Democratization of Student Leaders' Elections and its Effect on Students' Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Meru County, Kenya

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Abstract

Democratization of student leaders' appointment by way of allowing students in public secondary schools to elect their leaders is one of the approaches designed to enhance student discipline. However, the link between this approach and students' discipline has been unclear considering the rise in misconduct among students, which is manifest in periodic destruction of properties in schools and the deterioration of morals among students. This study sought to determine the effect of involving students in electing their leaders on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County. The Bandura's social learning theory of 1977 was critical in guiding this study. The study applied a descriptive survey research design to select ten principals, 196 deputy principals, and 384 student leaders. Schools were stratified into categories, before a systematic sampling technique was applied in each stratum. Both the principals and the deputy principals were purposively selected, while simple random sampling was used in selecting students' leaders. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were utilized in collecting data, while factor analysis, frequencies, percentages and means were computed with the help of SPSS. Ordinal logistical regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis, while the thematic technique was used to analyze the qualitative data. Cases of indiscipline were prevalent in most public secondary schools in Meru County. The study found out that only 52% of schools allowed students to elect their leaders, while 48% had students' leaders appointed by teachers. Many schools lacked elaborate electoral processes and a profound orientation program for students' leaders. Students' involvement in electing their leaders was statistically significant in affecting secondary schools' discipline. The study recommended the Ministry of Education to liaise with principals of secondary schools in streamlining the electoral processes, develop student leadership electoral policy, and devise holistic involvement mechanisms to ensure free and fair elections of students' leaders. Further, the study recommended that principals should educate students on electoral processes and train the elected leaders on effective leadership. The findings of this study have implications on election democracy and methods for electing students' leaders in public secondary schools in Kenya.

1.0 Introduction

Discipline can be defined as the level of one's compliance to the expected norms, values, rules and regulations; or decrees in a given set-up (Ukala, 2018). Njogu et al. (2017) describe discipline as the acquired behaviour resulting from obeying applicable contextual regulations and rules all the times. In the context of a secondary school, the discipline of a student refers to the state of consistent obedience and compliance with the set rules and standards of conduct which results in acceptable behaviour. Any deviation or non-compliance is an act of indiscipline that is usually punished (Sadik, 2018). Indiscipline among students is usually characterized by truancy, riots, absenteeism, fighting, violence, police arrests prompted by a breach of the law, harassment and bullying.

Student discipline in secondary schools has gained attention globally. Many cases of students burning school property, fighting, trouncing, killing, raping, rioting, beating and injuring teachers; threatening, bullying, vandalizing, disrespecting the authority, and other forms of disobedience have continued to be reported in secondary schools in several countries like Malaysia, Canada, India, Sweden, Ghana, Nigeria, and Botswana (Sadik, 2018). This high level of indiscipline has led to the destruction of properties, violence, loss of concentration, and expulsion of students. For example, 400 students were expelled in Malaysia (Azmir & Nizah, 2017); while poor academic performance, and bunking of classes was noted in Sweden (Sandqvist, 2014). This state of affairs is threatening the teaching profession, particularly in the Republic of Canada (Miline & Aurini, 2017).

Indiscipline of students in high schools has also been witnessed and reported widely in many African countries, like Ghana (Ofori et al., 2018). Ali et al. (2014) also reported mischief of students in Nigeria, while several misconduct cases among secondary school students coupled with waves of riots and destruction of properties were reported in Botswana (Njogu et al., 2017). Furthermore, Temitayo et al. (2013) cited regular physical and verbal confrontations which often lead to frequent suspension of classes and expulsion of students in secondary schools in South Africa.

