

PARENT-TEACHER COLLABORATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MAKUENI COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Based on educational research, the students' academic performance during secondary school is highly dependent on parent-teacher interaction. This is a partnership which is deemed vital to creating a nurturing school climate for students' development, engagement and success. Through these activities' students learn to value and expect school and home to be supportive of each other, creating an aligned support base that is substantial for the student in school. The study sought to assess the impact of parent teacher relationship in the learning outcomes of secondary school learners in Makueni public schools. The study aimed to assess the role of the participatory decision-making in the academic results of the students. The concept of social capital and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theories were used in this study. The study used descriptive research. The research comprises of 1965 members of the population comprising teachers and students attending 390 public secondary schools across Makueni County. The respondents were sampled using stratified sampling technique in the selected schools. This sample comprised the school principal, deputy principal, the coordinator of the BOM (senior school), and the chairpersons and student leader for the PTA in 59 schools, giving a total of 295 people. This data collection was done through the use of structured questionnaires which provided

quantitative data. The quantitative data analysis was carried out by using SPSS software which was used for statistical computation. Data shown in tables. It was noted that participative decision making; the quality and timeliness of communication. The study also revealed that it was conducive to free expression in the school environment because majority of the parents were comfortable to express their views. Additionally, the study found that principals with parents' communication was not only on time and frequent, but there was a possibility for information to be spread out concerning school. Furthermore, it identified effective early steps taken towards coordinating action with parents, representing the schools' wish to work on issues together with parents. Moreover, there was a high level of student volunteering encouragement and support found, which allows students to develop values including responsibility and service to the community. It was recommended that school leaders and boards of management make better use of formal and regular opportunities for parents to be involved in school issues.

Keywords: Participatory Decision-Making, Quality and Timeliness of Communication and Academic Performance of Students.

INTRODUCTION

Parents need to engage in collective effort in school education, with teachers and community members being responsible for education outside of the classroom (Harris & Goodall, 2022; Wang et al., 2023). Studies by Sheldon and Epstein (2022) have claimed that the relation between parents and teachers is beneficial to the achievement of students, because this relationship can increase student motivation, involvement and achievement. Moreover, student engagement in decision making is associated with greater likelihood of higher education enrollment and the acquisition of vital future education SEL skills (Sanders & Epstein, 2023). Despite these results, literature reveals that such collaborative attempt within various cultural contexts deserves to be investigated, especially considering the difficulties of effective communication (Aoki et al., 2022).

Involving students in decision-making processes creates ongoing advancement of student achievement in the school. Student participation in decision making assures continuous student achievement progress in the school. But, the study by Christenson and Sheridan (2022) indicates that parental involvement in school decision making is linked with the academic achievement of their students. Australian research and studies indicate that the influence of parental involvement in governance is beneficial to the achievement and participation of students in school activities (Zyngier, 2023). Moreover, the findings from the Canadian studies suggest that students' self-awareness is correlated with their parents' decision-making involvement in school, which ultimately affects academic achievement (Wilkins, 2022).

Critical to effective parent-teacher collaboration is the establishment of quality and timely communication, which directly influences students' academic performance. In the United Kingdom, research by Simpson and Rice (2023) emphasizes that clear and regular communication bridges gaps, empowering parents to take an active role in academic matters. This finding is echoed in Finland, where schools that implemented efficient communication strategies like newsletters and digital platforms achieved high parental involvement, resulting in better academic outcomes (Mäkelä et al., 2022). Additionally, a study in New Zealand demonstrates that when teachers provide timely feedback and maintain open communication with parents, students experience reduced anxiety and increased academic engagement, culminating in improved performance (Hohepa et al., 2023). Thus, high-quality interactions between parents and educators serve as essential drivers that enhance students' educational experiences.

Moreover, collaborative learning strategies that integrate parent-teacher partnerships positively impact student academic performance. For example, research by Shachar and Sharan (2022) in Israel found that when parents and teachers collaborate on learning initiatives like co-designing projects or joint tutoring sessions students exhibit significant improvements in both academic skills and self-efficacy. Similarly, studies in the Netherlands suggest that involving parents in collaborative learning processes fosters a

strong educational community, enhancing students' sense of support both at home and in school, thus resulting in marked academic gains (Van Langen et al., 2023).

