

The Impact of Student Participation in the Election of Student Leaders on Learners' Discipline in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Machakos Sub-County

Rose Mueni Luti-Mallei. Ph.D. (Corresponding author)

Machakos university, Kenya

Received: November 19, 2024 Accepted: December 12, 2024 Published: December 28, 2024

doi:10.5296/ijld.v14i4.22405

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijld.v14i4.22405>

Abstract

Students' active participation in the nomination, election, and installation of student leaders in school management shows greater control and positive response to educational institution rules and regulations. The purpose of this study was to discover how students' participation in the election of student leaders impacted their behavior in secondary government-sponsored and private learning institutions in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya. The study's two primary objectives were to determine the degree of student engagement in the identification and installation of student leaders and the impact on student mannerisms. A thorough survey technique was used in the study. The sample number was established using simple random selection and selective sampling. To correlate the information, surveys were given to students and instructors, and interview dates were given to the principals and their deputies, private school directors, and BOM chairpersons. The Statistical Program for Social Sciences was used to evaluate the data (SPSS V21).

Keywords: Students, student leaders, participation, governance, learners' discipline, election

1. Introduction

School governance is coordinating, directing, guiding, and controlling school operations and initiatives to achieve the institution's goals and objectives (Harber & Mncube, 2015). Stakeholders in school administration include management boards, parents' organizations, principals, instructors, support employees, and student councils. The phrase "students' participation in school governance" refers to a systematic, all-encompassing structure for involving students in the routine operations of both private and government-sponsored learning institutions.

Growing empirical and theoretical evidence suggested that student participation in school

administration (students identifying student leaders) improved students' behavior, progress, rewards, and achievement (McGowan, 2010; Mitra & Serriere, 2012). The study, further stressed the difficulty of developing a shared set of values because those held by the school central management body and mirrored in the school discipline policy periodically differ from those held by the student population Sushila (2004) proposed engaging students at various policy-making phases to address this problem. This research ignores the fact that student involvement in selecting student leaders is one method to guarantee their participation. The involvement should be broad-based and open to all the students for tangible results (Lutomia & Sikolia, 2006). Furthermore, Nasibi (2003) suggested that the student council program might be a useful way for students to participate in school administration. Such student officials would swear allegiance to their peers rather than the school administration. According to the study, one way to ensure students' self-confidence is to allow open and equitable voting for student leaders. School control can also be accomplished by increasing students' "self-confidence" (Davies & Yamashita, 2007). The research also found that students felt a stronger connection to school management after publicly voting for student representatives. The findings of this research suggest that student involvement in the election of student leaders is a strong indicator of student control of the student council, which is an important tool for influencing student conduct for the better. The selection panel's dispositions, skills, and knowledge decide the fairness of the voting process, so care should be taken to include members who can make the process successful. Mncube and Harber (2013) contend that students' autonomy may be inhibited by the selection procedure used by school management and teachers as they choose their leaders. Selected students gather to share their perspectives on topics such as scholastic requirements, athletics, artistic endeavors, and even school conduct (Mutua, 2014). The study established When learners feel respected, acknowledged, and valued good conduct follows. As a result, students were unlikely to make it difficult for their chosen officials to enforce the school policies. According to Obiero (2013), student leaders play an essential part in day-to-day school operations and discipline administration. As a result, the election should be handled carefully to ensure that suitable student leaders help their classmates and the school as a whole. Most secondary learning institutions use a democratic process where students have an opportunity to nominate and vote for leaders on an open ballot. (Mncube & Harber, 2013). Organizationally, students embrace and support their leaders of choice, which reduces rivalry and promotes unity. However, there are numerous management upheavals uncovered by this research that need to be addressed. This study also found that engaging students in decision-making in all of the aforementioned managerial resulted in an inclusive positive school environment, as evidenced by appropriate student punishment. To support this point of view, Nayak (2011) claimed that group self-discipline is accomplished when learners, among other things, are allowed to openly pick their leaders. While this study concurs with the sentiments expressed in the aforementioned studies, it is unclear from these reports whether or not student involvement in the election of their leaders has any bearing on the election's outcome. Further, a study by Fletcher (2009) showed that, in contrast to working for them, school administration collaborates with student leaders because school progress is beneficial to all parties involved.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, there have been cases of student discontent at both private and government-sponsored secondary learning institutions. Student leaders were not meaningfully included in the management of issues impacting their classmates or the school as a whole, despite repeated directives from the Ministry of Education. The Machakos Sub County Director of Education reported that 20 secondary educational institutions were involved in protests in 2022. Public secondary schools fared worse than private ones, but the problem affected both types of learning institutions. The government of Kenya took steps to rectify this situation by advocating for student self-governance in secondary schools and enforcing student elections for school leadership.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This research sought to determine the extent of students' involvement in the election of student leaders and the impact on the behavior of secondary school students in both public and private secondary educational institutions in the Machakos sub-county.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The study's goals were as follows:

- i) To ascertain extent of students participation in the election of student leaders in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos sub-County.
- ii) To examine the impact of student participation in the election of student leaders on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos sub-county.

