Original Article

Influence of Students Leaders' Selection Criteria on Management of Student Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Tigania West Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The success of the teaching-learning process in school is dependent upon the quality of students' discipline. However, indiscipline among students is on the rise in public secondary schools. The issue of student strikes, fear of examinations, leading to cheating and the burning of school property has become one of the serious problems being faced by the country's school principals. In light of this, the study sought to investigate selection criteria for the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Tigania West Sub-County, Kenya. The study is based on Douglas Murray McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y. The research employed a descriptive survey study. The population of the study consisted of 10 principals, 44 teachers and 80 student leaders to a total of 134 respondents, stratified random sampling was used to categorise schools into four: mixed day schools, boarding boys, boarding girls, and mixed boarding schools. Then 30% of principals were selected, while other categories were 10% each. The main research instrument was a questionnaire. The researcher piloted the questionnaires in one public secondary school, and the test-retest technique was used to assess the reliability of the research instrument. Quantitative data collected was analysed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences version 21 to get the percentages and generate tables, charts, and figures for interpretation. The study established that the selection is mainly based on the academic performance and discipline of the individual, and this allows the selection of disciplined individuals with academic merit and good personality as leaders. The study concluded that the selection of student leaders by involving both teachers and students could enhance the ability of student leaders to promote student discipline. The study recommends that the selection of student leaders should involve both teachers and students in a democratic manner to avoid any disruption of academic work due to students feeling short-changed.

INTRODUCTION

Student leaders have improved educational leadership mostly as a result of their proximity to their classmates and dorm mates; this is done to teach them participatory leadership qualities that will serve them well in the workplace and in their personal lives after graduation. In the 1960s, American students in secondary education began realising they needed to be more actively involved in school governance. The phenomenon eventually reached the rest of the globe. Bush (2018) has stated that in the United States of America, schools have programmes offered to school leaders that give them opportunities over time to engage in cumulative learning about their leadership roles. These are designed to improve adherence to school rules, respect, punctuality and perform well in their studies. These programmes seek to bring together different kinds of leaders in arrangements that provide a mutually reinforcing network to maintain discipline in their schools.

In the past, student leaders at many schools in the United Kingdom and other commonwealth countries had so much influence that they were able to manage the school outside of the classroom. They even went so far as to impose physical punishment. On the other hand, this was modified not too long ago (Welsh & Little, 2018). In today's schools, student leaders serve as ambassadors of the whole student population and embody the most admirable characteristics that a school's student body has to offer. They are responsible for acting as monitors of the behaviour of other pupils both inside and outside of the classroom. They are responsible for maintaining overall hygiene and controlling the noise level in the classroom. Student leaders are responsible for directing extracurricular activities such as sports and clubs, supervising the work done in community spaces, and ensuring that meals are provided on time and are of high quality.

Mbugua (2013) cites a study carried out in Canada on the role of students' involvement in educational policymaking in Canadian school systems. It shows that it is important for students to be given a formal role in policymaking that affects their lives in school. This has reduced cases of student unrest in their schools, hence, posting good performance in school.

According to Mutiso (2013), in South Africa, all learners who have completed at least one year of high school are eligible to vote for other learners to serve on the representative council for learners. When voting, they consider ability, good character, and leadership qualities. Eckstein (2008) contends that to eliminate negative aspects of the system, the administration has introduced changes in the selection and preparation of prefects, and adequate support is given to new leaders to settle in the office. When leaders are given more autonomy, they are better able to prevent and respond to issues like student strikes, bullying, hostility, violence, and contempt for authority figures and co-workers.

In Botswana, prefect selection in public secondary schools is carried out by fellow learners, but members of the teaching staff have to approve or disapprove of the names (Mothoteng, 2016). Once a full list of prefects is in place, the school authorities organise a handover ceremony. This handover exercise includes a briefing on what is expected of the incoming prefects. Pattenden (2018) points out that student leaders are key stakeholders who should not be excluded from decision-making. He advises that it would be wise to involve them in management activities by building capacity in them in terms of equipping them with certain skills and bodies of knowledge.

Selected student leaders must be provided with the training and resources they need to effectively manage themselves, their peers, their time, their responsibilities at school, and their academic pursuits. Without clear instructions, prefects get overwhelmed and confused when given more tasks (Mutiso, 2013). He argues that it is asking too much of students to calm down aggressive adolescents who are experiencing emotional distress. Prefects should focus on finding a balance between their duties as students and student leaders.

In comparison to the chances that are presented by the curriculum in schools, the opportunities that are offered to instructors to evaluate the unique abilities of their students via the implementation of school programs with the cooperation of both students and teachers are far more beneficial. Even though the principal is ultimately and officially responsible for these things, the duty of arranging activities and maintaining discipline is really divided among the instructors, the students, and the administration of the school (Mutiso, 2013). This is despite the fact that the principal is technically in charge of these things. Leadership may be shown in any endeavour and in every activity in which an individual participates. According to Mulindwa (2010), it may take place in families, places of employment, educational institutions, and even among groups of friends. As a result, leadership is an essential component in the process of operating businesses. Realising your own leadership potential requires you to have a good understanding of who you are, to have a clear vision that can be effectively conveyed, to have built trust among your peers, and to have taken successful action.

Leaders have many roles and responsibilities. They must be visionaries, managers, and problem solvers, whether they are leading a company or leading a school (Martin & Collie, 2019). Effective leaders possess skills that come naturally and, for others, are developed over time. As these skills are developed, leaders become more effective in serving and guiding others.

According to Valdebenito et al. (2018), the phrase "discipline management" is often used when referring to "behaviour modification." This is for good cause. It is basically about creating behavioural standards and making certain that those standards are adhered to. It is essential for students to demonstrate appropriate conduct in order to create an atmosphere conducive to learning. According to Mulindwa (2010), due to the fact that it teaches conformity to social standards, discipline is considered to be not only an essential but also an essential component of the educational process.

These are the important student leaders who are expected to play a significant part in the day-to-day operations of the school, and they are known as "prefects." You can find "prefects" at almost every school, and they are the people who are tasked with the job of guiding other people. According to Kubutha and Naituli (2011), student leaders are those who are tasked with the job of enforcing rules and regulations as well as organising other students towards orderliness to facilitate the fulfilment of planned education goals. Monitors, prefects, councillors, secretaries, chairpeople, and captains are some examples of leadership roles that may be held by students. They contribute to the maintenance of school discipline and order, assist in preventing bullying and inappropriate language usage, and discourage students from using

inappropriate language. In essence, they serve as examples for the rest of the student population to follow.