Kenya also has witnessed many horrific indiscipline issues in secondary schools. For instance, the murder of 19 girls in St. Kizito in 1991; the Bombolulu incident in 1998 where 28 girls died; the murder of 4 Nyeri High School prefects in 1999; the killing of 68 students at Kyanguli boys in 2001; the killing of a form three student in Upper Hill secondary school in 2008; and killing of 2 students from Endarasa secondary school in the year 2010 are cases on point. Most recently, in the year 2015, 2 students in Stephjoy secondary school were killed in school. In the year 2016, seven dormitories in Itiero secondary school in Kisii were razed by students after they, were denied permission to watch football (Omboki 2016). In 2017, Further, Kenya experienced a horrific fire incident in Moi Girls killed nine girls (Ochieng 2017).

One teacher was killed in 2019 by three students from Hopewell Secondary School in Nakuru for confiscating a mobile phone that had been sneaked into the school (Macharia, 2019). One form three student from a high school in Kisii was reported to have stabbed two teachers after he was asked to kneel down. Another more recent disturbing incident was reported when a student from Ainamoi secondary school swung a wooden plank at the principal on Wednesday, June 9th 2021, driving the nail into the teacher's head. These are a few documented cases that clearly show a high rate of indiscipline

among secondary school students. These waves of indiscipline were attributed to the change in the Kenyan education system from autocratic to democratic system (Knoester, 2015).

Similar indiscipline cases have also been witnessed in several secondary schools in Meru County. These cases were characterized by burning school facilities, vandalizing, students walking out of school, perpetual riots leading to destruction of property and time wastage (Aboo, 2016; Kiplagat & Oruko, 2015; Mutunga 2012; Njogu et al., 2017). Recently, Ndung'u (2018) reported riots and strikes in sixty-three public secondary schools in Meru County during the first two weeks of July 2018. Republic of Kenya [ROK] (2019) concurred, saying that in the second term of 2018, Meru County was leading in secondary schools with cases of unrest. This warranted the current study to assess how the act of students electing their leaders was affecting the students' discipline in public high schools in Meru County.

Statement of the Problem and Purpose of the Study

The government of Kenya expects secondary school students to be well disciplined. It has therefore established various mechanisms for addressing student discipline. Such mechanisms include introduction of guidelines to address students' discipline after the abolishment of corporal punishment. The government has established various disciplinary procedures and measures such as guidance and counselling and democratization of the school environment. One aspect of democratization is allowing students to elect their leaders (Khatete, 2014). Elected student leadership is expected to play a role in controlling students' behaviour to enhance their discipline (ROK, 2013). Despite these initiatives, waves of riots, strikes, disrespect for teachers and administration are rampant in many

secondary schools in Meru County (Aboo, 2016; Mutunga 2012; Ndung'u, 2018; Njogu et al., 2017; ROK, 2019).

This situation calls for a remedy. Failure to address this problem will result in unabated destruction of properties and unchecked cases of misconduct among students; consequently, raining havoc in school infrastructure and the general education achievement (Simba et al., 2016). Past empirical studies have largely focused on principals' roles and school-based factors, none has linked the democratic changes made in education to the indiscipline of secondary school students in Kenya. The current study took cognizant of education democratization in secondary schools in Kenya and hence examined the effect of students' leaders on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County.

The empirical literature on Involvement of Students in electing their Leaders and their discipline in Secondary Schools

The Bandura's social learning theory of 1977 informed this study. The theory argues that human behaviour is learnt through modelling; hence, the immediate surrounding play a role in influencing students' behaviour. The first step towards fostering democracy in schools is involving students in electing their leaders. This is characterized by creating and establishing systems that foster democratic election, and further involving students in formulating school rules and regulations among other matters that affect them (Muthoka et al., 2018; Sofo, 2016). The act of allowing students to elect their leaders foster inclusion in the decision-making process. Most studies on the discipline of learners and student leadership in high school have addressed student leadership; its impact on academic performance; the role of principals; perceptions of stakeholders; students' leadership styles; and challenges

faced by students' councils (Lyons, 2018; Tan, 2018; Waldon, 2020).

