CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS.

5.1 Introduction

The content in this chapter is presented in the following sequence. Section one presents a summary of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, purpose of the study, sample, the procedure and methodology used for the study. Section two presents the results of the study followed by discussion. In the final section, the researcher attempts to draw conclusions, and make suggestions and topics for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

5.2.1 Statement of the Problem

Analysis of decision making process in management tasks in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

5.2.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

1) To ascertain the status of decision making in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya.

2) To identify the key decision makers in selected management tasks in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya as perceived by students and teachers.
3) To find out the opinion of students and teachers on their involvement in decision making process in Secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

4) To find out the students’ and teachers’ perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

5) To identify structures within the secondary school system which are used for students’ and teachers’ involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

5.2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in line with the objectives to guide the study.

1) What is the status of decision making in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya?

2) Who are the key decision makers in selected management tasks in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya as perceived by students and teachers?

3) What is the opinion of students and teachers on their involvement in decision making in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya?

4) What is the perception of students and teachers on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya?
5) What are the structures within the secondary school system which are used for students’ and teachers’ involvement in decision making in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya?

5.2.4 Review of Related Literature

For this study, related literature was reviewed under the following topical areas: Definition of decision-making, characteristics of decision-making, types of decision-making and decision making Process. Others were the role of principal in decision making process and teachers’ and students’ involvement in decision making process; management tasks and styles of decision making. The previous researches were reviewed as follows:

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<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Educational Journals</td>
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<td>Ph. D Research Reports</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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5.2.5 Methodology

5.2.5.1 Research Method

The study adopted descriptive methods which are meant to collect data in order to answer questions about the current status of the subject or topic of the study. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were also applicable depending on the research objective.

5.2.5.2 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey design.

5.2.5.3 Population of the Study

The population of the study was composed of 596 secondary schools, 28441 form four (12th standard) students and 5064 secondary school teachers from secondary schools in Eastern Province, Kenya.

5.2.5.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Multi-stage sampling was applied including stratified random sampling to select three districts from the 13 of Eastern province. Proportionate random sampling was used to select 60 secondary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select 720 students and 360 teachers.
5.2.5.5 Tools for Data Collection.

There were three tools for data collection. These were:

i) Document Analysis

ii) Students’ Involvement in Decision Making Questionnaire (SIDMQ)-Appendix 1

iii) Teachers’ Involvement in Decision Making Questionnaire (TIDMQ)-Appendix 2

5.2.5.6 Procedure for Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative analytical procedures. The qualitative method used was content analysis. Quantitative methods used for data analysis included frequencies, percentages, weighted means and summated ratings. Computer based packages for quantitative data (SPSS Version 11.5) analysis was used to analyze the data and where possible was presented in tables and figures.

5.3 Findings

The findings were summarized as per the objectives of the study as follows:

5. 3.1 The status of decision making in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

1) Decision making on issues relating to day-to-day operations, curriculum implementation, local supervision, personnel and financial management have been decentralized to local stakeholders (principals, teachers, parents, students and the community) at the schools both with backstopping services from the ministry and other national level actors. Other decision making responsibilities
delegated to the stakeholders at the school level include resource mobilization to support education and training as well as counseling students and staff.

2) In school finance management, the policy is the participation of stakeholders in the decision making through the establishment of procurement and tender committees. The committee members are teachers, parents’ representatives and the non-teaching staff members.

5.3.2 Key decision makers in selected management tasks in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya as perceived by students and teachers

3) The key decision makers as identified by students in curriculum and instructional program were teachers, principals and students (Table 6.0).

4) In students’ management and welfare, the key decision makers as identified by students were principals, teachers and Boards of governors (Table 7.0).

5) Students identified principals as the key decision makers in school-community relations (Table 8.0).

6) The key decision makers as identified by teachers in curriculum and instructional program were the principals and teachers (Table 18.0).

7) In students’ management and welfare, the key decision makers were the principals, teachers and Boards of Governors as identified by teachers (Table 19.0).

8) The teachers identified the key decision makers in school-community relations as the principals and teachers (Table 20.0).
9) In School finance management, the key decision makers as identified by teachers were principals and Boards of Governors (Table 21.0)

5.3.3 The opinion of students and teachers on their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya

10) Majority of the students and teachers were of the view that they should be involved in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya (Tables 9.0 and 23.0).