Student leaders at each school depend on the school's rules and regulations as a basis for their efforts to persuade their fellow students to comply with those rules and regulations. It goes without saying that each school is distinct and has its own set of rules and regulations. In a case study on the democratisation of Wolves' Hampton Grammar School in Britain, Hill (2007) advocated for power sharing among teachers and students in the educational setting. According to Wambua (2010), student leaders who are adequately empowered to assume responsibility for their educational judgments and for the repercussions of those decisions carry out their responsibilities effectively. Mulindwa (2010) argues that in order for prefects to earn the respect of their fellow students, they must be given sufficient authority. This sense of agency may be exercised in a variety of contexts, including the mentoring and capacity-building processes that precede their assumption of administrative responsibilities. But in their administrative capacities, are our student leaders given the authority to really exercise that authority and to actively engage in decisions that directly impact students?

Their capacity to maintain and handle emerging student indiscipline like strikes, bullying, aggression, violence, and disrespect toward teachers and other employees can be impacted by a lack of empowerment in their administrative responsibilities, the criteria used to select the leaders, and the failure to identify and address their needs. Student leaders must be chosen, trained, and given the tools they need to manage their time, their peers, their responsibilities at school, and their academics. Prefects get confused and agitated when given tasks without the right direction (Mutiso, 2013).

The lack of student compliance with school rules has become a concern in Kenyan schools.

According to Mutiso (2013), expecting angry teenage pupils to be tamed while they are going through internal turmoil is asking a little too much from kids. Mutiso argues that this is an unfair expectation to place on students. There is a need for a heightened focus on finding a balance between the duties of prefects as students and as student leaders in the community.

According to Griffin (1996), prefects play an essential part in the process of maintaining student discipline and exercising authority over other students in public secondary schools. They see to it that the directions that have been given by the professors and the administration are carried out. In a similar spirit, Griffin (1996) contends that in order to aid in the smooth operation of the school, it is necessary for every school to have a prefect system that is both efficient and effective. Every school ought to devise methods for the establishment of such a system, including the appropriate selection of prefects, the in-house training of prefects to be successful leaders, the development of teams, and the inculcation of morals and appropriate attitudes in their administrative responsibilities.

The position of student leader comes with a significant amount of responsibility and serves as an essential link between the student body and the administration. According to Mutiso (2013), being a leader is an admirable objective, and holding a position of leadership provides students with the opportunity to open their minds to higher levels of responsibility while also contributing to their own personal growth.

The issue of student discipline in Kenya's public secondary schools is not a new one, and it has been discussed at length in educational forums for quite some time. As a result, task teams have been formed to investigate the causes of disturbances in secondary schools. In Kenya, the Ministry of Education (MOE) has taken many steps, including the establishment of student councils, with the intention of reducing the number of instances of indiscipline that occur in educational institutions. In

the year 2009, the Ministry of Education issued rules that specified how schools were meant to begin democratically choosing prefect bodies via student councils. These recommendations emphasised the need for transparency and accountability in the election process. The elections are supposed to be student-driven in which prospective leaders campaign and be elected by their peers.

Several incidents of student indiscipline have nevertheless been recorded, despite these measures. This points to a breakdown in communication between the school's administration and student government. As stated by Mutiso (2013), any prefect body worth its salt would report any acts of premeditated violence to the proper authorities.

In this sense, the student leaders in the reported schools could be said not to have played their administrative role. The student leaders in schools might have been participants in planning and destroying the school's property. This study, therefore, sought to establish the extent to which student leaders' empowerment influences the management of discipline in public sec schools in Tigania West Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, the issue of student indiscipline is a growing problem for teachers, parents, administrators, and the government. Destruction of property through the unrest in secondary schools dominates the media. The challenges presented by the strikes call for bold, proactive actions.

Joyce (2013), quoting the findings of the Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association (KSSHA), established that the core causes of unrest rested with the administration of student affairs as the existing system allowed students to play little role in running the schools. She further argues student councils aim to involve students in the running of the school as opposed to the prefecture system.

Although Kenyan secondary schools try to practice participatory management styles (Mbugua, 2013), evidence on the ground indicates that the indiscipline of students in Tigania West sub-county secondary schools has, in fact, remained quite problematic. The performance of student leaders is not meeting present objectives. Eleven schools experienced unrest by the end of May 2016 (DEOs office, Tigania West Sub-County). Since it is not clear why student leaders' participation in school management has not translated into improved discipline, the study aims to investigate the extent to which schools empower student leaders to meaningfully participate in school management as a strategy for improving school discipline. This forms the basis for the researcher to find out the empowerment of student leaders.

Research Objective

The study was guided by the following specific objective: To examine the influence of selection criteria on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in Tigania West sub-county, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Literature Review

Theories of leadership, regardless of the period, are propelled by the theorist's own beliefs and aspirations (Mulindwa, 2010). One belief is the need of staying abreast of social difficulties and their implications for the most effective management of human groupings in light of rapid societal change. The shift from a focus on individual leaders and behaviour to a focus on the valued ends of the systems that leaders lead has helped to redirect attention from the management of schools to leadership (Brooks et al., 2017). Such a leadership agenda suggests a new set of roles and responsibilities in schools.

The effectiveness of any school must be measured by what contributions it has made to improve the learning of the school students. This may not be

achieved when there is poor leadership (Mugizi et al., 2022). Thus, in any organisation, the most important figures are the leaders since they are responsible for directing them towards the achievement of set goals. But not all organisations have been able to live up to their stated aims and objectives if their leaders are wanting.

Schools have to provide students with social ideals of being obedient to authority (Mulindwa, 2010). This can be achieved when a school has sanctioned and empowered student leadership that oversees and monitor students' behaviour to maintain a high degree of discipline. The success or failure of a school depends on many factors, among them being the kind of leadership offered by the leader (Day & Sammons, 2016).

A common aspect of schools that concerns those who wish to see improvement in educational outcomes is the way they are organised to meet the critical educational needs of their students. The evolution in thinking about the empowerment of school leaders reflects a dance between ideas about what individuals do and the capacity built on them to influence school life and the responsiveness of the school as a learning organisation (Day & Sammons, 2016). At the end of the day, the idea that a principal provides a series of innovative ideas, resource acquisition, and empowerment continues to hold a prominent place in policy and practice.

Empirical Literature

The student is the centre of all school activities (Griffin, 1996). What Dr. Griffin Contends here is that in the management of schools, the leaders should have the interests of the students before anything else. Their rights and welfare ought to be enhanced to allow social, intellectual, and personal growth in an orderly school environment. Educational leaders in Kenya face the challenge of shifting from a constraining and controlling bureaucracy to one that is outcomes and accountability driven.

The prefectorial system of leadership in England was started as a result of the great influence of traditional education upon the public system of schools (Wambua & Okoth, 2017). It operates in many English schools from primary to secondary school level, where each class has a monitor. The functions of prefects in different schools vary extensively. Prefectorial duties in England schools include the policing of school premises and activities, acting as guides to visitors, acting as stewards at school functions and supervising other pupils during assembly and class. The prefects may give out small penalties like additional chores and can propose harsher measures if necessary. Even these prefects need to get together formally to talk about issues and plans (Arimi, 2014).