1.5 Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis was being tested in the study:

H₀1: Students' participation in the election of student leaders does not significantly influence learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos Sub County

2. Review of Related Literature

Student leaders have a vested interest in the smooth operation of their learning institutions (Lutomia & Sikolia, 2006). For one thing, student leaders serve as a vital linkage between the school's management and the student population. This research contends that a robust and significant connection is established when students exercise their freedom of choice in selecting student leaders. In addition, Nasibi (2003) suggested that the students' council might be an effective vehicle for student participation in school administration. If such student councils were properly created and put into action, their leaders would swear allegiance to their fellow students and provide vital feedback to the school administration. Students' active involvement in the election of student leaders would give them a sense of pride in the student council and would be an effective means of fostering self-discipline among the student body. Self-confidence building is another means through which discipline can be achieved in the classroom (Davies & Yamashita, 2007). This study suggested students' participation in the

election of student leaders is one way of strengthening self-confidence among learners which translates to improved learners' discipline. Additionally, Students who have been chosen take part in a group conversation in which they offer their perspectives on a variety of themes, including their educational needs, interests, sports, and classroom behavior (Mutua, 2014). This study established that when learners are treated with dignity and appreciation, they strive to behave well. Students are more likely to own, look up to, and respect their leaders if they are allowed to vote for them. As a result, there was little chance that students would make life difficult for their elected officials when it came to enforcing school policies. In this regard, There should be some thought given to including open-minded members of staff who can offer a positive conclusion to the process because the ethics of the selection technique are built on the exposure, abilities, reasoning, attitudes, and relevant experience of members of the school selection panel. Obiero (2013) backed up the claim, stressing the importance of student representatives in school discipline governance. Therefore, the election process should be handled carefully to ensure that the best candidates become the student representatives to ultimately represent their peers and the school as a whole. Moreover, the newly elected leaders should be guided by intensive and transparent induction and training policies. According to Nayak (2011), student self-discipline improved when students were given the option to choose their leadership through a democratic process. Notably, the vast majority of educational institutions now use an open, democratic process for student body representative nominations and elections, during which candidates are allowed to run for office (Mncube & Harber, 2013). The student side embraced and backed leaders of their choice, reducing rivalry and pressure on those in charge. However, Mncube and Harber (2013) argued that the evaluation process used by the school administration and instructors before students pick their representatives may limit students' capacity to make fully informed judgments. Further, this research showed that school administrators have substantial manipulation, influence, and control over the nomination and selection of student leaders. Furthermore, this research confirmed that when students participate in decision-making in all of the aforementioned levels of management, the most likely outcome is an optimal school environment, as shown by good student discipline. More importantly, according to Fletcher's (2009) research, school administrations collaborated with student leaders because, in contrast to working for them, school progress is beneficial and rewarding for all parties involved. While this study agreed with the positions taken by the previous studies that championed students to have a vote in electing their leaders no clear conclusions have been drawn on the extent of students' participation in the identification of student leaders and the influence on learners' conduct when comparing government-sponsored and private secondary educational centers. As a result, the focus of this research was to find out whether students at government-sponsored and private secondary learning institutions in Machakos sub-county, Kenya, were actively involved in the identification of student councils, and if so, the extent and impact on learners discipline in both school categories.

3. Research Methodology

In Machakos Sub-County, 44 public and 14 private secondary schools were targeted for this study. The second key aspect is that the study targeted all government-aided and private

secondary learning center students (totaling 28,000 and 2,800, respectively). All 720 public secondary school teachers and 140 private secondary school teachers were also targeted in the study. Additional participants included 14 deputy principals, 14 principals, and 14 directors to represent the private secondary schools. Further, the study focused on 44 deputy principals, 44 principals, and 44 BOM chairpersons to represent the government-sponsored secondary schools. The total target population was 33,220 respondents. The study utilized Simple random sampling to select the sample size of students, Probability sampling was employed to identify teachers from the sampled school. Census sampling was utilized to identify all the BOM chairpersons in Public secondary learning institutions and directors in private secondary schools. Principals and deputy principals of the 22 sampled schools were included in the study. In the end, the overall number of sampled respondents add up to 16 BOM chairpersons, 6 directors, 22 principals (16 public secondary schools, 6 private secondary schools), 22 deputy principals (16 government-sponsored secondary learning institutions) 6 directors (private secondary learning institutions), 110 teachers (80 public secondary schools and 30 private secondary schools) Finally, 24 students from each sampled school totaling 144 students in the 6 private secondary schools and 384 students in the public secondary schools totaling to 528 students. The total number of respondents in the study added up to 704 participants.