11) To almost all the students and teachers their involvement in the decision making process is significant (important) (Table 10.0 and Table 24.0).

12) From both teachers’ and students’ response to open questions, it was established that to them, there are strong reasons why they should be involved in the decision making process.

5.3.4 Students’ and teachers’ perception on the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya

13) To most of the students, their involvement in the decision making process was inadequate (Table 11.0). The most common reasons given by those students who indicated that their participation was inadequate (unsatisfactory) were:

- Though students are requested to participate in making some decisions, their inputs are never included in the final decisions.

- Many times, students’ inputs are required to rubberstamp decisions that have already been made by the principals, teachers and boards of governors.
• Students are viewed as children and trouble makers who can never contribute anything substantial in the decision making process in a school.

• Whenever students join secondary schools, they always find rules which have already been set and it is demanded of them to obey without questioning.

A few reasons came from those who had indicated their involvement as adequate (satisfactory). These were:

• In some schools, students feel recognized and seen as people who have constructive ideas.

• There is always room to discuss ideas before they come out of control.

• Students’ inputs are not ignored, but are given an opportunity to make inputs through suggestion boxes.

From the students’ response, it was found out that most of the students felt deprived off involvement in decision making process in students’ management and welfare, and curriculum and instructional program and wished to participate more. Only a small percentage of the students wished to participate more in School-community relations.

14) To most of the teachers, their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province was adequate (satisfactory-Table 25). Some of the common reasons given by those who had indicated their involvement in decision making process as very adequate or adequate were:

• Teachers are the ones who come up with some of the major decisions in schools especially in curriculum and instructional program.
At times, teachers are the ones who either add value or refine any decisions made by other stakeholders for implementation in schools.

They do facilitate some of the decisions making process by getting opinions from other stakeholders especially parents and students.

Those who expressed their participation as either inadequate or very inadequate had the following reasons:

- That they are only required to implement decisions that have already been made.
- Their views are not sought in making some of the critical decisions especially in school finance management.

From the teachers’ responses, it was found out that although most the teachers indicated that they were adequately involved in decision making process, they still wished to participate more in most of the areas in curriculum and instruction programs, and school finance management.

5.3.5 Structures within the secondary school system which are used for students’ and teachers’ involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya

15) The prefect system was the most commonly used for students’ involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya. Students’ councils which are argued to be the most democratic were reported to be available by only a few students (Table 12.0).
16) There seemed not to be any structure for teacher involvement in decision making process since only a few teachers reported the existence of tender and procurement committees. Teacher councils were non-existent in all the schools (Table 26.0).

5.4 Inferences according to Research Questions

1) Decision making on issues regarding day-to-day operations, curriculum implementation, local supervision, personnel and financial management have been transferred to stakeholders at school level.

2) The key decision makers as identified by both teachers and students in curriculum and instructional program, students’ management and welfare and school-community relations were principals and teachers, principals and boards of governors, and principals respectively. Teachers identified the key decision makers in school finance management as the principals and boards of governors.

3) Majority of the students and teachers supported the idea of their involvement in the decision making process. They also indicated that their involvement in decision making process is important since it benefits the school a great way.

4) Students and teachers perceived their involvement in the decision making process in secondary schools as inadequate and adequate respectively.

5) Majority of the students and teachers indicated that their schools had not constituted the necessary structures for their involvement in decision making process.
5.5 Discussion about Findings.

From the analysis of policy and legal documents, it was established that decision making authority in a number of areas has been transferred to the stakeholders at the school level in Kenya. This could be attributed to globalization, democratization and pressure from human rights groups.

Students identified the key decision makers in curriculum and instruction as the teachers, principals and students themselves. Probably because of their position, teachers and principals were viewed as major decision makers by the students. The fact that teachers did attend to lessons daily in classes makes the students perceive them as the key decision makers in curriculum and instruction programmes. This is supported by a study conducted in Nepal which found out that students in Nepal were interested in participating in decision making and perceived teachers as willing to involve them but head teachers had less interests in exploring the children’s’ right\textsuperscript{1}. The principals were also indicated as key decision makers in curriculum and instruction. This could be attributed to the fact that they are basically teachers, the only difference being that they are the link between the schools and higher authorities.