Most commonly, prefects are appointed by the headmaster from among the senior pupils in schools upon recommendations by the teachers. Apart from seniority parse, other factors like ability, good character and leadership qualities are considered. Certain schools have implemented adjustments in the selection, preparation, and duties of the prefects to remove undesirable parts of the system and improve the public's perception of the prefects' power. Colonial education in Africa reinforced the bureaucratic form of Western-style school administration established in the colonies by emphasising loyalty as the fundamental pillar of education (Mulindwa, 2010).

When concerns occur, they are dealt with heavy-handed authoritarianism, and animosity rises, which may escalate to violence (Sifuna, 2000). The new African leaders scarcely questioned this ethos of education. It is evident that the issue of how student leaders obtained power is a big element in the occurrence of strikes and riots in a lot of African secondary schools (Fordham, 2003). This is shown by the fact that there are strikes and riots. No one should ever be chosen to the position of prefect only due to their popularity among their classmates or because they are a favourite of the faculty or administration at their school. Instead, the students

and the faculty need to agree unanimously on each candidate for the position of prefect (Griffin, 1994). In South Africa, all learners from grade eight onwards are allowed to vote for learners who will serve in the Representative Council of Learners (Mutiso, 2013). While carrying out a study in Nigeria, Culp (2019) found that when students were asked if they thought it was a good thing to have prefects who are democratically elected, they overwhelmingly approved it.

The student leaders in a school can be compared to workers in an organisation whose participation will lead to efficient and effective operations of the school (Koli, 2006). Leaders come in many forms, usually known as prefects. They are either selected by their peers or picked by the administration to lead others. They undergo a selection process in which they are vetted by the teachers and the head teacher. The students then vote for their leaders (Prefectorial News, 2004). According to Mutiso (2013), the regulations that apply to the discipline of students are riddled with conflicts and inconsistencies, particularly considering the various concepts of involvement by other students. This shows that one of the sources of tension might be the problem of students not being able to engage completely in the decision-making process of the governing body of the school.

Student involvement in school governance has been linked to improved learning and the instillation of positive values in children, according to a 2008 survey conducted by the United Nations agency UNICEF in collaboration with the Kenyan government's Ministry of Education. The success of a school depends on the administration's willingness to address student concerns raised by elected student leaders. According to Ahmadi and Ahmadi (2020), student participation in school governance and shared decision-making may lead to better educational outcomes. As a result, Mbugua (2013) recommends that schools give kids a voice in disciplinary decisions.

Due to changes in technology, culture, and other growing human rights problems, the position of student leaders in school administration is getting more and more complicated in Kenya and other areas of the globe (Mutiso, 2010). The principal and other stakeholders should not undervalue the contributions of students, particularly if they are given a chance to improve their talents, according to Mati et al. (2016). This argument lends credence to the notion that the nomination of student leaders needs to be democratic and carried out with due care for the purpose of ensuring that the appropriate group of prefects is selected, which is necessary for successful leadership. The ideas that Kiprop (2020) has brought about the appointment of prefects are shared by Profiroiu and Negoiță (2022). He argues that it is preferable to give them permission to run democratic elections since this gives the administration the opportunity to recruit student leaders who will assist the group or school in achieving its goals.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: a conceptual framework
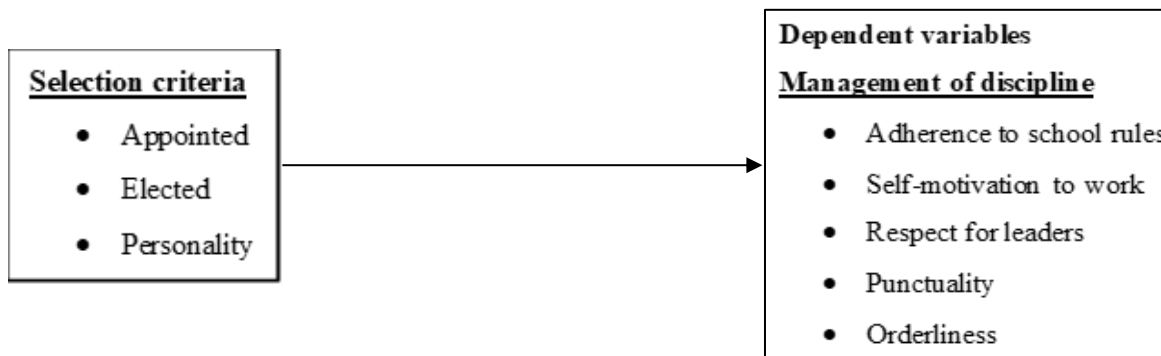
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research used a descriptive survey approach to provide an accurate account of the current condition of affairs. A descriptive survey, as defined by Kothari (2014), is one that seeks to describe, document, analyse, and report existing situations. Research of this kind may be used to assess the status quo and provide the foundation for future action. Thus, in this study, discipline management was the dependent variable, while student leaders' empowerment was the independent variable. So, the researcher investigated the administrative strategies used to empower student leaders to manage discipline in public secondary schools of Tigania West Sub-County.

Target Population

According to Kiruma (2004), who cited Borg and Gall (1989), the target population is a study of all the individuals who make up a real or fictitious group of individuals, occasions, or things to whom an investigator desires to apply the findings of the research study. Only public secondary schools in Kenya's Tigania West sub-county were used for this investigation. According to the office of the sub-county director of education, this sub-county is home to 34 public secondary schools. Of the 34 schools, twenty-one are mixed-day secondary schools, five are mixed boarding schools, three are pure boys boarding and five are exclusively girls' boarding schools. The total student leaders (prefects) population in these schools is 800.

Sampling Procedures and Techniques

This study sampled 30% of the schools. This percentage is required for a smaller population. On the other hand, the study used a sample size of 10% of teachers and student leaders. This gave 44 teachers out of the 440, and 10% of 800 student leaders were 80. The total number of respondents was, therefore, 10 principals, 44 teachers and 80 student leaders to yield hundred and thirty-four (134) respondents. Each of the 10 schools included in the sample were allocated an equal number of teachers and student leaders. Every school contributed 4 teachers of the required 44, 8 student leaders of the required 80. The researcher used the lottery technique of the simple random sampling method to select the required eight student leaders in each school.

Research Instruments

Data were gathered by the researcher using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was used for this research because participants were considered to be literate and capable of providing sufficient answers to the question questions. The questionnaire was made up of four categories of structured questions. Category A contained questions for the school principals to obtain information related to qualification experience, causes of indiscipline and empowerment strategies for student leaders. Category B was for teachers.