Data were collected using personal-administered questionnaires for teachers and students, interview schedules were used for the deputy principals, principals, BOM chairpersons, and private schools' directors as well as document analysis. The content validity of the research instruments was ascertained through analysis by experts in comparative and international education, on the subject and piloting of the questionnaires. Instruments reliability was ascertained after the pilot study by calculating Cronbach's alpha by utilizing the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The alpha coefficient value ranged from 0 to 1 and was used to portray the reliability of the figures deduced from the scales. A greater value indicated a more reliable produced Likert scale. If the alpha coefficients were greater than the level of significance (0.7), the researcher affirmed that the research instruments had a tolerable reliability coefficient and hence recommended for the study.

4. Study Findings

Data analysis on the influence of students' participation in the election of student leaders on learners' discipline in private and public secondary schools was done. The first research goal was to examine the extent of student involvement in the election of student leaders and the level of discipline among students in the learning institution. The study examined the level of learners' involvement in student leader elections, as well as the impact of this involvement on school disciplinary status, for better conception.

4.1 Extent of Learners' Participation in the Election of Student Leaders

The study intended to establish the extent to which all learners participated in the election of student leaders by asking students and teachers to identify their replies as EP denoting "Extensive participation", M denoting "Moderate participation", and N denoting "No participation". Table 1 displays the results.

Table 1. Views of Students and Teachers on the Extent of Students' Participation in the Election of Student Leaders

		Students				Teachers			
		Public		Private		Public		Private	
		n	%	n	%	%	n	%	
Form 1-4 learners involved in the nomination and election process	No participation	96	25.6	1	0.8	-	-	-	-
	Moderate participation	114	30.4	28	19.7	20	27.8	6	21.4
	Extensive participation	166	44.0	115	79.5	52	72.2	22	78.6
Only form 3-4 learners are involved in the nomination and election process	No participation	-	-	92	63.8	63	87.5	25	89.3
	Moderate participation	20	5.2	40	27.8	9	12.5	3	10.7
	Extensive participation	356	94.8	12	8.3	-	-	-	-
School administration controls the entire election process	No participation	-	-	46	31.9	-	-	6	21.4
	Moderate participation	50	13.3	58	40.3	14	19.4	16	57.2
	Extensive participation	326	86.7	40	27.8	58	80.6	6	21.4

Data captured in Table 1 revealed that the level of student participation in the election of student leaders varies between public and private secondary schools. Among public secondary school students, 44.0 percent, 30.4 percent, and 25.6 percent believe that students had extensive, moderate, and no participation respectively in the nomination and election process of student leaders. While in private secondary schools, 79.5 percent, 19.7 percent, and 0.8 percent of students hold these beliefs. However, in public secondary schools, 94.8

percent and 5.2 percent of students indicated only senior classes extensively and moderately participated in the nomination and election process, while in private secondary schools, 8.3 percent, 27.8 percent, and 63.8 percent of students respectively indicated the same opinion. Additionally, 86.7 percent, 13.3 percent, and none of the secondary school students in public schools and 31.9 percent, 40.3 percent, and 27.8 percent of students in private learning centers indicated that school administrators had considerable, moderate, or no role in the nomination and election process, respectively. These findings suggested that student involvement in the election of student leaders process is more practicable in private than in public secondary schools. Higher levels of student discipline and fewer strikes were reported at private secondary learning institutions, which may be attributed to the more open nature of the constitution of student leaders' councils compared to those in public secondary schools. This is consistent with the research of Fletcher (2009), which found that administrators collaborate with student leaders rather than serving as their agents. Thus, teachers and principals at public secondary schools should collaborate with student government to enhance student behavior. Additionally, the findings also indicated that 72.2 percent, 27.8 percent, and none of public secondary school teachers whereas 78.0 percent, 21.4 percent, and none of private secondary school instructors believed that all students participate extensively, somewhat, or not at all in the election of student leaders. On the contrary, in private secondary schools, 89.3 percent of teachers reported student participation in the election of student leaders, while in public secondary schools, none of the teachers, 12.5 percent, and 87.5 percent of teachers reported only senior classes participated extensively, moderately, or not at all. Moreover, 81.6 percent, 19.4 percent, and none of secondary school teachers in public schools and 21.4 percent, 57.2 percent, and 21.4 percent of private school instructors in government-sponsored institutions indicated that school officials were heavily involved, somewhat involved, or not involved at all in the election of student leaders. The level of oversight in secondary schools, both public and private, is high. As school student council elections have become more formalized in public schools, schools should consider implementing and cultivating guided democracy among students to elect responsible student leaders who serve as a connection between school administration and students, resulting in improved student behavior. Teachers' reports of increased student participation, increased diversity, and low administrative interference in student leadership elections counter to students' perceptions. Nayak (2011), who mentioned that group self-discipline is achieved when scholars are allowed to elect their leaders constitutionally, lends further support to the idea that high discipline levels in private secondary schools can be attributed to greater involvement of all students in the student leaders' election. Teachers and students' opinions agreed that student engagement in the appointment of student leaders was more doable and elaborate in private than in public secondary learning institutions. The differences between the students' and the teachers' perspectives lend credence to the notion that students contribute little to school governance because they have nothing of value to offer. Deputies, principals, BOM chairs, and private school directors consented to the students' and instructors' points of thought during the interview sessions. A large majority of private and public secondary school principals and their deputies emphasized that their schools' student elections were held fairly and by MOE policy requirements. While the only National School