From the students’ responses, they (students) were found out to be key decision makers too. This could be attributed to the fact that majority of them are allowed to determine their future professions through choosing subjects that will drive them to their desired careers. This is supported by researchers who found out that teachers and students were aware of the pupils’ rights to participate in deciding the subjects they
This fair involvement in decision making could be attributed to the fact that the students are the direct beneficiaries of the curriculum and instructional programs, and therefore need to take part in what affects their education. This is collaborated by the argument that the involvement of the students in curriculum issues is likely to increase their interest in education and improve achievement, which in turn make their schools more marketable. There are also school managers who belief that being closest to the students makes them know how best to meet the needs of the students hence tend to make them (students) make more decisions.

The students identified the key decision makers in students’ management and welfare as the principals, teachers and boards of governors (BOGs). The principals and boards of governors (BOGs) were earlier the main decision makers in almost all areas of school management, including students’ management and welfare. This was authenticated by the Education Act of 1968 which necessitated the appointment of BOGs for secondary schools by the Minister of education and the consequent delegation of powers to run the schools. The principals being the secretaries and chief executives of the BOGs had the powers to make decisions in school management. The teachers on the other hand have their immediate supervisor as the principal and by extension they have authority to make decisions in students’ management and welfare, either through legitimate power acquired through their training, employment or age.

Students and parents were not key decision makers in students’ management and welfare. This is collaborated from other studies done earlier such as those which found...
out that students played very little or no role in school management in Kenya. Others found out that there was limited participation of students in decision making. As long as all the stakeholders are not adequately involved in decision making, and especially in matters that concern them, the challenges will still remain. Students particularly must be involved in decision making in management and welfare issues, since these area directly affects them, if this is not addressed, then the number of school strikes will continue rising. Students should play an active role, for example in determining; school rules and regulations, how responsibilities should be delegated to students, disciplinary action against them, type of food provided for supper and lunch and in organizing boarding facilities.

The students indicated the principals as the only key decision makers in school-community relations. This is a reflection that the school-community relations is not considered as important and most likely there has not been any deliberate effort to enhance it. The students are likely to have indicated the principals as the main decision maker in school community relations because whenever outsiders visit their schools, most of them end up at the principal’s office, although he/she may not necessarily be enhancing the school community relations.

Teachers indicated the key decision makers in curriculum and instructional program as the principals and the teachers themselves. Teachers did not perceive students as key decision makers in curriculum and instruction. As argued by some researchers, this could be attributed to the feeling among teachers and school heads
that it was more of their duty to decide for pupils because of their immaturity. The teachers, including the principals are the ones who are in constant touch with the national body (the Kenya Institute of Education) that designs and prepares the curriculum; hence they could have the feeling that they are more involved in making decisions on any curriculum and instructional programs. The teachers do attend workshops and seminars on piloting and experimenting of any new syllabus; hence through the input of their classroom experiences, they are in a way involved. The students’ contributions are assumed in many cases to be communicated through teachers’ experiences in class during the implementation of the curriculum.

Teachers had identified the key decision makers in students’ management and welfare as principals, teachers and boards of governors. Principals are the chief executive officers of the schools hence are viewed as the key decision makers since all decisions made by other stakeholders always comes to him or her for implementation. Teachers, by virtue of their position which has given some legitimate power are also key decision makers in students’ management and welfare. Boards of Governors (BOGs) members who have been identified as one of the key decision makers in students’ management and welfare, have powers delegated by the minister of education through the Education Act of 1968 to manage secondary schools in Kenya. This was collaborated by the finding that many school governance teams and teachers have not yet grasped the concept of students’ participation in decision making and still regard students as ‘children’ and not partners in education.
The respondents indicated that teachers and the principals were the key decision makers in school community relations. This could be attributed to the fact that the teachers are the patrons of clubs and societies that may be engaged in some public relations exercise. The teachers always do report all their activities to the principals hence they do view them as the main decision makers. The teachers did not indicate students as key decision makers; most likely because of the teachers’ mentality that students are immature hence they should make all decisions for them.

Teachers identified the key decision makers in school financial management as the principals and boards of governors. Although teachers have been mandated by the Public Procurement and Disposal Act of 2005 to take charge of procurement and tendering in schools this seems not to have been implemented. This has been collaborated by the research finding that that there is very little teacher consultation and involvement in secondary school budgeting. The reason why stakeholders within the school are not among the key decision makers could be because of corrupt practices that have been inherent in the secondary school systems and have been perfected by principals and some support staff. Although the teachers were not a key decision maker in school finance management, they did not indicate it as an area where they would wish to participate more in decision making. This could be attributed to reasons such as that; teachers do not have the skills in school finance management or they believe that it as a docket that is predominantly for the principal and boards of governors. The other key decision makers in financial management as indicated by the teachers are the boards of governors. Probably the teachers based their
responses on the Education Act of 1968 which mandates the boards of governors to manage among others, school finances.