Most secondary schools in Africa are still struggling to embrace education democratization. Very few were reported as allowing students to elect their leaders (Bwankarikari, 2016; Hakiza, 2017; Mttiiri, 2011). Most studies indicated that students' leaders ascended to their positions by appointment (Mttiiri, 2011; Onditi, 2018). However, most high schools in Ghana were reported to have adopted democratic approaches and electoral processes in electing students' leaders (Kuranchie & Affum (2021) where two models of democracy were prevalent in most public secondary schools (Boakye, 2012).

Studies done in Kenya, for example, by Nduta (2018), Ogweno et al. (2016), and Onditi (2018) pointed out that students in most public secondary schools were less involved in electing their leaders and in the decision-making process. There were, however, few schools, as noted by Jepkemboi et al. (2018), Jeruto & Kiprop (2011), Kandie (2017), Nekesa (2017), Ong'injo (2015), and Singoei (2019) where students were accorded opportunities for electing their leaders. However, lack of election policies, advocacy, and awareness programs derailed the effectiveness of elections of student leaders.

2.0 Materials and Methods

The study focused on 395 public secondary schools in Meru County. It employed a correlational research design in investigating the phenomena. Schools were stratified proportionally into categories, and hence questionnaires were distributed to 196 deputy principals and 384 student leaders. Ten principals were purposively selected and interviewed accordingly. The school discipline book was also analyzed to understand the nature of indiscipline cases. Content and construct validity were ensured

and reliability checked using Cronbach alpha coefficient. The tools were also pre-tested before administering them. This helped to improve the instruments to a great extent.

Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 24, where descriptive statistics such as percentage, mean, standard deviations and factor analysis were computed, while inferential statistics (Chi-square and ordinal logistic regression analysis) were used to test the hypothesized relationship. Data from interviews and documents were analyzed using the thematic technique. The findings were presented in tables, figures and narratives.

3.0 Results and Discussion

This study sought to determine the effect of involving students in electing their leaders on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County.

Response Rate

The study had distributed 196 questionnaires to deputy principals, out of which 182 (92.9%) were returned. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to students, from which 284 were returned, representing 74.0 per cent. All the targeted principals and the County Education Officer responded to the study. The good response rate was attributed to adequate preparation and training of research assistants (Kothari, 2014).

Descriptive Statistics on Students Discipline

The principals were asked to comment on the students' discipline with regard to classroom distractions, completion of assignments; respect to other students, truancy, cases of drug abuse, and vigilance in attending to the allocated duties; damaging of school properties, riots, and obedience to school prefects. The responses indicated that students' indiscipline cases in public secondary schools in Meru County were

prevalent. The data gathered from the schools' disciplinary books for the last one year further confirmed the prevalent cases of indiscipline among students of public secondary schools. Most incidences mentioned in the above discussions were categorized as minor cases. There were other cases which were noted in the disciplinary books which were classified as major. These results agree with Kute (2014) who reported major cases of violence and fighting among **Figure 1**

students in USA. Additionally, Kiboiy (2013) also cited major cases of drug abuse, and minor cases of rudeness to other students and teachers, refusal to do punishments and absenteeism as common indiscipline cases.

In the second instance, the study sought to understand how students' leaders ascended to leadership positions. Results were summarized and presented in a pie chart, as shown in Figure 1