and several extra county public secondary schools have clear, well-documented election school policy guidelines, this was only the case for the National School based on the document analysis. Nominations and election dates were recorded in the school logbook, and an election committee with clear responsibilities was formed. The majority of private schools possessed records that backed up student elections, such as minutes from staff meetings where the process was confirmed to be discussed and clearly stated. While the directors of private schools provided an independent, detailed report that demonstrated their dedication to the routine operations of their schools, the BOM chairpersons of public secondary learning institutions provided responses that were carbon copies of the principals' reports, indicating that they primarily relied on the principals for information.

4.2 Influence of Learners' Participation in the Election of Student Leaders on Learners' Discipline

It was important to examine the influence of student-elected leaders on students' mannerisms due to the students' role in electing those leaders. Consequently, this study sought the views of stakeholders such as students, teachers, deputy principals, school board chairpersons, principals, and private school directors. The results of the investigation can be seen in Table 2

Table 2. Views of students and teachers on the influence of students' participation in the election of student leaders on school discipline

	Students				Teachers			
	Public schools		Private schools		Public schools		Private schools	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No influence	15	4.0	9	6.3	16	22.2	2	7.1
Low influence	35	9.3	19	13.2	28	38.9	6	21.4
Moderate influence	150	39.9	56	38.8	16	22.2	12	42.9
High Influence	176	46.8	60	41.7	12	16.7	8	28.6
Total	376	100	144	100	72	100	28	100

Data in Table 2 indicated that among secondary school students in both government-sponsored and private categories, nearly half (46.8 percent) believe that student participation in the election of student leaders has a notable impact on students' discipline,

while (41.7 percent believe the same among private secondary school students. The data showed that a majority of public and private schools believed that student involvement in the election of student leaders had a worthwhile impact on the discipline of their students, whereas a minority of institutions in both sectors held the opposite view. The research outcome endorsed those of a study by Kamau (2007), which established that student councils play a crucial role in enforcing student compliance with school policies. Of the instructors at public secondary schools, 16.7 percent said it had a “great deal of influence,” while 38.9 percent said the same about “some influence,” 22.2 percent said it had “little influence,” and 22.2 percent said it had “no influence” on their students' discipline. In addition, among instructors at private secondary schools, 28.6 percent said students' leaders were very influential, 42.9 percent said they were influential, 21.4 percent said they were less influential, and 7.1 percent said they were not influential at all on students' discipline. Results from instructors showed a lower proportion than those from students, suggesting that educators in both learning institution categories believed their learners were unable to make sound choices on their own. This is consistent with the findings of research by Mati, et al. (2016) on student participation in decision-making and academic accomplishment in public secondary schools in Embu West Sub-County, Kenya. The truth is that the vast majority of adults in authority positions still believe that student leaders contribute little value. In addition, the data showed that a larger proportion of public school instructors, compared to private secondary school teachers, do not believe that student involvement in student leaders' elections has a major influence on learners' discipline. The majority of the school heads and the deputies at public secondary schools agreed with the teachers in an interview, saying that electing student leaders necessitated a great deal of oversight and intervention from the administration. There was consensus between the BOM chairpersons and the directors of private schools, as well as between the deputy principals and the principals. The scrutiny of documents revealed that both public and private secondary schools with explicit student election procedures took the election seriously and had a history of excellent discipline levels, which may be ascribed to the involvement of student-elected leaders in school administration. Results from this study corroborated those of Nayak (2011), who found that letting students vote on who would lead them helped foster a climate of self-discipline.

4.3 Teachers and Students' Views on How Students' Participation in Election Influences Discipline Related Behaviors

The study looked at how much student participation in the election of student leaders influenced 10 key indicators of discipline. The indicators involve promptness, lesson participation, cleanliness, and responsibility, completion of academic tasks, respectable language, modest dressing, optimistic attitude, development, and mentorship. The data is recorded in Table 3.