In addition to learning initiatives, collaborative resourcing and volunteering efforts have proven effective in enhancing academic performance. A study in Germany by Pohlmann and Koller (2022) revealed that parental volunteering whether through classroom assistance or participation in school events contributes to increased resources for student learning and improved educational outcomes. Correspondingly, Myende and Nhlumayo (2023) identified the positive effects of community involvement in South Africa, where shared resources and collaborative efforts significantly enhance student performance. Their research emphasizes that schools that foster partnerships with community organizations and encourage parental involvement create an enriched educational environment filled with diverse learning resources and experiences, thereby enhancing student achievements.

In the African context, parent-teacher relations bring to light inter-cultural, socio-economic, and educational differences in that region. Some parents who are not economically well-off experience systemic problems that impinge on their roles as parents (Nambudiri et al., 2022). Lack of adequate communication channels and mechanisms between parents and schools further compromise learning difficulties, leading to mediocre academic results. Collaborative decision making with parent involvement in a variety of decision-making issues within and across school areas are emphasized for positive gains in student achievement. Bandula (2022) suggests that good collaboration in learning depends on good leadership.

Parent involvement along with student performance constitute vital parts of the East Africa educational scholarship system's educational framework that must be enhanced to improve educational outcomes (Amadi & Mwita, 2020). Parental and teachers' participation in the education system faces a number of challenges including incompatibility in expectations between the parent and the educator in relation to the role of the parent and educators' incompatibilities with the parents and teachers culturally and linguistically (Karanja & Ndung'u, 2021). Different levels of parent involvement have been shown to be attributed to socio-economic and educational policies (Farah, 2022). From the research results, it was noted that communicating through parents and teachers is difficult in the East African Countries, particularly among the rural and marginalised areas of the countries, hence there exist a gap in the existing literature in this field that requires further in-depth research.

There is very limited literature addressing parental participation in and impacts on students' academic performance in Kenya, and in Makueni County specifically. Parent-teacher relationships have been found to positively impact learner outcomes (Syomwene 2022) but there are several more aspects of participatory decision making that need to be explored. Moreover, low mean score of 46 in the KCSE was recorded in Makueni County while national mean score was 58 (KNEC, 2023) which demonstrates the yearning to adopt interventions and programmes that can be strengthened through parent-teacher

collaboration. The study will produce specific outcomes that will guide the stakeholders in the education sector of Makueni on the implications of participatory decision making on pupil achievement in the school.

The empirical research on parent-teacher collaboration progresses continuously but scientists still need to investigate how participatory decision-making influences student academic outcomes in Makueni County. Most existing studies adopt a generalized approach, neglecting localized insights that consider specific cultural and contextual variables inherent in local educational systems. Furthermore, empirical evidence elucidating the mechanisms through which participatory decision-making influences student outcomes remains sparse. Thus, comprehensive studies are needed to address unique challenges and opportunities in this realm. Importantly, future research should explore not only teacher-centric perspectives but also actively showcase the vital contributions of parents in fostering collaborative environments, revealing a more balanced view of educational partnerships that can ultimately benefit student achievement.

Statement of the Problem

The data presents an alarming trend of children's performance in various subjects and districts, and significant drops in standardized test scores. The KCSE exam scores, for instance, have been dropping in Makueni county from the time the exam was introduced, with its average being less than the national average of 58 while the county score is 46. The downward trend indicates that there are issues that are underlying and this is impacting on student outcomes. From the research outcomes, it is evident that there is a need for teachers and parents to meet regularly, and in a meaningful way, to ensure academic understanding and for students to progress. If present, engagement means that parents understand the supportive and/or therapeutic requirements of their child's education, and thus have the opportunity to be offered support and/or intervention. There has been evidence that negative parental involvement correlates and negatively impacts student motivation, student absence and parental student engagement. In addition, research has shown that where there is some degree of involvement in the creation of a supportive learning environment, there can be a significant increase in student achievement when parents collaborate with teachers.

Unfortunately, many of the schools lack any form of organizational structure of collaboration and this causes no synergy and removes the partnership from its full potential. Thus, there is worrying empirical evidence on the nature of the impact of parent-teacher partnerships on academic outcomes. The proposed research seeks to methodically examine whether there are any significant empirical effects that can be attributed to collaborations between parents and teachers that would be beneficial for the learning outcomes, and to fill some gaps. The purpose of this study was to support a set of actionable plans that would increase collaboration and, therefore, influence students' outcomes in Makueni County by investigating how communication practice affects students' outcomes. Poor academic outcomes have produced an unpredictable trend that needs to be explored and, crucially,

solutions to create effective engagement with parents that will increase students' ability to achieve good academic outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

- i) To explore influence of participatory decision-making on the academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section examines the schools of thought guiding the study together with empirical and conceptual framework as indicated below:

Theoretical Framework

Theories of social capital and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems were applied in this study. These two theories were chosen as they complement each other in providing an explanation as to the effect of Parent-Teacher collaboration on students' academic achievement.