Reliability Test

When an instrument is reliable, it consistently measures the things it is designed to measure. In one public school, pilot research was carried out; it was excluded from the main investigation. The results of the piloted instrument answers were input into the SPSS software and tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The questionnaire's overall reliability coefficient was 0.8. This suggested that the tool was trustworthy when used for data collecting. (Chong, 2003) is quoted by Mulindwa (2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

The study sampled a total of 134 respondents comprising ten principals, 44 teachers and 80 student leaders. A total of 110 respondents comprising six principals, 36 teachers and 68 student leaders, returned their questionnaires. This constitutes an 82.1% return rate which is sufficient

to answer research questions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013), a response rate of 50% or more is adequate. The response was adequate and deemed reliable for making the final study conclusion. The composition of respondents was essential since it represents all groups that deal with issues related to the student council and its role in mitigating student discipline.

Respondent Demographic Information

The researcher sought to know the distribution of demographic information of student leaders, which included gender, form/class, and school type. The results are summarised in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Student leaders' demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Response	Frequency	Percent
Sex of the student	Male	46	67.6
	Female	22	32.4
Year of Study	Form 1	2	2.9
	Form 2	14	20.6
	Form 3	24	35.3
	Form 4	28	41.2
Type of school	Girls Boarding	11	16.2
	Mixed boarding	15	22.1
	Boy boarding	30	44.1
	Mixed day	12	17.6

Findings in *Table 1* reveal that out of 68 respondents who participated in this study, 46 (67.6%) were males, and 22 (32.4%) were females. In addition, a considerable number of the students sampled were in form three and four constituting 52 (76.5%). The justification for having many student leaders in forms three and four was that this category had spent more years in secondary schools. This fact made them fit to supply the required information in this research. The results indicated that student leaders were drawn from different types of schools, with 11 (16.2%) from girls boarding, 15 (22.1%)

from mixed boarding, 30 (44.1%) from boys boarding and 12 (17.6%) from mixed day. This was congruent with Onditi (2018), who sampled respondents from various categories of schools in his study on managing student discipline via student leadership. This implies that all types of schools were represented, and hence the information gathered could be generalised to all secondary schools within the study location.

Demographic data of teachers was also gathered. The results are summarised in *Table 2*.

Table 2: Teacher's demographic characteristics

Characteristic	Response	Frequency	Percent
Type of school	Boys boarding	18	50.0
	Girls boarding	9	25.0
	Mixed boarding	9	25.0
Sex of the teacher	Male	24	66.7
	Female	12	33.3
Duration in the current school	Less than 2 years	15	41.7
	2 to 3 years	6	16.7
	3 to 5 years	6	16.7
	5 years and above	9	25.0

The teachers were drawn from boys' boarding schools (50%), girls' boarding schools (25%) and mixed boarding schools (25%). The results also indicated that 66.7% of teachers sampled were males, while 33.3% were females. The study also established that the majority (41.7%) of teachers sampled had been in their current workstations for less than two years, 25% had been there for five years and above, 16.7% of them had been there for two to three years, and another 16.7% had been there for three to five years. Thus, the teachers had the necessary characteristics that could inform the study of the student leaders' empowerment and management of discipline.

The study also gathered demographic data for the principal/deputy principals. The results are summarised in *Table 3*. The results indicated that 50% of the principal/deputy principals were sampled from boys boarding schools, 33.3% were sampled from mixed boarding schools, and 16.7% were drawn from girls' boarding schools. These results were also congruent with Onditi's (2018) sampling of respondents from various categories of schools in his study on student discipline as it related to student leadership.

Table 3: Demographic data for the principal/deputy principals

Responses		Frequency	Percent
Type of school	Boys boarding	3	50.0
	Girls boarding	1	16.7
	Mixed boarding	2	33.3
Sex of the student	Male	5	83.3
	Female	1	16.7
Sex of the principal/deputy principal	Male	5	83.3
	Female	1	16.7
Duration in the current school	Less than 2 years	1	16.7
	3 to 5 years	2	33.3
	5 to 10 years	2	33.3
	10 years and above	1	16.7
Age	35-40 years	1	16.7
	40-45 years	1	16.7
	45 years and above	4	66.7
Educational qualification	Bachelor's degree	5	83.3
	Master's degree	1	16.7
Ever attended KEMI training on educational management	Yes	5	83.3
	No	1	16.7

The results also indicated that 83.3% of the principals/deputy principals were male, while 16.7% of them were females. The results further pointed out that 16.7% of principals/deputy principals had been in their current workstations for less than two years, 33.3% for three to five years, 33.3% for five to 10 years and 16.7% for ten years and above.

The results further indicated that 66.7% of the principals/deputy principals were aged 45 years and

above, 16.7% were aged 40 to 45 years, and 16.7% were aged 35 to 40 years. The study also established that 83.3% of the principals/deputy principals were holders of bachelor's degrees, and 16.7% were holders of master's degrees. The study also established that 83.3% of the principals/deputy principals had attended KEMI training on educational management, while 16.7% of them had not. Based on these characteristics, it is clear that the principals/deputy principals sampled were in a better position to provide the necessary information

to answer study questions. This is in support of Onditi's (2018) assertion that school leadership, including principals/deputy principals and student leaders, are better placed to answer questions related to student discipline.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

The Influence of Selection Criteria on the Management of Student Discipline

The first objective sought to examine the influence of selection criteria on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in the Tigania West sub-county, Kenya. The principals/deputy principals were requested to state the roles of student leaders. They indicated that student leaders act as a bridge between the students and school administration, assist the administration in running the school, communicate students' issues to teachers and administration, maintain law and order in the school, help in enforcing school rules and regulations and guide, influence others in doing the right things or the right way. This finding concurs

with Eckstein's (2008) argument that student leaders play the role of supervising other pupils during assembly and class and giving minor punishments.

The student leaders were requested to state the leadership positions they held in their respective schools. The results indicated that they held a diverse range of leadership positions, including academic secretary, assistant boarding secretary, assistant compound, assistant games captain, class secretary, class representative, compound minister, deputy head girl, deputy head girl boarding, dining hall captain, environmental secretary, games captain minister, minister library, religious leader, school captain, school head girl, student chairman, student welfare, vice chairperson and vice president. This implies that the respondents were in a better position to point out how they were selected and how the selection impacts student discipline.

The principals/deputy principals were required to indicate how student leaders are picked in their schools. The results are shown in *Figure 2*.