Table 3. Teachers and Students' perspective on the impact of Students' Participation in the Election of student leaders on learners' discipline

Variable	Measure	Students				Teachers			
		Public		Private		Public		Private	
		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Punctuality	No influence	26	6.9	35	24.3	15	20.8	3	10.7
	Moderate influence	184	48.9	100	69.4	26	36.1	14	50
	High influence	166	44.1	9	6.2	31	43.1	11	39.3
Lesson attendance	No influence	35	9.3	29	20.1	11	15.3	11	39.3
	Moderate influence	191	50.8	89	61.8	28	38.9	10	35.7
	High influence	150	39.9	26	18.1	33	45.8	7	25
Cleanliness	No influence	49	13	35	24.3	3	4.2	1	3.6
	Moderate influence	116	30.9	34	23.6	32	44.4	10	35.7
	High influence	211	56.1	75	52.1	37	51.4	17	60.7
Accountability	No influence	79	21	29	20.1	17	23.6	6	21.4
	Moderate influence	128	34	44	30.6	23	31.9	12	42.9
	High influence	169	44.9	71	49.3	32	44.4	10	35.7
Completion of assignments	No influence	119	31.6	47	32.6	26	36.1	2	7.1
	Moderate influence	139	37	45	31.2	23	31.9	15	53.6
	High influence	118	31.4	52	36.1	16	21.9	11	39.3
Use of decent language	No influence	127	33.8	41	28.5	19	26.4	3	10.7
	Moderate influence	124	33	68	47.2	29	40.3	7	25
	High influence	125	33.2	35	24.3	24	33.3	18	64.3

Decent dressing	No influence	117	31.1	59	41	24	33.3	10	35.7
	Moderate influence	138	36.7	46	31.9	20	27.8	14	50
	High influence	121	32.2	39	27.1	28	38.9	4	14.3
Positive attitude	No influence	135	35.9	39	27.1	24	33.3	13	46.4
	Moderate influence	159	42.3	47	32.6	22	30.6	13	46.4
	High influence	82	21.8	58	40.3	26	36.1	2	7.1
Progression	No influence	167	44.4	48	33.3	42	58.3	5	17.9
	Moderate influence	126	33.5	41	28.5	15	20.8	14	50
	High influence	83	22.1	55	38.2	15	20.8	9	32.1
Mentorship	No influence	48	12.8	28	19.4	17	23.6	12	42.9
	Moderate influence	188	50	56	38.9	23	31.9	4	14.3
	High influence	140	37.2	60	41.7	32	44.4	12	42.9

Statistics in Table 3 demonstrated that there is an agreement between students' and teachers' assessments on the level of students' involvement in the identification of student councils and the influence of such participation on students' behavior. The majority of secondary school students and teachers from both government-sponsored and private learning institutions concurred that the democratic election of student leaders by fellow students has a positive influence on important discipline metrics like punctuality, lesson attendance, cleanliness, and general student attitude, in addition to progress for students and teachers in public institutions. Most indices of student conduct showed a greater influence in private secondary schools than in public ones. Earlier findings from this study suggested that the difference might be attributed to the greater involvement of students in the election of student leaders. This is by the findings of research by Bertness, Holt, and Borzel (2016), who suggested that student participation in school governance constitution might improve school unity and organization. A meaningful bond is formed between the students and the school administration. Additional KII data from secondary government-aided and private learning institutions confirmed the idea that elected student leaders' engagement in school governance had a notable impact on learners' conduct. Less influence from instructors was shown in public secondary schools as compared to students' opinions, confirming prior findings in this study which indicated most teachers are not concerned about the election and active participation of student leaders in

school routine control. The government-aided secondary learning institutions deputies and the Principals corroborated these findings, saying that elected student leaders at their institutions mostly focused on enforcing punctuality and cleanliness among fellow students rather than addressing more pressing concerns related to school administration. According to one of the deputy principals, the election of student leaders required a great deal of oversight, both in terms of candidate screening and the actual voting process, because it could cause havoc in the schools otherwise. To further improve student discipline in secondary schools, the respondent emphasized the importance of setting up a transparent procedure that would produce responsible and accountable student councils. The responder went on to recommend that secondary schools, both public and private, institute rigorous mentoring programs among students of all grade levels and provide instruction on the relevance of student leaders' governance as a preparatory ground for student leaders' election. According to the data, it is true that most public secondary schools do not have sufficient evidence to prove that students actively participated in the election of student leaders, in contrast to private secondary schools, where students were more likely to participate and maintain order during the election process. In addition, there was limited information on the election process and no mention of student induction and training programs before and after the student leaders were elected in the materials provided for analysis in both categories of schools.

According to the data results in Table 4.3, students' and instructors' opinions on the level of involvement and the impact of students' engagement in the identification of student councils on students' behavior are consistent. The results of the analysis showed that, in addition to progress for both students and teachers in public secondary schools, as well as appropriate clothing for students and a positive attitude for teachers in private secondary schools, the majority of students and teachers from public and private learning institutions concurred that student leaders' involvement in school governance had a favorable impact on important discipline parameters like punctuality, lesson attendance, and other factors. In contrast to public secondary schools, private learning institutions had a greater effect on the majority of the disciplinary indices. According to past findings in this study, the difference can be attributed to the greater student involvement in the election of student leaders. This is in line with research by Bertness, et al. (2016), who suggested that student leadership in schools promoted coordination, organization, and cohesion. The result is a close relationship between the students and the administrators of the schools. Additional KII findings from secondary public and private schools hypothesized that student leaders' involvement in school governance registered a positive impact on students' conduct. The absence of strikes in Machakos sub-county private secondary schools may be related to their counterparts' higher influence, but public-school teachers' opinions have less influence than students' opinions, supporting earlier findings that teachers are not concerned about the election of student leaders. The findings were corroborated by deputy principals and principals of public secondary schools, who reported that elected student leaders improved punctuality and orderliness among other students rather than other serious issues in school administration, demonstrating that students were not professionals and needed more guidance and mentoring on what to do. One of the deputy principals reported that student leaders' election needed a lot of control in vetting and the actual voting process citing if left open it would be a cause of