How students' leaders gain leadership positions in public secondary schools in Meru County
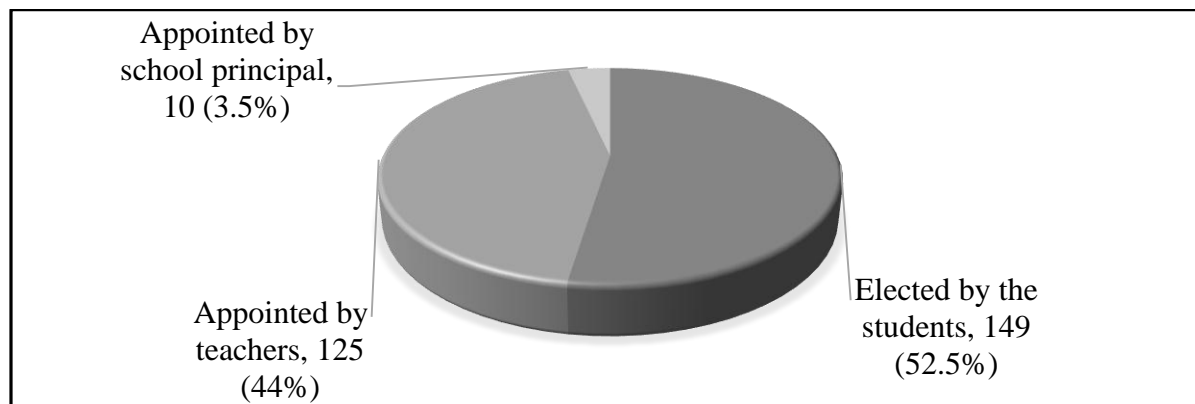
Despite campaigns and advocacy on the democratization of education, it was surprising to note that only about half of the public secondary schools in Meru County, 149 (52.5%), were allowing students to elect their leaders. The rest of the schools had either students' leaders appointed by teachers, 12 (44%) or appointed by the principals 10 (3.5%). Failing to involve students in electing their leaders can make the students perceive leaders as imposed, and this is likely to elicit resistance and disobedience amongst students.

The findings agree with Murage (2014), who observed that the most commonly used form of student involvement in decision making was the perfect system where teachers and principals appointed students who represent the others in management meetings. The

findings by Kagendo (2018) disagreed with the current study. According to Kagendo, students (89.5%) were electing their student council members in most secondary schools. In few schools, teachers and the principals (10.5%) were appointing prefects to participate in the board of management meetings.

Although Kagendo (2018) found that students selecting their leaders was a common practice in most secondary schools, there was trouble allowing them to participate in meetings where decisions regarding students' matters were discussed. In the second instance, the study sought to understand whether students were allowed to vie for any leadership position in the school as per school policy, whether they were given equal/ same conditions of being elected,

whether they were supplied with electoral cards, whether those vying for various positions were given time to promote their manifestos; whether those vying for various positions were given time for campaigns, whether they got designated time for the election, and whether they are represented in the school electoral commission. Results from deputy principals were presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Responses from deputy principals on involvement of student in electing their own leaders in public secondary schools in Meru County

Sentiments on involvement of student in electing their own leaders (N = 182)	Factor loading	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
Time is designated for electoral process and election for student leaders	.656	2.51	1.131	.563	.180	-.907	.358
Student are allowed to vie for any leadership position in the school as guided in the policy	.511	2.50	.973	.963	.180	.095	.358
All students vying for various positions are given equal/ same conditions of being elected	.706	2.48	1.081	.906	.180	-.307	.358
All students are presented with electoral cards to vote for student leaders of their choice	.735	2.31	.948	.959	.180	.436	.358
The school gives time for vying students to promote their manifesto	.683	2.31	.989	1.033	.180	.365	.358
Students are usually represented in the school electoral commission	.566	2.27	1.152	.782	.180	-.351	.358
The school usually sets aside time for campaigns for student vying for leadership positions	.704	2.25	1.087	1.007	.180	.242	.358
Summation		2.38	1.052				
KMO = .913							
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = .000							

Data collected on this construct was skewed as indicated by skewness statistics and Kurtosis values, hence, did not exhibit normality. A factor analysis in Table 4.13 indicates that most sentiments as perceived by deputy principals on involvement of students in electing their own leaders in public secondary schools loaded well, where all occurrences had a factor Eigen value above 0.5; with an overall KMO value of .913 and a Bartlett's test of sphericity being significant (P= .000). This shows that all indicators on involvement of students in electing their own leaders were weighty and worth considering.