Figure 2: How student leaders are selected
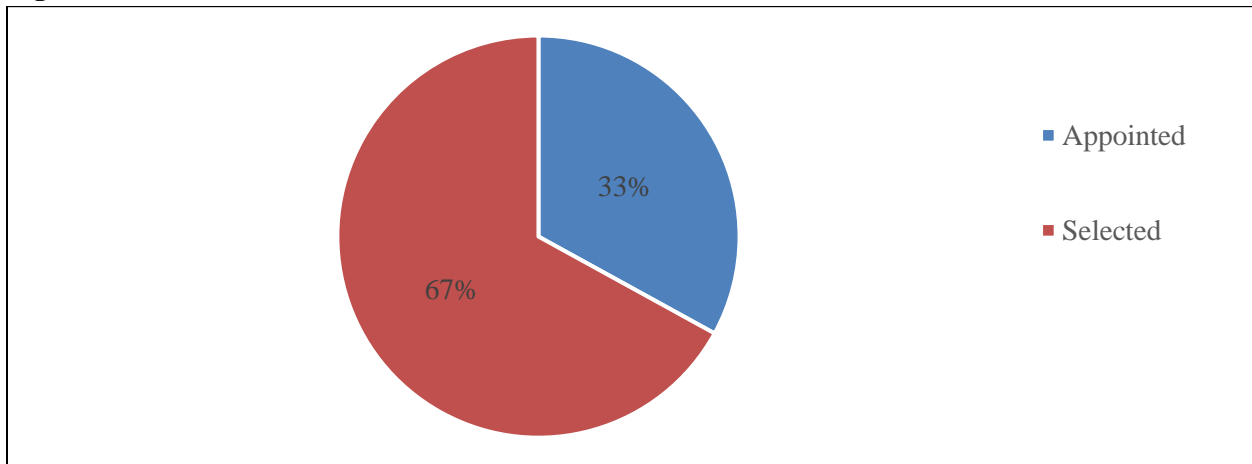
The results indicated that the majority of the principals (6, 67%) reported that student leaders are selected, while 1 (33%) showed that they are appointed. This differs from Mulindwa (2010), who argued that prefects are appointed by the headmaster from among the senior pupils in schools upon recommendations by the teachers. From this,

it can be deduced that the majority of the student leaders were being selected in a democratic manner as opposed to being picked directly. Mutiso (2013) argues that if the prefectorial system is to be of any credit to the students, then they should identify with it. Arguably, when students are allowed to select student leaders of their choice, the surest way is to

buttress democracy. Thus, the student leaders, teachers and principals/deputy principals were requested to state how student leaders were selected in their respective schools. The results are shown in *Table 4*.

Table 4: How student leaders are selected

Student leaders are selected:		Frequency	Percent
Student leaders	By the staff	38	55.9
	By both students and staff	30	44.1
	Total	68	100
Teachers	Teachers	9	25.0
	School administration	3	8.3
	Students	18	50.0
	Both teachers and students	6	16.7
	Total	36	100
Principals/deputy principals	Teachers	1	16.7
	Students	5	83.3
	Total	6	100

Results of the analysis indicated that the majority of student leaders (38, 55.9%) are selected by staff. However, student leaders also indicated that 30 (44.1%) of student leaders were selected by both students and staff. On the other hand, according to 50% of teachers, student leaders are selected by students. The results also showed that 25% of teachers stated that student leaders are selected by teachers, while 16.7% of them indicated that student leaders are selected by both teachers and students. This finding supports Koli's (2006) argument that student leaders are either selected by their peers or picked by the administration to lead others. The majority (83.3%) of principals/deputy principals indicated that student leaders are selected by students. This implies that the responsibility of student leaders' selection, to a large extent, involves the students, although the teachers and the school administration may be involved. This assertion supports Mutiso's (2013) finding that in most schools, student leaders are selected by fellow students.

The student leaders were also requested to indicate the type of student leaders found in their respective schools. The results are summarised in *Figure 3*.

Figure 3: Type of student leaders

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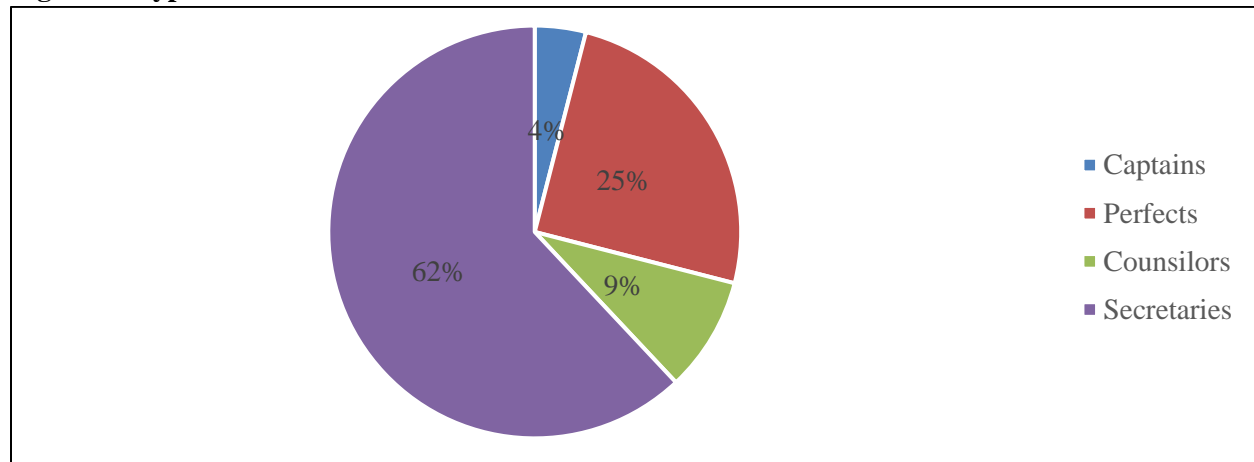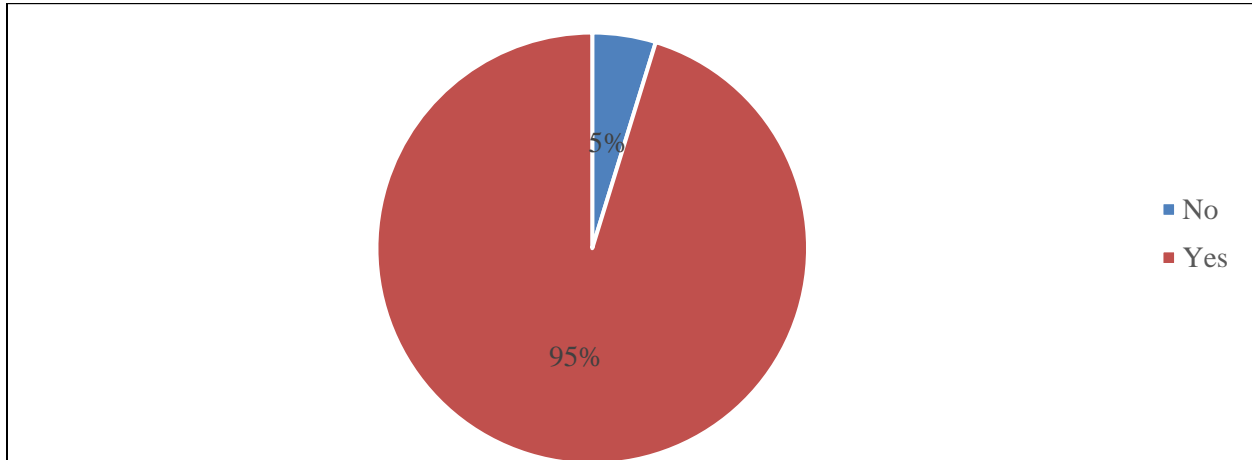
The results indicated that in most schools (62%), student leaders are referred to as secretaries and in 25%, they are referred to as prefects. The results further indicated that 9% of the school's student leaders are referred to as councillors, while in 4% of the schools, they are referred to as captains. This implies that various types of student leaders are found in different schools. Although the post titles differ from one school to the other, they are established for candidates to compete and help the school to maintain discipline.