chaos in the schools. Further, the respondent pointed it was critical to establish a clear process that will yield responsible and accountable student councils to enforce learners' discipline in secondary schools. Further, the respondent suggested that both public and private secondary schools should have reliable mentor-ship programs among the student body in all the class levels, training on the significance of student leaders' governance as a preparation ground for student leaders' election. The opinions were supported by the records studied, which showed that in contrast to private secondary schools, which showed greater student engagement and order, most public secondary schools did not demonstrate consistent students' active participation in the election of student leaders. Additionally, there was scanty information on the election procedure and no mention of student training programs before the elections for student leaders in the materials that were readily available in both types of learning institutions.

4.4 Testing of Hypothesis HO_1

Students' participation in the election of student leaders' does not significantly influence learners' conduct in government-sponsored and private secondary learning institutions. The research purposed to determine whether and how voting for student leaders affects students' conformity to classroom statutes. To do this, the data was statistically examined, taking into account the views of both students and teachers. The association between student discipline and the category of school and student participation in choosing student leaders was examined using nominal logistic regression. Logistic regression was utilized since the ordinal model could not meet the condition of the parallel lines. Assuming that there is no fluctuation in the correlation between the dependent and independent variables across various classes of the dependent variable, this strategy works best when the proportionate odds or parallel lines assumption is correct. The inquiry established that there was no remarkable association between student conduct and the kind of school, but that there was a notable association between student conduct and active involvement in choosing student leaders.

Table 4. Participation of Learners in Election of Student Leaders (Students' Perspective)

							No Obs.	520	
							LRchi2 (6)	42.529	
							Prob>chi ²	.000	
							Pseudo R ²	.084	
							(Nagelkerke)		
School Discipline rating		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Very good	Intercept	.013	.490	.001	1	.979			
	Elections	-.170	.092	3.408	1	.065	.844	.704	1.011
	[School Category=1.00]	-.095	.281	.114	1	.736	.909	.524	1.577
	[School Category=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Good	Intercept	-1.219	.511	5.678	1	.017			
	Elections	-.052	.090	.335	1	.563	.949	.796	1.132
	[School Category=1.00]	1.013	.315	10.349	1	.001	2.753	1.485	5.103
	[School Category=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Fair	Intercept	-2.059	.513	16.107	1	.000			
	Elections	.154	.091	2.833	1	.092	1.166	.975	1.395
	[School Category=1.00]	1.377	.290	22.543	1	.000	3.961	2.244	6.993
	[School Category=2.00]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is Poor.

b. This variable is set to zero because it is inessential.

Analysis of data revealed a statistically significant difference in the students' perceptions of school discipline depending on how involved students are in electing student leaders. The results of the Nagelkerke test indicated that the model had an 8.4 percent improvement in fit over the null model [$2(6, N = 520) = 42.529, p = .05$]. Furthermore, Wald $2(1) = 10.349, p = 0.001$, showed that pupils in public schools are more likely to rate school discipline as “good” than “poor”, with a 95 percent confidence interval of 1.485 to 5.103. Additionally, an odds ratio of 3.961 (95 percent confidence interval [CI], 2.244 to 6.993) indicated that compared to pupils at private schools, those at public schools are far more likely to rate school discipline as “fair” instead of “poor”. Therefore, the data suggested that students in public schools are more likely to rate their school as having well or fair discipline than students in private schools, even though there was no significant difference in the amount of student involvement.

Table 5. Model Accuracy for Students’ Participation in Elections (Students’ Perspective)

Observed	Predicted				Percent Correct
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	
Very good	0	0	32	59	0.0%
Good	0	0	54	43	0.0%
Fair	0	0	95	42	69.3%
Poor	0	0	81	114	58.5%
Overall Percentage	0.0%	0.0%	50.4%	49.6%	40.2%

The results of a nominal logistic regression were examined to determine if differences in school category and student engagement affected classroom behavior. The nominal logistic regression was chosen instead of the ordinal model, which did not fulfill the parallel regression assumption. Tables 5 and 6 show that the model predicted an overall “Fair” rating for school discipline with 69.3 percent accuracy, and accurately predicted “Poor” ratings 58.5 percent of the time. However, the model's general veracity was only 40.2 percent. This suggested that while the model was successful in determining which school would be placed in the “Fair” category, it was less effective in determining the overall rating.

