	276	73.4	94	65.3	38	52.8	16	57.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**376**	**100**	**144**	**100**	**72**	**100**	**28**	**100**	**15**	**100**	**6**	**100**	**15**	**100**	**6**	**100**

Data in Table 2 shows that among students in public secondary schools, 73.4 percent indicated that student leaders' participation in peer counseling sessions had a high influence, 21.2 percent believed it had a moderate influence, 4.9 percent believed it had a low influence, and 0.5 percent believed it had no influence. This is in contrast to the 65.3 percent, 29.2 percent, 5.55 percent, and none of students in private secondary schools who held these views. Also, while 57.1 percent, 28.6 percent, 14.3 percent, and none of teachers in private secondary schools agreed that student leaders' involvement in peer counseling was very influential, influential, less influential, or not influential respectively in improving students' discipline, 52.8 percent, 41.7 percent, 4.2 percent, and 1.3 percent of teachers in public secondary schools reached the same conclusions.

The findings suggest that both public and private secondary schools enthusiastically welcome student leaders in peer counseling programs, with the latter having a greater involvement rate than the former. Students' behavior at private secondary schools improved more as a result of

higher student leaders' involvement than in public secondary schools. These findings corroborated those of a research by Santrock (2010), which found that teenage happiness was higher when teens spent time with their friends and communicated more frequently with their peers than with adults. Melgosa (2001), who argues that children and adolescents are influenced more by their peers than by their parents, confirms that the contact enhances students' discipline. Therefore, as a means of enhancing student discipline, public secondary schools should implement widespread systems of student leaders' engagement in school governance.

Further, data in Table 2 demonstrates that, while 50.0 percent of deputy principals at private secondary schools believe that student leaders' participation in peer counseling sessions has a very significant influence on the efforts to address students' disciplinary issues, 40 percent believe that it has a significant influence, and 33 percent believe that it has a less significant influence. The participation of student leaders in peer counseling sessions, on the other hand, was cited by 50 percent of principals of public secondary schools and 50 percent of those of private secondary schools as being very influential, influential, and less influential, respectively, in achieving better discipline levels among secondary school students. The findings indicate that since more student leaders participate in peer counseling efforts, private secondary schools have better student discipline. In order to improve student behavior in public high schools, student leaders must actively participate in peer counseling programs.

The results suggest that peer counseling played an important role in both public and private secondary schools in addressing and managing situations of student indiscipline. The majority of assistants and administrators in both categories of schools found that having student leaders present during peer counseling sessions improved students' behavior. Both the chairs of the boards of management and the owners of private schools have voiced their support for peer counseling programmes in secondary schools, emphasizing the necessity of providing adequate training for the peer counselors who will be facilitating these initiatives. This study was backed by findings from (Betty, Kiprop &Bomett, 2011) that showed people with similar personalities and ages exerted greater influence on one another. This suggests that in both public and private secondary institutions, peer counseling is a vital conduit for addressing students' behavioral concerns with the school administration.

4.3 Students and Teachers' Views on How the Extent of Participation of Student Leaders in Peer Counseling Programs Influences Learners' Discipline Related Behaviors

The study investigated the extent to which participation of student leaders in peer counseling influenced indicators of discipline including punctuality, lesson attendance, and cleanliness, and accountability, completion of assignments, decent language, decent dressing, positive attitude, progression and mentorship. The results are captured in Table 3.

Table 3. Students and teachers views on influence of student leaders' participation in peer counseling programs on learners' discipline related behaviors