The student leaders were asked whether they liked the way student leaders were selected in their respective schools. The results are summarised in *Figure 4*.

Figure 4: Student leader's selection criterion

The results indicated that the majority (84%) of the student leaders liked the way student leaders were selected in their schools. However, 16% of the student leaders were of a negative opinion on the selection criteria employed in their schools. The student leaders who felt that the criteria employed to select student leaders were good were requested to state why they felt so. Various reasons emerged as to why the criteria were good. One of the reasons was that the choice of student leaders was based on academic performance and discipline of the individual, and this allowed the selection of disciplined students with academic merit and good personality as leaders. It was also established that the criteria used allow staff to select students who act as role models in terms of discipline and academic performance. The student leaders also indicated that the criteria allow teachers to select student leaders who can improve school discipline and academic performance as opposed to the process being left to students who are likely to elect persons who can tolerate their indiscipline cases.

Others indicated that the criteria used in their school are fair since it gives both staff and students to participate in the selection process. The student leaders also indicated that the selection of leaders by staff is based on a systematic analysis of behaviour and character as opposed to students who would elect persons they deem friends. Other student leaders felt that the students are likely to select indiscipline individuals as their leaders. The varied reasons provided supports Prefectorial News's (2004) argument that student leaders' selection process involves vetting by the teachers and the head teacher even though the peers may be involved in their selection.

The students were requested to indicate whether there were specific requirements to be selected as a student leader. All the students indicated that there are requirements needed for one to serve as a student leader in their respective schools. Thus, the student leaders, teachers and principals/deputy principals were requested to state some of the

requirements for becoming a student leader. The results are summarised in *Table 5*.

Table 5: Requirement for selection to the position of student leader

Respondent	Selection criterion	Frequency	Percent
Student leaders	Academic merit	28	41.2
	Teachers' recommendation	8	11.8
	Personality	4	5.9
	Discipline	28	41.2
	Total	68	100
Teachers	Academic performance	6	16.7
	Personality	9	25.0
	Good behaviour	18	50.0
	Popularity	3	8.3
	Total	36	100
Principals/deputy principals	Popularity	1	16.7
	Character	4	66.7
	Academic performance	1	16.7
	Total	6	100

The results indicated that 41.2% of the student leaders are selected on the basis of academic merit, while another 41.2% are selected on the basis of their discipline. This is supported by 50% of teachers who indicated that student leaders are selected on the basis of good behaviour and 16.7% who indicated that student leaders are selected based on academic merit. The results also indicated that 11.8% of the students are selected on the basis of teachers' recommendations, while 5.9% are selected on the basis of their personality. Unlike student leaders, more teachers (25%) indicated that student leaders are also selected on the basis of personality. The majority (66.7%) of the principals/deputy principals, however, indicated that student leaders are selected on the basis of character. This implies that student academic merit, discipline and personality are the main requirements for a student to qualify to be selected as a student leader. This supports Mulindwa's (2010) argument that student leaders' selection is based on seniority and other factors like ability, good character, and leadership qualities. This could positively impact student discipline since they may act as role models to other students both academically and discipline-wise. The student leaders were asked whether the requirements were important in the selection of student leaders. The results are shown in *Figure 5*.

Figure 5: The requirements are important in the selection of student leaders
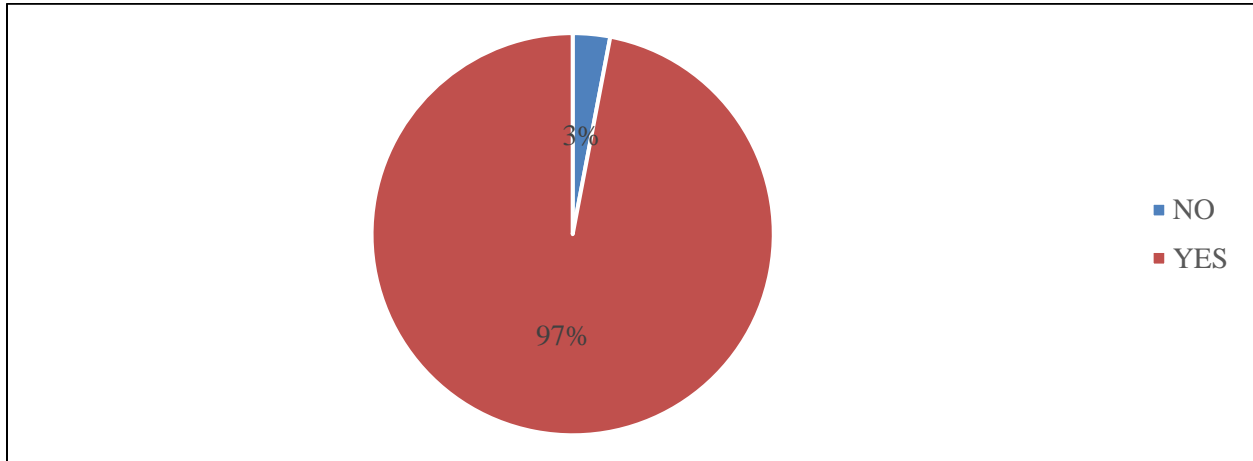
The results indicated that 97% of the student leaders felt that the requirements were important, while only 3% of the felt that the requirements were not important. This implies that most student leaders were satisfied with the requirements needed for one to qualify to be a student leader. To ascertain this, the student leaders were requested to rate the selection process used in their schools. The results are shown in *Figure 6*.