Table 6. Participation of Learners in Elections (Teachers' Perspective)

				No Obs.			100		
				LRchi2 (6)			20.630		
				Prob>chi ²			.002		
				Pseudo (Nagelkerke)	R ²			.199	
School Discipline rating ^s	B	Std.Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)		
							Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Very good	Intercept	1.239	.923	1.805	1	.179			
	Elections	.098	.185	.280	1	.597	1.103	.768 1.585	
	[School Category=0]	-1.355	.855	2.514	1	.113	.258	.048 1.377	
	[School Category=1]	0 ^b	.	.	0
Good	Intercept	-.506	1.080	.219	1	.640			
	Elections	.489	.211	5.368	1	.021	1.631	1.078 2.468	
	[School Category=0]	-1.181	.913	1.672	1	.196	.307	.051 1.838	
	[School Category=1]	0 ^b	.	.	0
Fair	Intercept	2.235	.894	6.250	1	.012			
	Elections	-.236	.189	1.559	1	.212	.790	.545 1.144	

[School Category=0]	-1.373	.842	2.657	1	.103	.253	.049	1.320
[School Category=1]	0 ^b	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is Poor.

b. This variable is set to zero because it is inessential.

The results of a log-likelihood test revealed that the model was significantly better fitted than the null model [$X^2(6, N = 100) = 20.630, p = .002$], showing a 19.9 percent increase in fit over the null model as established by the Nagelkerke test. There was no statistically significant relationship found between school type and disciplinary measures ($p > 0.05$); however, learners' participation in student elections affected the schools' categorization of disciplinary problems. The log-odd that a school has "Good" discipline (compared to "Poor" discipline) is expected to rise by 0.489 units for every 1 unit increase in student involvement in elections ($b = .489, SE = .211, Wald = 5.368, p = 0.021$). This means that learners' likelihood of being classified as "Good" increases proportionally with their score on the extent to which they took part in the election of student leaders [EXP (B) = 1.631, 95 percent CI (1.078, 2.468)]. The data suggested that teachers are more likely to rate a school's discipline as "Good" if more students actively participate in choosing their student leaders.

Table 7. Model Accuracy for Students' Participation in Elections (Teachers' Perspective)

<i>Observed</i>	<i>Predicted</i>				<i>Percent Correct</i>
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	
Very good	6	11	11	0	21.4%
Good	7	13	2	0	59.1%
Fair	6	6	20	0	62.5%
Poor	8	4	6	0	0.0%
Overall Percentage	27.0%	34.0%	39.0%	0.0%	39.0%

The model's outcomes demonstrated that 59.1 percent of schools were accurately classified as belonging to the “Good” category for classroom management. In addition, 62.5 percent of schools were accurately classified as “Fair” schools, while 21.4 percent of schools were appropriately classified as “Very Good” schools. The model's total accuracy was 39.0 percent it may be said that the model performed well in identifying the schools that were classified as “Good and fair,” but less well in predicting the overall rating.

5. Discussions

Based on the outcome of the research as captured on data examination on the influence of students’ participation in the election of student leaders on learners’ discipline in private and public secondary schools, evidence suggested that participation of students in the election of student leaders has a significant influence on students' behavior in both government aided and private secondary learning institutions. However, student involvement in the selection of student leaders was found to be strongly regulated by the school executive governance in government-sponsored secondary learning institutions where students and teachers indicated 86.7 and 80.6 percent extensive control compared to private secondary schools where students and teachers cited only 27.8 percent and 21.4 percent control respectively.

The regulation was identified in the monitored nomination of the election candidates mostly encouraging the preferred senior students leading to mistrust among the student body in the public schools. The interpretation of the students' body indicated the student leaders were the administration's mouthpiece. The lack of a trusted elected body of student leaders to communicate students' emotional, moral, and intellectual requirements has led to widespread disruption in most public secondary schools because students refuse to accept the guidance of the elected student leaders.

Further, the review of school relevant documents also revealed that the majority of the public secondary schools lacked clear rules and mechanisms for the elections, training, and induction of student leaders. As a result, the student body did not fully accept the newly elected student leaders' body, and there was widespread misunderstanding and mistrust throughout the whole nomination and election process. Contrarily, the private secondary schools had a greater overall level of learner discipline than the public secondary schools because they had more established procedures for electing and training student leaders. According to the data analysis in this study students at private secondary schools agreed that their schools had an active council of student leaders who served the interests of the students at 90.3 percent, this has led to better student discipline (as evidenced by a lack of strikes). Interviewees who played a critical role in the process of selecting student leaders expressed support for open and fair elections. They were certain that the learners needed some sort of direction through it all.