Social Capital Theory

The Social Capital theory has been developed late in the 20th century and the first introduction of the theory was made by Pierre Bourdieu who suggested that a network of people can be used as a resource for each member of the network because they can take advantage of the capital of the network (Bourdieu, 1985; Florin et al., 2003). Social networks are created via the process of building relationships (Portes, 1998).

There are three fundamental notions of the theory: social networks, norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness. Social networks refer to people's links and relationships within their social networks and organizations (Bourdieu, 1986; Lin, 2001). These networks are characterized by rules of reciprocity, not just among the actors involved, but among all the actors involved, resources, favors and support (Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 2000). The trustworthiness level is defined as the level of social relationship trustworthiness and reliability that can be trusted by people (Fukuyama, 1995; Adler & Kwon, 2002).

The study examines the social networking influence on educative community. The study will examine relationships and interactions that arise in these networks and how community members create, maintain or utilize social capital. When it comes to parent-teacher interactions, reciprocity norms can facilitate flow of information, thus further enhancing the quality of students' education (Smith & Jones, 2022). Trust, however, is extremely important in fostering productive relationships between parents and teachers (Garcia, 2021).

The Social Capital Theory, however, fails to account for socio-economic differences and power dynamics, as all relationships are assumed to be mutually beneficial (Misztal 2019). In theory, parent-teacher relation is not discussed in a fundamental level; sub-factors are given by parental behavior, expectations, institutional factors among others (Kumar &

Mwende, 2023). Relationships that exist between these can also influence the development of a relationship where there is trust and reciprocity, and, in turn, can influence students' learning. There is a need to bring the existing theory with the providing of other theories to fully comprehend what different kinds of relationships mean to an individual's development.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

According to Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) environmental factors influence the development of the person. Bronfenbrenner (1994) stated that the theory has five interacting systems: microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystem, macrosystems and chronosystems. The process of family-school interaction is an important process because there are very strong reciprocal influences in this process.

The relative influence of each environmental system on individual development is difficult to be measured and critics suggest that the theory fails to make clear distinctions concerning the extent to which each environmental system affects individual development (Tudge et al., 2016; Rosa & Tudge, 2019). Some criticism of the theory comes from the fact that it does not capture the nature of social relationships as being of good quality, nor the significance of trust and reciprocity and of social networks on social outcomes of learning (Ettekal & Mahoney 2017). Additionally, some scholars have pointed out that the theory does not adequately consider power dynamics and disparities that may occur in educational settings and educational family relationships (Jaeger, 2021). These weaknesses inspired the theory to be supported by another, called the Social Capital Theory based on the relationship between the parent and teacher.

The present study was found to be relevant to Bronfenbrenner's EAST (Ecological systems theory) because it was useful to understand the interaction between home and school and its impact on children's school performance. The theory was more specifically used in the objectives two (Quality and Timeliness of communication) and three (Collaborative learning and development). It was also possible to gain insight into how parent teacher-school and the social context impacts the learning achievement of the learners within the public secondary schools of Makueni County Kenya.

Participatory -Decision Making and Students' Academic Performance

The involvement in learning decision-making leads to positive impact on learning. Research has been conducted in various parts of the world that suggest that when parents become involved in school governing and school policy development, school contexts can be integral to improving student success and student motivation. These are some of the empirical studies of participatory decision making as discussed below.

Participation in learning decision making results in positive impact on learning. research has taken place in different parts of the world which indicates that where parents are engaged in school governing and school policy making, school contexts can be part of achieving higher

levels of student success and student motivation. Below are some of the empirical research on participatory decision making.

Smiley, Lazarus and Brownlee-Conyers (2021) conducted a study on Chicago public schools and the relationship between school based participative decision making and instructional outcomes. The results of the inferential analysis demonstrated that participative decision making had an effect on the quality of instruction, and the achievement results. However, the focus was primarily on teachers and administrators, and parents and students were also key stakeholders in the governance of schools. The current study sought to address these gaps by engaging the teachers, parents and form four students of public secondary schools as the subjects for the descriptive research design. The study was also of interest to the findings that are generated from the Kenyan setting where student's participation in decision making may have a different effect on their academic performance.