Figure 6: Selection process rating by student leaders
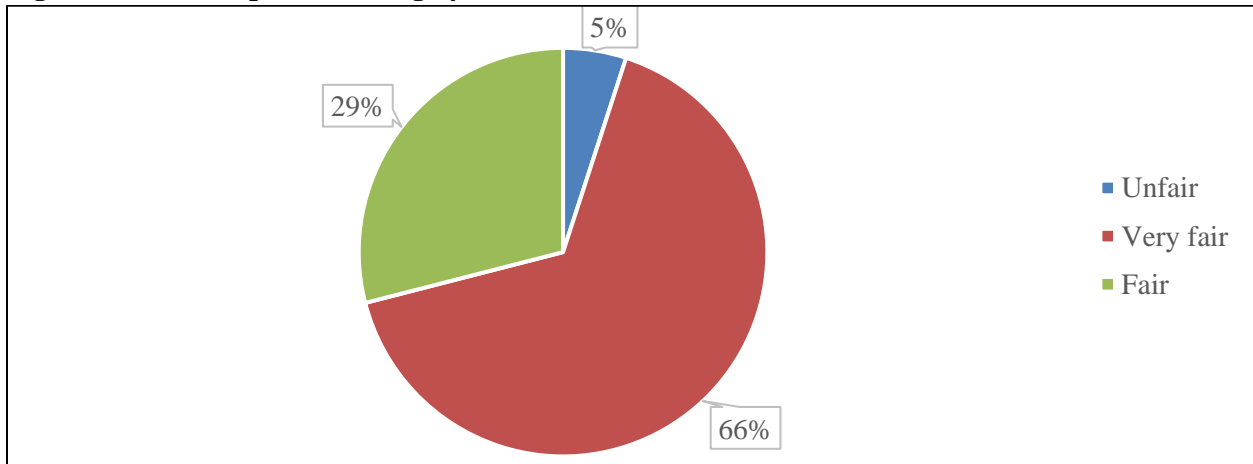
The results indicated that the majority (66%) of the student leaders felt that the process was very fair, while 29% of them felt it was fair. However, 5% of the student leaders felt that the student leader selection process was unfair. This implies that the majority of student leaders felt that the selection criterion was fair. The principals/deputy principals were requested to rate the selection process. The results are summarised in *Figure 7*.

Figure 7: Selection process rating by principals/deputy principals
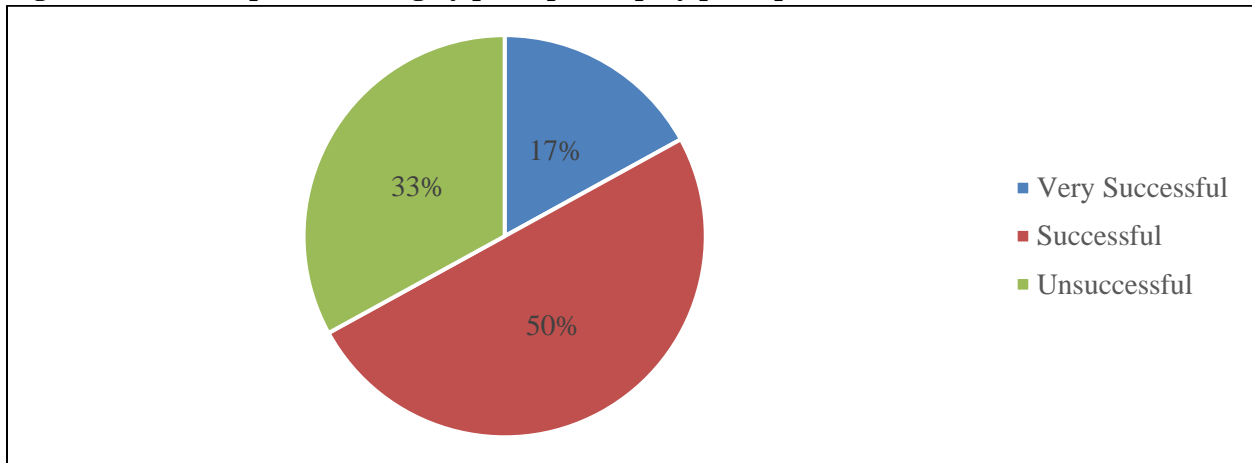
According to 50% of the principals/deputy principals, the selection process was successful; 17% of them indicated that the selection process was very successful, while 33% of them felt that the process was unsuccessful.

The student leaders were required to indicate the extent to which selection criteria determine student leaders' performance. The results are shown in *Table 6*.

Table 6: Mode of selection determine student leader's performance in their duties

	Frequency	**Percent**
Very likely	32	47.1
Likely	30	44.1
Unlikely	3	4.4
Very unlikely	3	4.4
Total	68	100

The results showed that 47.1% of the student leaders felt that the mode of selection was very likely to determine student leaders' performance in their duties, and 44.1% felt that the mode of selection was likely to determine student leaders' performance in their duties. However, 4.4% of the student leaders felt that mode of selection was unlikely to determine student leaders' performance in their duties, and 4.4% of them felt that mode of selection was very unlikely to determine student leaders' performance in their duties. These results imply that to a large extent mode of selection is likely to impact the

ability of student leaders to perform their duties. This supports Murage's (2014) study, which found that students had positive perceptions towards student councils when the establishment and voting was free and fair and that in schools where student councils had been established, members played their role as expected.

Teachers were asked to state the extent to which student leaders are effective in performing their duties. The results are shown in *Figure 8*.

Figure 8: Effectiveness of student leaders in performing their duties
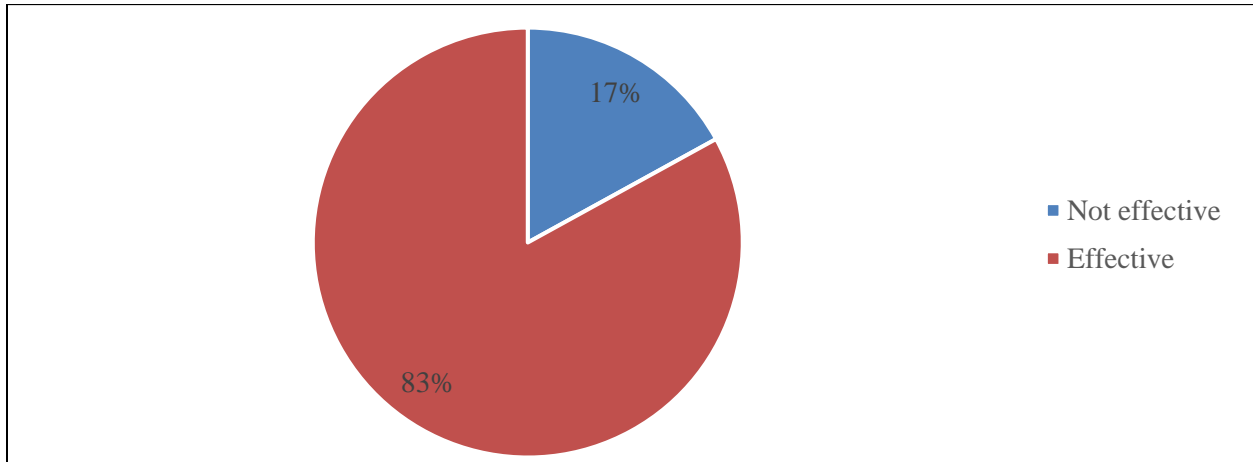

Source: Researcher (023)

The majority (83%) of teachers felt that student leaders are effective in their duties. However, 17% of teachers felt that student leaders are not effective in executing their duties. This implies that more strategies need to be done to enhance the effectiveness of the student leaders in carrying out their roles.