Most of the students and teachers were of the view that they should be involved in decision making process in secondary process in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya. Most of the teachers and students’ did indicate that their involvement in the decision making process is either significant (Important) or very significant. Some of the reasons used in support of this view were:

a) Involvement of teachers and students in decision making process makes them be part and parcel of the school and makes them own it.

b) Involvement of students in the decision making process prepares them for adult life while for the teachers this is a preparation for higher leadership positions in secondary schools.

c) Students and teachers are very creative and at times do come up with original ideas which may be very useful to the school if implemented.

d) Teachers did argue that they are implementers of most of the academic programs hence there is no way this can be successful without their input.

This finding is fully supported by the argument that people would always want to experience a sense of control of their lives. In support of the importance of participation of other stakeholders in the decision making process in secondary schools, it is argued that this strengthens a commitment to and understanding of democracy. The participation in the decision making process, especially by the
students is said to improve academic performance and the reduce the frequency of school strikes.\(^{12}\)

In order to explain the adequacy of students’ and teachers’ involvement in decision making, very adequate and adequate were compressed together to simply indicate satisfied while inadequate and very inadequate meant dissatisfied. From this argument then, most of the students were dissatisfied with the adequacy of their involvement in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya. This is collaborated by a study done in Kenya that found out that there was no meaningful involvement of students in decision making in Kenya.\(^{13}\) This is also supported by the students’ response that they are only key decision makers in curriculum and instruction.

With most of the students having indicated that they should be involved in decision making process and their perception that participation in decision making process in secondary school is significant, then not adequately involving them in decision making process could be a source of conflict in schools. There seems to be a wide gap between students’ expectations as far as involvement in decision making process is concerned and the actual involvement hence a source of discontentment. This could be a cause of the strikes and unrests that have been experienced of late in secondary schools of Eastern Province, Kenya.

If very adequate and adequate were combined to imply satisfied and inadequate and very inadequate to become dissatisfied, then from the teachers’ response, slightly
more than half (59.9\%) of the teachers sampled are satisfied with their involvement in decision making process. This implies that the teachers are marginally satisfied with the adequacy of their participation in decision making process in their schools. This is collaborated by the teachers’ response where they indicated that they are key decision makers in curriculum and instruction, students’ management and welfare and school-community relations. The only area where they indicated as not key decision makers was in school financial management. Therefore, it could be concluded that the teachers are fairly involved in decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern Province. This is somehow in harmony with the majority teachers’ opinion that their involvement in decision making process is important. The teachers’ expectations as per their involvement in decision making in schools is marginally met. From these findings, it is unlikely that teachers are the instigators of the students’ unrests in many schools since they are marginally satisfied with their participation in decision making.

The study found out that the structure that was commonly used for students’ involvement in decision making was the prefects system, while the students’ councils, whose leaders were elected by the students, were only indicated to be available by just a few students. These findings are collaborated by a study which found out that prefects system was the main structure used in students’ participation in decision making process in Kenya.\textsuperscript{14} Another study also found out that prefects and students’ councils were the main structures used in students’ participation in decision making in Kenya, and the prefects were selected by the teachers based on their performance and good conduct.\textsuperscript{15} Such student leaders are seen as spies who cannot be trusted to
communicate students’ wishes. It has been pointed out that most schools in English-speaking African countries have some form of prefect system. The basic role of the prefects normally is to act as agents of social-control, checking lateness, reporting misbehavior to teachers and generally acting as messengers of staff. The structure in many schools with the prefects system have a unidirectional flow of information and provides no corresponding channels for the students to communicate with their teachers or even the principal.

Students’ councils, whose members should be elected by the students themselves, are the most democratic way of making school decisions. They should also act as a forum where complaints could be voiced and grievances settled or a means by which students would have a better idea of what happens in schools. There is a wide variety in the way students’ councils can be organized, with some being ‘safety valves’ where the principals or teachers listen to students’ problems and explain them away. Thus students’ councils in a democratic structure are able to air the students’ ideas, opinions, ideas and grievances to the relevant authorities. A major argument against students’ councils is that they can easily breed chaos in schools. There have been reported cases of student councils that become so powerful that they literally attempt a coup against school administrations abound.