All aspects of involvement of students in electing their own leaders in public secondary schools showed a summated mean value of 2.38 and standard deviation of 1.052. This meant that only 87 (47.6%) deputy principals who agreed with the aspects of involvement of student in electing their own leaders in public secondary schools. According to majority of deputy principals, only two aspects of involving students in electing their own leaders were widely practiced in most public secondary schools. These were: time is designated for electoral process and election for student leaders (mean = 2.51); and that student are allowed to vie for any leadership position in the school as guided in the policy (mean = 2.50).

Notably, most deputy principals disagreed that schools give time for vying students to promote their manifesto (mean = 2.31), students are usually represented in the school electoral commission (mean = 2.27), and schools usually set aside time for campaigns for students vying for leadership positions (mean = 2.25) respectively. These findings are painting a picture of a weak system of involving students in electing their own leaders in most public secondary schools in Meru County. Probably most schools focus on academic achievement and completion of syllabus, hence less time for election-related activities. Responses from students are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Responses from students on the involvement of the student in electing their leaders in public secondary schools in Meru County

Sentiments on the involvement of the student in electing their leaders (N = 284)	Factor loading	Mean Statistic	Std. Deviation Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error
Time is designated for the electoral process and election for student leaders	.607	2.43	1.182	.680	.145	-.642	.288
Student are allowed to vie for any leadership position in the school as guided in the school policy	.558	2.42	1.082	.648	.145	-.471	.288
The school gives time for vying students to promote their manifesto	.644	2.26	1.117	.827	.145	-.331	.288

All students vying for various positions are given equal/ same conditions of being elected	.730	2.18	1.061	.970	.145	.221	.288
All students are presented with electoral cards to vote for student leaders of their choice	.605	2.12	1.095	.952	.145	.148	.289
The school usually sets aside time for campaigns for student vying for leadership positions	.711	2.09	1.097	.907	.145	-.154	.288
Students are usually represented in the school electoral commission	.622	2.01	1.052	.842	.145	-.125	.288
Summation		2.22	1.098				
KMO = .890							
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity = .000							

The findings in Table 1 clearly show that all indicators regarding involving students in electing their leaders had a factor Eigenvalue above 0.5, with an overall KMO value of .890 and Bartlett's test of sphericity being significant (P= .000). The findings also show a summated mean value of 2.22 and a standard deviation of 1.098. However, the data was observably skewed as indicated by skewness statistics and Kurtosis values, hence, did not exhibit normality. Notably, the mean values are conspicuously below the expected average of 2.5. This meant a general disagreement (mean is below 2.5 in each case) among students on all aspects of involving students in electing their leaders in public secondary schools. This implies that democratization of education which is expected to be realized through the involvement of students in electing their leaders was less evident in most secondary schools in Meru County.

It was surprising that in most public secondary schools, students are rarely presented with electoral cards to vote leaders of their choice. Additionally, many schools do not set aside time for campaigns for those students vying for leadership positions, and that students are hardly represented in the school electoral commission. This indicates severe weaknesses in the democratization of the electoral process in public secondary school. This can be the genesis of alienation of students in administration and consequent dissatisfaction among students. Moreover, lack of proper involvement of students in the electoral process may nurture a feeling of objection, disobedience, and hostility; and is likely to lead to indiscipline. These findings illustrate a weak system of involving students in electing their own leaders in most public secondary schools in Meru County. The study presupposed that most schools were focusing on academic achievement and finishing of syllabus, hence less time for election-related activities.

An earlier study done in Mombasa by Nekesa (2018) underpinned the role of students' councils in fostering obedience, instilling motivation, and creating a spirit of belongingness that goes a long way in improving students' discipline.Nekesa

documented the criteria for electing student leaders and demonstrated how priorities were given to campaigning, selling manifestos, and the election itself. Although involvement of students in electing their leaders is crucial in the democratization of the education process, and in addressing students' discipline, some principals also blamed it for the many cases of indiscipline witnessed in most public secondary schools.