The teachers were requested to outline some of the effects of removing student leaders in their schools. The teachers indicated that indiscipline cases would increase, it would be difficult to identify wrongdoers, the self-esteem of current student leaders would decline, and there would be a general rebellion in the school. The teachers also indicated that such action would interfere with the normal running of the school programs. This implies that student leaders play an important role in maintaining discipline, identification and reporting of students involved in indiscipline cases. This is congruent with Mbugua's (2013) assertion that student leaders play a vital role in maintaining discipline in school by ensuring that school rules and regulations are adhered to.

The principals/deputy principals were requested to indicate the frequency to which they replace student leaders. The results are shown in *Figure 9*.

Figure 9: Frequency by which student leaders are replaced

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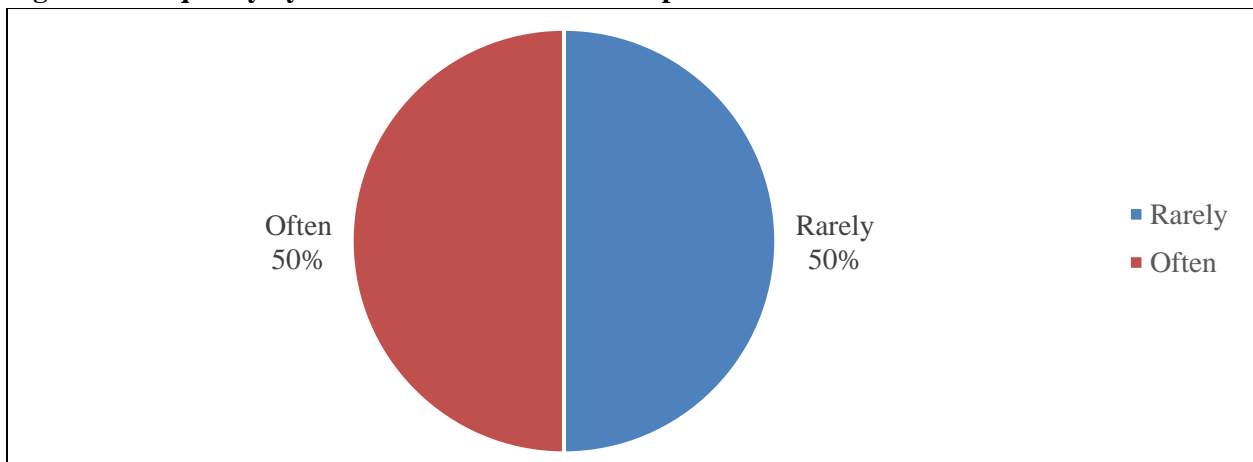
The findings indicated that 50% of the principal/deputy principals rarely replaced student leaders, while 50% often replaced them. Thus, the principal/deputy principals were requested to highlight some of the reasons for replacing the student leaders. The principal/deputy principals pointed out that some of the student leaders are selected by their fellow students on the basis of their popularity but are poor leaders; some transfer to other schools, some become populists and forget their roles, while others may be involved in indiscipline cases.

The principal/deputy principals were also requested to point out ways that can be used to improve the selection process of student leaders. They indicated that this could be enhanced through doing serious vetting based on character and academic performance; giving teachers the mandate to appoint the leaders; putting into consideration discipline, academic performance, character and looking for God-fearing people; educating the students on the role and qualities of leaders; involving students and teachers in the process; and involving teachers to vet the students' choices.

The study sought to examine the influence of selection criteria of student leaders in the management of discipline in public secondary schools in the Tigania West sub-county. The mean variations in the management of discipline in the selected Secondary Schools are given and summarised in *Table 7*.

Table 7: Effect of the selection criteria on the management of discipline in the selected Secondary Schools

How are student leaders selected in this school?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-statistic	P-value
By only students	52	88.4231	16.45355	-.882	.378
By both students and staff	186	90.5968	15.48893		

From *Table 7*, the mean variation in the management of discipline from schools where the selection process involved both teachers and students had a higher average score of (90.59) which was greater than their counterparts in schools where the selection was done by students alone (88.4). The p-value for the t-statistic was, however, insignificant (.378 >.05), implying that the criterion used to select student leaders does not significantly affect school discipline. The study established that in schools where it is only students who select their leaders, their school discipline is almost the same as the one where teachers and students are involved in the selection process of leaders.

Summary of the Results

The purpose of the study was to examine the influence of selection criteria on the management of student discipline in public secondary schools in the Tigania West sub-county, Kenya. It was established that the responsibility of student leaders' selection, to a large extent, involves the students, although the teachers and the school administration may be involved. The student leaders act as a bridge between the students and school administration, assist the administration in running the school, communicate students' issues to teachers and administration, maintain law and order in the school, help in enforcing school rules and regulations and guide and influence others in doing the right things or the right way. The findings of this study are in conformity with those of previous scholars like Kwan (2020), who stressed that ensuring all schools have effective leadership begins with the selection process. Thus, their selection criteria are important for the management of student discipline. It was established that the selection is mainly based on academic performance and discipline of the individual, and this allows the selection of disciplined individuals with academic

merit and good personality as leaders. The way in which student leaders are appointed establishes the style in which they perform their duties. If student leaders are appointed by the staff with little impact on students, they will naturally look immediately to the staff as their source of authority (Ensiyaitu, 2018).

CONCLUSION

Selection of student leaders by involving both teachers and students can enhance the ability of student leaders to act as a bridge between the students and school administration, assist the administration in running the school, communicate students' issues to teachers and administration, maintain law and order in the school, help in enforcing school rules and regulations and guide and influence others in doing things the right way.

Recommendations

The selection of student leaders should involve both teachers and students in a democratic manner to avoid any disruption of academic work due to students feeling short-changed.

Suggestions for Further Study

The researcher acknowledges that the study is not exhaustive and cannot claim full coverage of all aspects of student leaders' empowerment and how they relate to the management of school discipline. Taking the limitation and delimitation of the study, the following were the suggestions for further research:

- Reasons why student leaders are partially involved in the governance of secondary schools.

- The impact of the annual Kenya secondary school leadership conference. This was started in 2009 with the aim of providing a safe and supportive environment which encourages student leaders to explore their academic and career interests while developing leadership

skills for their success. The years down the line, has this objective been realised?

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