Consequently, the survey found that most public secondary school principals and deputies only saw student elections as a necessary evil to satisfy the Ministry of Education policy. According to one of the principals in a public secondary school, the election of student leaders required a great deal of oversight, both in terms of candidate screening and the actual voting process, because it could cause havoc in the schools otherwise. Further, the election of

student leaders also failed to take into account the need for appropriate planning and execution where the res-ponder emphasized the importance of setting up a transparent procedure that would produce responsible and accountable student councils.

Additionally, the study's results emphasized the significance of raising awareness among school stakeholders about the significance of electing student leaders who were expected to reflect the needs of students and put appropriate measures in place to maintain and enhance learners' discipline. Furthermore, educational leaders and educators should be adaptable and welcoming of societal shifts and differences. Not just in terms of student welfare concerns, but also in terms of basic school administration, it is essential to demonstrate that society is adaptable and welcomes the students' perspectives and ideas. There should be a favorable attitude toward student government elections as a means of fostering leadership development and establishing a precedent for democratic norms in the larger community. Additionally, 90 percent of principals recommended that the MOE give clear rules for student leader elections based on the category and kind of school. The day schools that house the majority of students with low KCPE scores and who do not appear interested in student engagement in school governance at the sub-county level of secondary schools warrant more attention.

Most BOM chairpersons, at public secondary schools also lacked initiative; they were not keen on the nomination and election procedure in the school. This suggested that most of them were out of touch with the day-to-day happenings in schools and, as a result, unable to provide helpful suggestions for preserving and enhancing students' discipline. On the other hand, the private school's directors were well versed in the nomination and election procedure, citing the need for nurturing students' democracy. The study established participation of students in the identification of student councils significantly influenced learners' conduct.

6. Conclusion

Based on the outcome, which investigated how student involvement in the election of student leaders affected both public and private secondary learning institutions students' behavior, the following resolves were drawn: The majority of secondary schools support student leadership elections, but they also point to heavy management control; in public secondary schools, this control is greater in private secondary schools. Second, the majority of public secondary institutions lack detailed voting rules. In both school categories, chosen student leaders lacked proper training and had unclear job descriptions. The leaders should be chosen with the help of the students, according to the school administrators. The students' feeling of ownership would increase with active participation, which would also help their focus. Student leadership elections are therefore an honorable tradition. When determining policies, the MOE should take into account the degree, style, and category of the schools. The rules should also be modified by school administrators to fit the category, style, and degree of the institution.

Funding

None.

Informed Consent

Obtained.

Provenance and Peer Review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that there are no competing or potential conflicts of interest.

References

Bertness, J. H., & Barzel, R. (2016). *It shouldn't hurt to be a child: Preventing Early childhood caries (ECC)*. Washington DC: National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Centre.

Davies, I., & Yamashita, H. (2007). *School Councils- School Improvement*. The London Secondary School Councils' action research Project. University of Birmingham.

Fletcher, A. (2009). *Guide to students as partners in school change*. Meaningful student involvement Retrieved July 4th, 2016, from <http://www.Sound out. Org/MSIGuide.pdf>

Georges School prefecture. www.georghal-p.schools.nsw.edu.au

Lutomia, G. A., & Sikolia, L.W. (2006). *Handling problems facing the Youth in Learning Institutions*. Zima Publishing House: Nairobi.

Mncube, V., & Harber, C. (2013). *The dynamics of violence in South African Schools: Report*. Pretoria: UNISA.

Harber&Man cube (2015). *Violence in South African Schools; what is external and what is internal to schools?* March 2014.

Kamau, A. (2007). *Impact or students' council involvement in the management of Students "discipline in public secondary schools in Naivasha Sub-County*. Kenya Unpublished Thesis, and the University of Nairobi.

Machakos Sub-county Education Office, Annual Report (2017). Government Printer.

Mati, A., Gatumu, J. C., & Chandi, J. R. (2016). *Students' Involvement in Decision-Making and their Academic Performance in Embu West*. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2016.041008>

McGowan, (2010). School democratization in the prefigurative form: Two Brazilian experiences. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice*, 5, 21-41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1746197909353567>

Mulwa, D.M., Kimosop, M. K., & Kasivu, G. M. (2015). Participatory governance in

secondary schools: The Students' Viewpoint in Eastern Region of Kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(30).

Mutua, T. M. (2014). *Role of Students Council in Secondary Schools Management in Mwingi Central District, Kitui County, Kenya*. Unpublished MED. Project: Kenyatta University.

Nasibi, W. M. W (2003). *Discipline; Guidance and Counseling in Schools*. Nairobi: Strong wall Africa.

Nayak, K. C. (2013). *School Organization and Administration*. New Delhi: Saurabh Publishing House.

Obiero, N. A. (2013). *The involvement of student leaders in the Governance of University: An Implication of shared leadership*. University of Oslo, Unpublished Masters Thesis

Sunshila, B. (2004). *Management and Evaluation of schools*. Oxford University Press, East Africa Limited, Kenya.

Copyright Disclaimer

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).