Variable	Measure	Students				Teachers			
		Public		Private		Public		Private	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Punctuality	No influence	15	4.0	31	21.5	0	0	8	28.6
	Moderate influence	106	28.2	38	26.4	30	41.7	4	14.3
	High influence	255	67.8	75	52.1	42	58.3	16	57.1
Lesson attendance	No influence	48	12.8	16	11.1	7	9.7	11	39.3
	Moderate influence	30	8	18	12.5	29	40.3	0	0
	High influence	298	79.3	110	76.4	36	50	17	60.7
Cleanliness	No influence	1	0.3	28	19.4	2	2.8	0	0
	Moderate influence	63	16.8	48	33.3	22	30.6	12	42.9
	High influence	312	83	68	47.2	48	66.7	16	57.1
Accountability	No influence	45	12	9	6.2	13	18.1	0	0
	Moderate influence	95	25.3	55	38.2	28	38.9	9	32.1
	High influence	236	62.8	80	55.6	31	43.1	19	67.9
Completion of assignments	No influence	48	12.8	2	1.4	8	11.1	8	28.6
	Moderate influence	92	24.5	50	34.7	29	40.3	7	25
	High influence	236	62.8	92	63.9	35	48.6	13	46.4
Use of decent language	No influence	45	12	28	19.4	3	4.2	9	32.1
	Moderate influence	98	26.1	57	39.6	31	43.1	7	25
	High influence	233	62	59	41	38	52.8	12	42.9
Decent dressing	No influence	23	6.1	28	19.4	20	27.8	2	7.1
	Moderate influence	83	22.1	57	39.6	22	30.6	14	50
	High influence	270	71.8	59	41	30	41.7	12	42.9
Positive attitude	No influence	33	8.8	30	20.8	14	19.4	0	0
	Moderate influence	74	19.7	48	33.3	23	31.9	13	46.4
	High influence	269	71.5	66	45.8	35	48.6	15	53.6
Progression	No influence	69	18.4	5	3.5	10	13.9	8	28.6
	Moderate influence	98	26.1	43	29.9	26	36.1	12	42.9
	High influence	209	55.6	96	66.7	36	50	8	28.6
Mentorship	No influence	18	4.8	2	1.4	8	11.1	4	14.3
	Moderate influence	99	26.3	6	4.2	13	18.1	15	53.6
	High influence	259	68.9	136	94.4	51	70.8	9	32.1

Statistics presented in Table 3 shows that the learners' disciplinary parameters in this study were significantly affected by student leaders' attendance at school peer counseling sessions in public secondary schools. Eighty-three percent of students reported having a significant influence on the tidiness of their fellow students, while only three percent reported having no influence at all. Teachers shared the students' assessment that the program had a good effect on several aspects of classroom discipline.

Results from the KII survey revealed that student leaders' involvement in peer counseling sessions had a positive impression on student behavior in both public and private secondary schools. The research showed that the influence was greater in private secondary schools, with 18.4 percent of students and 13.9 percent of teachers from public secondary schools reporting progress, while 19.4 percent of students and 19.1 percent of teachers from private secondary schools reported decent dress. This finding is consistent with the research of Bertness, et al. (2016), who argued that student participation in school leadership roles would lead to better school cohesion and efficiency. Additionally, the data showed that teachers in private secondary schools had a stronger opinion regarding the efficacy of student leaders' involvement in peer counseling sessions than those in public schools. This could be explained by the fact that peer election of student leaders at private schools fosters a sense of ownership and accountability for the established customs and practices. Document analysis further supported these conclusions, demonstrating the presence of peer counseling groups in both public and private secondary schools.

4.4 Testing of Hypothesis HO_1

Student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs does not statistically influence learners' discipline. To ascertain if the degree of student leaders' engagement in school peer counseling programs affected school discipline, a nominal logistic regression was used. The study proposed to determine the extent and how student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programmers affects students' adherence to school rules and regulations. To do this, the data was statistically analyzed, taking into consideration the opinions of both students and teachers. Following this investigation, it was discovered that there was a substantial correlation between student behavior and participation of student leaders in school peer counseling programs. The information was shown in Tabular Data 4.

Table 4. Participation of Student Leaders in Peer Counseling Programmes (Students' Perspective)

					No Obs.		520		
					LRchi2 (6)		40.028		
					Prob>chi^2		.000		
					Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)		.080		

School Discipline rating[a]		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Very good	Intercept	-.964	.396	5.938	1	.015			
	Counseling	.036	.078	.218	1	.640	1.037	.891	1.207
	[School Category=1.00]	.106	.273	.151	1	.698	1.112	.651	1.898
	[School Category=2.00]	0[b]	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Good	Intercept	-2.124	.441	23.223	1	.000			
	Counseling	.148	.078	3.607	1	.058	1.160	.995	1.351
	[School Category=1.00]	1.183	.313	14.279	1	.000	3.263	1.767	6.025
	[School Category=2.00]	0[b]	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Fair	Intercept	-2.128	.408	27.202	1	.000			
	Counseling	.185	.071	6.747	1	.009	1.203	1.046	1.383
	[School Category=1.00]	1.426	.291	24.028	1	.000	4.163	2.354	7.364
	[School Category=2.00]	0[b]	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is Poor.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The findings from the research showed that student leaders' participation in school peer counseling sessions did not significantly influence students' perceptions of learners' school discipline (p>0.05). However, comparing students from public and private schools, the results indicated a statistically significant difference between the two groups in their views of school discipline. The Wald 2(1) test revealed that public school students were more likely to rate school discipline as either "Good" or "Fair" than "Poor" (Wald 2(1) = 14.279, p0.05 and