The researcher studied parent involvement in school decision making and academic achievements of students in Sto. (Cauad 2025). Parents felt that it was important for them to be involved in school forums relating to governance and communication. Furthermore, there was a positive and statistically significant correlation between parents' decisions making and students' learning outcomes. The opinions of parents were considered but not the opinions of the participants of the participatory decision-making processes – the teachers and students. In an attempt to tackle the shortcomings of the foregoing study, an attempt was made to sample teachers, parent and students in selected public secondary schools according to scientifically derived sampling technique in this study. The study was also set to come up with conclusions which could be used in the education sector of the public secondary schools of Kenya.

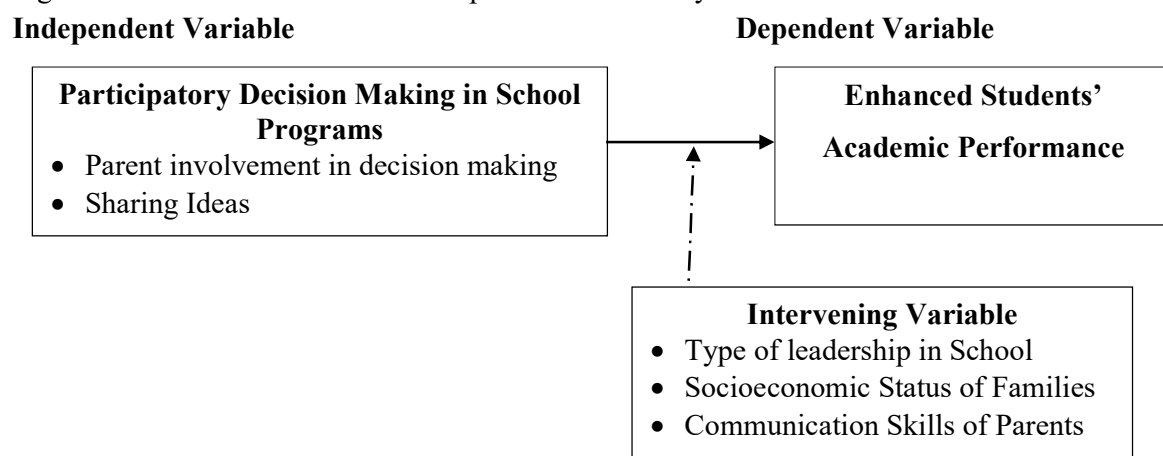
Somech (2021) conducted a research concerning participative decision making and its effect on the effectiveness of secondary school in Israel. The present study was a correlational study of teachers of public secondary schools in Israel. The results indicated that the more engaged teachers in school decision making the more elevated were the morale, OCBs commitment and institutional goals commitment of the teachers. The study also found that participative decision making positively and significantly affected the productivity of the school, job satisfaction of teachers and also the reduction of work stress. For the study presented by researcher, the focus was on teacher's organizational achievement, not on student's achievement directly. Furthermore, being a correlational study, it was not possible to determine the level of impact of participative decision making of the various stakeholders in the School context. In light of the above gap in the literature, the present study aims at filling up the gap and directly investigates the effect of participative decision making on students' academic achievement. The study will also take into consideration the parents, teachers and form four learners who are the stakeholders in the public secondary schools in Kenya.

Mburuki and Thinguri (2021) studied democratic democracy leadership in public secondary schools of Tigania East Sub-County, Kiplombe, Kenya on the participatory decision making of students. Descriptive results showed that there was a practice of democratic leadership in school and there was involvement of students in decision making on discipline policy, welfare policy and academic policy. The results of inferential analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables namely of democratic leadership and participative decision making of students. The study found harmony about responsibility of learners and harmony through participatory leadership in the education. It was not about the impact of democratic leadership on students' academic success, but it was a study of democratic leadership, in general. The aim of the present study was to fill these gaps specifically and examine self-determination as an independent variable that influences school achievement through participatory decision-making. The parents, also teachers and form four students are also involved to acquire the required information from public secondary schools.