Principal number 10 explained;

"Students chose popular leaders who may be indisciplined".

Principal number 6 added;

"Sometimes students view the elected leaders as their appointees who should therefore serve them according to their wish and not to 'betray' them".

Principal number 2 noted;

"Prefects are answerable to students who elected them and are under the mercy of students; therefore, they can never be strict to students".

Many principals further said that some elected student leaders misuse their power and mandate. Regrettably, some student leaders had given speeches meant to lecture teachers.

Principal number 9 gave an example saying, *"one of the form two classes decided to revoke the election of their perfect whom they referred to as a dictator".* Most principals noted that the prefects who executed their duties as expected were often branded dictators; hence, they were hated and disrespected.

When contacted for explanation on the time students are given for campaigns and selling of their manifestos, principal number 5 said,

"The campaigns have done before election usually divide students' body into several camps depending on the number of candidates, so those who do not vote the winner have disrespect for the winning perfect and therefore do not follow their instructions; a time they insult them".

The above situation reported by principals indicate a need for moderation and guidance in the electoral process in public secondary schools. Principals' leadership is also critical in ensuring that the electoral process does not cause divisions among students. The same should be entrenched in the students' council policy document for smooth administration and oversight.

The establishment of student leadership electoral process was hypothesized to have had an effect on students' discipline in public secondary schools. The responses from both deputy principals (88.8%) and student leaders (90.98%) on student discipline were analyzed accordingly. The results from the respondents and document analysis revealed prevalence of cases of indiscipline among students, such as staying away from school (truancy), inability to finish assignments on time, damaging school property, drug abuse, noise-making in classrooms, refusal to take notes, disrespect for prefects and teachers; improper dressing, violence and fighting; sneaking out of school and lateness. In addition, indiscipline cases amongst students were attributed to the banning of corporal punishment.

Testing of hypothesis on the involvement of students in electing their leaders on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County

The null hypothesis stated that the student's involvement in electing their leaders did not affect students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County. Ordinal logistic regression was applied since the data was not normally distributed. Analyzed information on the fitness of the model and goodness-of-fit is presented in Tables 3.

Table 3

Model fitting information for involving the student in electing their leaders and discipline of students

Model	-2 Log Likelihood	Chi-Square	df	Sig.	Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)
Intercept Only	238.390				.765
Final	220.550	17.840	3	.000	

Link function: Logit.

Table 3 shows P = 0.000, hence, less than 0.05, which means that the model has statistically significant predictive capacity. It is also clear that the student's involvement in electing their leaders predicts 76.5% of the variations in the discipline of students in public secondary schools in Meru County, as indicated by Nagelkerke R square values. However, the results are based on one independent variable.

The study further tested whether the observed data is having a goodness of fit with the fitted model. The decision rule is to reject the underlying null hypothesis if P-value is less than 0.05. The null hypothesis state that the observed data is having the goodness of fit with the fitted model. Table 3 shows the result on goodness-of-fit.

Table 4

Goodness-of-Fit for involving the student in electing their leaders and discipline of students

		Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
Deputies' responses	Pearson	60.754	75	.883
	Deviance	69.407	75	.660

Link function: Logit.

The results in Table 4 show χ^2 (df 75) = 60.754; p= .883. Therefore, the study fails to reject the null hypothesis that the observed data has the goodness of fit with the fitted model. This means that the model fit the data well. Therefore, the results imply that the data on the involvement of students in electing their leaders is fit for predicting the discipline of students in public secondary

schools in Meru County. Since the model was reliable, it was used to determine the parameter estimates on the student's involvement in electing their leaders. The estimates are critical in showing how the independent variable is influencing the dependent variable in this model. The results on parameter estimates are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Parameter estimates for involving the student in electing their leaders and discipline of students

		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Responses from deputies							95% Confidence Interval	
Location	X1	4.212	.336	156.731	1	.000	3.553	4.872

Link function: Logit.