Wald 2(1) = 24.028, p<0.05 respectively). The Nagelkerke test also demonstrated that the fitted model was an 8.0% increase in fit over the null model (χ^2 (6, N = 520) = 40.028, p.05).

Table 5. Model accuracy for student's leaders' participation in peer counseling programmes (Students' Perspective)

Observed	Predicted				
	Very good	**Good**	**Fair**	**Poor**	**Percent Correct**
Very good	0	0	23	68	0.0%
Good	0	0	53	44	0.0%
Fair	0	0	76	61	55.5%
Poor	0	0	65	130	66.7%
Overall Percentage	**0.0%**	**0.0%**	**41.7%**	**58.3%**	**39.6%**

This study explored the influence of student leaders' participation in peer counseling sessions on school discipline. Data was collected from a variety of schools and nominal logistic regression was used to analyze the results. The model predicted an overall "Fair" ranking for school discipline 55.5 percent of the time and the model's prediction that students had "Poor" discipline was correct 66.7 percent of the time. However, the overall accuracy of the model was only 39.6 percent.

Table 6. Participation of Student Leaders in Peer Counseling Programmes (Teachers' Perspective)

					No Obs.		100			
					LRchi2 (6)		11.195			
					Prob>chi^2		.083			
					Pseudo R^2 (Nagelkerke)		.113			
School Discipline rating[a]		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)		
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Very good	Intercept	-.477	1.174	.165	1	.684				
	Peer Counselling	.751	.336	4.998	1	.025	2.120	1.097	4.095	
	[School Category=0]	-1.006	.878	1.314	1	.252	.366	.065	2.042	
	[School Category=1]	0[b]	.	.	0	.	.	.	.	
Good	Intercept	-.908	1.242	.535	1	.465				
	Peer Counselling	.760	.354	4.609	1	.032	2.139	1.068	4.282	
	[School Category=0]	-.770	.915	.708	1	.400	.463	.077	2.783	

	[School Category=1]	0[b]	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Fair	Intercept	-.177	1.137	.024	1	.877			
	Peer Counselling	.716	.325	4.854	1	.028	2.046	1.082	3.866
	[School Category=0]	-1.117	.862	1.677	1	.195	.327	.060	1.774
	[School Category=1]	0[b]	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is Poor.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

The log-likelihood test results [χ2(6, N = 100) = 11.195, p=.083] and the Nagelkerke test showed that the model's fit was only slightly better than the null hypothesis 11.3 percent better—than the null model. School type and disciplinary actions did not have a statistically significant link (p>0.05). However, there was a discernible influence of student leaders' attendance at peer counseling sessions on classroom management. When student leaders participated in peer counseling sessions, both public and private universities experienced an improvement in discipline. The log-odd that a school has "Very Good" discipline (compared to "Poor" discipline) was found to increase by 0.751 units for every unit increase in student leader engagement in peer counseling sessions (b =.751, SE=.336, Wald=4.998, p=0.025). This would lead to a 2.120 times higher likelihood of being rated as "Very Good" [EXP (B) = 2.120, 95 percent CI (1.097, 4.095)]. Similar to this, it was shown that for every unit increase in the level of student leaders' engagement in peer counseling sessions, the log-odd that a school had "Fair" discipline (as opposed to "Poor" discipline) increased by 0.716 units (b =.716, SE=.325, Wald=4.854, p=0.028). This would lead to a 2.046 times higher likelihood of being classified as "Fair" [EXP (B) = 2.046, 95 percent CI (1.068, 4.282)]. Thus, it can be concluded that schools with a higher score on the amount of student leader engagement in peer counseling sessions have a higher chance of being rated as "Very Good or Fair" than those with a lower level of involvement.