Mati, Gatumu and Chandi (2020) conducted a research study on Participation in decision making and academic performance of public secondary school students in Embu west Sub-County, Kenya. The results showed that the students who took part in the making of discipline improvement had improved their discipline and also students who took part in the decision making of the school had improved their discipline and motivation. The study also confirmed the positive and significant relationship between participative decision making and school performance. The geographical scope of this study was, however, relatively limited and parents of school governance that involved parents were not included in this study. This study was therefore designed to address the above challenges by sampling a larger number of public secondary schools comprising teachers, parents and form four students. To provide a general overview of the effects of participative decision making on secondary school students' performance was the second aim of the study.

Conceptual Framework

Figure below indicated the relationship between the study variables:



The first objective is visualized in the framework wherein parent meetings, sharing ideas, and taking part in school discussions act as pivotal mechanisms that can foster a supportive educational environment, enhancing students' motivation and academic achievement. The variables included under this category regular communication, prompt and coordinated actions, and timely sharing of school calendars and events underline the necessity of effective information exchange.

Under "Collaborative Resourcing & Volunteering" parents combine efforts with teachers to supply both monetary and physical support alongside human assistance for students' educational development. The indicators of Collaborative Resourcing and Volunteering are grouped together because they are intrinsically linked.

Lastly, the objective related to collaborative resourcing and volunteering focuses on practical contributions parents can make to the educational process. Resources provided by parents, volunteer and participation in school fundraising initiatives are critical elements that support a rich learning environment.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was used. To provide a reflection of the state of parent-teacher relationship to as closely as possible. The descriptive research design was used in this study because the findings of this study on parent-teacher collaboration enabled to identify the valuable improvement areas in public secondary education. The study was undertaken in Makueni which is in the eastern region with a land area of approximately, 8000 km², with both urban and rural populations. The County has so many public secondary schools, which is the main focus of this study. The researcher selected Makueni County as the study area because it was readily accessible and the researcher had a prior knowledge of the area making data collection easy and efficient in this regard. Moreover, the weak KCSE performance over the years in the county has forced the need to study the factors that influence academic performance in the county, thus making the study relevant and timely (Syomwene, 2022).

The analysis focused on 390 public secondary schools that seeks data from teachers and parents and form four students. To ascertain the required sample size, the researcher adopted Yamane (1967) formula. A total of 59 schools were selected to provide 295 individuals to participate in data collection. Once the number of schools from each Sub-county has been identifies, the researcher used Systematic sampling method to select subjects at regular intervals. Random sampling occurs when population members are first ordered to create a list and then every kth individual respondent is chosen for the sample. The researcher picked a random point among their 1000-member population and goes on to select every tenth person from their list as sample participants. The technique helped maintain uniform sample distribution across the population thus strengthening the study findings according to Fowler (2014) and Krejcie & Morgan (1970).

Structured questionnaires were used to gather quantitative perceptions about parent-teacher collaboration. Three separate questionnaires geared for teachers and students and parents have been designed for data collection. Data collection through this specific method allowed researchers to gather information that accurately represented the specific viewpoints of stakeholders who participate in education. The questionnaire was delivered through a self-administered pick up and drop off technique to enable them to respond to the questionnaires at their own time and speed, facilitating their time which would increase the chances of obtaining thorough responses. We are trying to reduce the pressure of the time constraint which we believe will increase the accuracy and reliability of the data. Previous studies have shown that self-administration can decrease response bias and encourage accurate self-reporting (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Completed questionnaires were subsequently scanned for missing questions, consistency and accuracy of answers, and analysed. Closed ended questions in the questionnaire generated quantitative data which were coded and entered into the computer programme called SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics) for analysis. Data were summarized using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations), to highlight general trends and parents' characteristics with regards to parent-teacher collaboration and students' academic performance. Information displayed in tabular format for ease of interpretation and comparison.

A correlation between the study variables was also obtained by using inferential statistics. Pearson correlation was applied to determine the nature and strength of the relationship between participative decision-making and the quality and timeliness of communication, collaborative learning and development, collaborative resourcing, parental volunteering and academic outcomes of students. Besides, multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine the level of contribution of the independent variables to the variance of the academic performances of the students in public secondary schools of Makueni County, Kenya. The regression model provided an effect for each independent variable on the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Out of the 295 questionnaires, the researcher gave 59 each to principals, deputy principals, BOM chairpersons, PTA chairpersons and 59 student presidents (school captain) in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The overall principals' response rate was 53 (89%) whilst deputy principals, BOM members, PTA members and the student president (school captain) had response rates of 55 (93%), 49 (83%), 51 (86%) and 54 (92%) respectively.