In an attempt to improve communication and involve students more in decision making in Kenya, other structures such as students open forums ‘barazas’ and the suggestion boxes have been designed. Open forums were strongly proposed by some educationists through which students were required to raise any issues with the
school principal and necessary reactions were given. However provided such structures are in bureaucratic machinery, they are just meant to make the system run but they do not add any value.¹⁸ Due to ineffective structures, there are times when students feel they cannot tolerate the oppressive and dictatorial nature of their schools. When such a time comes, the students will riot regardless of the consequences of their actions. This could be the situation in secondary schools of Eastern province in Kenya, and the outcomes are regular student strikes.

Teacher councils were non-existent in secondary schools since none of the respondents confirmed their existence. This means that teachers participate in decision making individually, not through representation. It was also found out that most of the secondary schools in Eastern Province had not established tender and procurement committees, since only less than a third of the teachers had indicated that their schools had such committees, with most of them, indicating that such had not been constituted. Therefore in most of the secondary schools in Eastern Province, Kenya, there were no tender and procurement committees. This confirms the reason why most of the teachers had indicated that they were not key decision makers in secondary school financial management. The earlier practice before democratization of the country was that the principal and the BOGs were the main decision makers on financial matters, but the trend seemed not to have changed in many secondary schools of Eastern Province. Principals may have purposely refused to form such committees because of some corrupt practices in tendering and procurement, or they may be ignorant of the regulations. Unless these committees are constituted and activated, the purpose of their
establishment which were to democratize education, increase transparency, observe ethical practices in procurement and reduce corruption will never be met.

5.6 Conclusions

Some decision making authority had been decentralized to stakeholders at secondary schools in Eastern province, Kenya. In the opinion of students and teachers, the principals did dominate the decision making process. Students’ actual involvement in the decision making process was not adequate and they wished to participate more. This gap between the actual and desired rate of participation in decision making by the students could be the cause of strikes in many secondary schools in Eastern Province. Though teachers were fairly satisfied with their involvement in the decision making process, they still wished to participate more. The necessary structures for participatory decision making process had also not been established. From these findings it was concluded that decision making process in secondary schools of Eastern province, Kenya was not participatory.

5.7 Suggestions

1) From the study, it was found out that the students’ involvement in decision making process was inadequate and that they desired to participate more. Therefore school authorities should devise strategies to involve students more in decision making. They should specifically target students’ management and welfare, and school-community relations as the management tasks for more
students’ involvement in decision making since these are the areas where they were least involved and desired to be involved more.

2) From the findings, it was found that only slightly more than half of the teacher respondents had indicated the adequacy of their participation in decision making process as either adequate or very adequate. This means that the teachers’ involvement in decision making process was just slightly above the threshold of satisfactory decision making. There is need therefore to involve teachers more adequately in decision making process, and especially in areas where they indicated their desire to participate more.

3) Students’ and teachers’ councils which are the necessary structures for effective participatory decision making process had not been established in most of the secondary schools. It is therefore recommended that such structures are constituted in order to enhance democratic school governance.

5.8 Possible Knowledge Contributes

1) The study enriches the general knowledge base about decision making process in secondary schools.

2) The study adds a new knowledge dimension into democratic governance, especially with the emphasis on students’ participation in decision making process who should be viewed as important stakeholders, and that through their involvement, this will be nurturing democracy.

3) The study has been able to reveal areas where teachers and students are deprived off decision making and makes appropriate suggestions.
5.9 Topics for Further Research

On the basis of the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are the recommendations for further research:

1) Analysis of decision making process in secondary schools of Kenya.

2) A study on the principals’ attitude towards teachers’ and students’ participation in decision making process in Eastern province, Kenya.

3) A study on the perception of the students and teachers on their roles and limits in the school based decision making process.

4) A study on the effectiveness of teacher-student forums (barazas) as a structure in participatory school based management.

5) A study on the relationship between the rate of involvement of teachers and students’ in decision making process in secondary schools and principals’ attributes.
References


5. Kenya Female Advisory Organization.

6. Shumba et al.


18. Sifuna.