Table 7. Model Accuracy for Student's Leaders' Participation in Peer Counseling Programmes (Teachers' Perspective)

Observed	Predicted				
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	Percent Correct
Very good	0	0	23	5	0.0%
Good	0	0	18	4	0.0%
Fair	0	0	26	6	81.2%
Poor	0	0	10	8	44.4%
Overall Percentage	0.0%	0.0%	77.0%	23.0%	34.0%

The model was able to estimate school discipline rankings within the "Fair" category with 81.2 percent accuracy and within the "Poor" category with 44.4 percent. When taking the entire model into consideration, the accuracy rate was 34 percent.

5. Discussions

Public and private secondary schools often overlook evidence suggesting that student leaders' involvement in peer counseling sessions has no statistically significant effect on students' behavior management. Students in both public and private secondary schools (75.3 percent and 65.3 percent respectively) and teachers in both public and private secondary schools (52.8 percent and 57.1 percent respectively) agreed that student leaders' participation in school peer counseling sessions had a significant influence on learners' discipline. What is more, just 26.7 percent of public secondary school teachers reported having a great deal of influence, where as 50 percent of their private secondary school counterparts said so. Meanwhile, 33.3 percent of students at public secondary schools and 50 percent of students at private secondary schools reported significant influence.

The research outcome established that the presence of student leaders in school peer counseling sessions was seen as a positive by students in public secondary schools, leading to an increase in learners' discipline level manifested in learners' punctuality to school activities, decent dressing, and use of decent language among other discipline parameters. Yet most public secondary school educators, including teachers, assistant principals, and administrators, reported relatively modest influence. As a result, it appeared that students were not trusted to make decisions on their own and that there was reluctance to enable students to express their opinions freely. In this case the school administration control of peer counseling sessions was manifest. However, public and private secondary school principals and vice principals were unanimous in their approval of and gratitude for student leaders who participated in school peer counseling sessions. Document analysis showed that most schools provided functional peer counseling sessions, an opinion echoed by BOM chairpersons, private school directors, deputy principals, and principals. Most schools made the calendar of peer counseling sessions available in the minutes of staff meetings, and some even publicly displayed the specific days and hours for the noble activity. Further, teachers, deputy principals and principals at private secondary schools agreed with the students that having student leaders participate in peer counseling sessions would help to improve students' conduct. While most public school BOM chairs were unsure of the influence, most private secondary school heads said student leaders' involvement in peer counseling had a big influence on students' behavior. The study established Peer counseling sessions give a safe space for students to share their thoughts and feelings with their peers, the teachers and the school administration use the information provided to address new areas of concern and implement effective solutions. The practice may help explain why most private secondary schools often have better student discipline than public schools. Additionally, it is important to provide adequate training for the peer counselors who will be facilitating those initiatives to ensure efficiency and a significant outcome.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results, which examined the extent of student leaders' participation in school peer counseling programs and the effect on both public and private secondary school students' behavior, the following conclusions were drawn:

Most public and private secondary schools registered active peer counseling programs. The research findings further established school peer counseling programs are an effective means of communication and a strong link between the students, teachers and the school administration. However, the public secondary schools administrators indicated more control of the programs limiting the outcome of such forums. Additionally, most of the peer counselors in both school categories were ill trained hence lacked expertise to ensure efficiency and a significant outcome of the program. Well organized school peer counseling sessions provide secure space to voice students concerns in both public and private secondary schools which is beneficial to all entities involved, as it allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the problems secondary schools students face and the development of strategies to timely address them.

Both from the findings of the present research and the literature review, it is clear that the use of peer counseling programs as a strategy to improve learners discipline is a relevant topical and original research problem. In order to achieve effective utilization of school peer counseling programs in everyday school operations in both public and private secondary schools the following interventions should be made:

The principals in both private and public secondary schools would do well to empower and necessitate student leaders in overseeing peer counseling services and open discussion sessions, which serve as a dependable channel for disseminating information on all issues affecting students' disciplinary behavior in a school setting. The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should invest in training of peer counselors to actualize their role in secondary schools. Further, schools should also have functional suggestion boxes available for students who are unable to voice their opinions during the school peer counseling and open discussion sessions. The provided information should be appreciated and given an open thought. By addressing problems as they arise, teachers and school administrators may help students become more self-disciplined.

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