From Table 5, it can be observed that a marginal increase in the student's involvement in electing their leaders positively increases the logit of the students' discipline. This means that as the scores of the independent variable increases, there is an increased probability of falling at a higher level on the dependent variable, when all other factors are held constant. The result shows that involvement of the student in electing their leaders is a statistically significant predictor of students' discipline; where, for every one-unit increase in the involvement of the student in electing their leaders, there is a predicted statistically significant increase of 4.212 (P= .000) in the log odds likelihood (logit) of falling at a higher level on the students' discipline.

Since the p-values in Table 3 and Table 5 were less than alpha level (p<0.05), then the null hypothesis of this study which stated that 'the involvement of the student in electing their leaders did not affect students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County' was rejected, and it was concluded that the involvement of students in electing their leaders had a statistically significant effect on students' discipline in public secondary schools in Meru County. Similar observations were noted by Nekesa (2018), who emphasized the need for a straightforward electoral process. Ogweno et al. (2016) further underscored the need for democracy in students' election, noting that secondary schools which had suggestion boxes, held students meetings, and forums and elected their student leaders had scored higher in students' discipline construct. Both studies supported the idea of allowing students to elect their leaders and involving the elected leaders in decision-making. The involvement of students in electing their leaders and their participation in decision making was regarded as very critical in minimizing students' unrest in public secondary schools (Singoei, 2019; Jepkemboi et al., 2018).

The results show that although students are rarely involved in electing their leaders, the act of involvement has repercussions on students' discipline in public secondary schools. Failure to involve students in electing their leaders diminishes the spirit of democracy and is likely to fan discord and discontentment, which ultimately affect discipline in school. The study by Kandie (2017) reported that secondary school administrators who failed to involve students in decision-making had more disciplinary issues than those that did. Kuranchie and Affum (2021) and Hakiza (2016) noted that in schools where students were involved in decision-making and electing their leaders, notable improvements in both discipline and

academic achievements were noted. Muthui et al. (2018) also supported this proposition, arguing that prefects in secondary schools should be treated like a link between the administration and their fellow students; hence, creating a sense of ownership and respect, which are enhanced democracy in education.

4.0 Conclusion

The study established that approximately half of public secondary school students' representatives in Meru County were appointed either by teachers or principals. The results indicate weak systems of involving students in electing their leaders in Meru County. Majority of schools had weak electoral processes and mechanisms for involving students in electing their leaders. Very few schools set aside time for campaigning and promoting manifestos, and only a few were ensuring students' representation in the electoral commission. Majority of schools criticized the system of allowing students to elect their leaders, saying that it was causing the rise of indiscipline cases witnessed in most public secondary schools. This was because students have a high propensity to elect leaders who would favour them. Some were electing notorious and rebellious leaders who incite conflicts between students and the school management. In other cases, the conflicts and misunderstanding lead to riots and unrest in the school. Nevertheless, the democratic practices of allowing students to elect their leaders were found crucial in addressing students' discipline in public secondary schools.

5.0 Recommendations

The Ministry of Education should develop policy and guidelines for election of student leaders in secondary schools. These guidelines should include elaborate electoral process, electoral body, a designated time for an election, and campaigning regulations. The principals should organize sensitization meetings with all stakeholders to create awareness and educate students on the electoral process and regulations governing the students' election. The principals should further ensure that the electoral body is well constituted to include students' representatives. The findings of this study should inject changes in the students' leadership election by emphasizing the adoption of democratic practices in the entire process. Further, the Ministry of education should devise monitoring systems to enforce students' election in all secondary schools. The findings of this study have significant implications on legislation and policy framework regarding education democratization in public secondary schools in Meru County.

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