A review of demographic data indicated that on age groups, 30% of principals were in the age group of above 50 years, 40% in the age group of 41-50 years, 25% in the age group of 31-40 years and 6% of principals were in the age group of 21-30 years. This indicated that the age range for most of the principals was 41-50 years and 51 years and above. This finding

was similar to that of Bush (2018) and Orodho (2019) who noted that the school leadership is dominated by mid-to-late career school leaders due to experience requirements. This suggests that the maturity of the leader is being front and center in school administration. The results of this study indicate that principals are likely to have enough experiences that may be beneficial for their decision making and school performance outcome.

Deputy Principals: 7% of deputy principals were aged between 21-30 years, 27% were aged 31-40 years, 36% were aged 41-50 years and 30% aged 51 years or over. This means that most deputy principals were between 41–50 years old, and just behind that age group were those aged 51 years and older. This is in line with the findings of Ngware et al., (2020) which showed that the deputy leaders are mostly experienced teachers in the middle of their career. This demonstrates a progressive leadership in the school. The study indicates that the deputies are competent enough to be able to participate in the instructional leadership and administration.

BoM Chairpersons: None of the chairpersons of the BoM were in age group 21-30 years, 23% were in age group 31-40 years, 35% were in age group 41-50 years and 42% were 51 years and above. That would have included the majority of the BoM chairs who were over 51 years old, plus those age group 41-50. The findings are closely aligned with the findings of Mwangi (2016) who noted that the trend of appointing some individuals above 40 years old to chair committees on education was due to their experience and perceived maturity.

PTA Chairs: The results showed that 9% of the PTA Chairs were between 21-30 years old, 23% between 31-40 years, 35% between 41-50 years and 33 % were 51 years and above. This means that most PTA Chairs were in the age group 41 to 50 years and just behind them was the age group 51 years and older. The results align with the U.S. study conducted by Baquedano-López et al. (2016) who posit that older parents are more likely to hold leadership positions in school governance because of their existing influence in the community and experience in the school environment.

Student Presidents: The analysis clearly revealed that 5% of student presidents were in the age group of 15–16 years, 87% were in the age group of 17–18 years and 7% were in the age group of 19–20 years. Hence the majority of the student presidents was of age group 17-18 years. The same finding was seen by Kinyua and Ouma (2021) where student leadership is mostly from the high form classes as they are normally mature and responsible. This means that pupils' leadership is suitably age-appropriate. The results indicate that the attention given to leadership of the students is mostly directed at the final year students who are more engaged in school governance.

Data on education levels attained indicated that

Principals: The results indicate that 2% of principals had certificates, 13% had diplomas, 57% had bachelor's degree and 25% had master's degree, and 4% had other qualifications. The study by Ngware, et al., (2020) also revealed that in general, most of the school

principals have undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. School leadership with this level of academic qualification is considered fairly high. The research indicates that principals are well prepared for their role as administrators and teachers of instruction.

Deputy Principals: 16% of deputy principals had a diploma, 57% a bachelor's degree, 22% a master's degree and 5% other education. No one responded that they only had a certificate. A similar situation was recorded in the present study, where majority of the deputy heads has at least the undergraduate qualification as indicated by Ouma and Kiplagat (2019). This demonstrates good career development in school leadership. It is recommended that deputy principals be academically prepared to be effective in assisting school administration as suggested in the present study.

BoM Chairpersons: 11% of the BoM chairpersons were found to have certificates, 27% of them have diplomas, 35% have bachelor's degree, 21% have master's degree and 6% of them had other forms of education. This reflects the fact that most of the chairs of the BoM have a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree, indicating that the majority of BoM leaders have received a high level of education. Kiprop (2018) also found similar results with a positive trend in education levels of school boards. This means that the capacity of school governance is now enhanced. The study noted that BoM's leadership is moderately educated, positively affecting governance effectiveness.

PTA Chairs: The results revealed that 13% of the PTA Chairs had certificate, 31% had diploma, 37% had bachelor, 13% had master and 4% other type of education. This means that a majority of PTA Chairs are fairly well educated, and the majority have a bachelor's degree. This is similar to Kiptoo (2022) findings that, the more educated one is, the more people are participating in school decision making.

Students Presidents: The result indicated that 1% of the student presidents were from Form 1, 5% from Form 2, 25% from Form 3 and 69% from Form 4. This indicated that most of the student presidents were in Form 4 with the rest coming from Form 3. The findings are in sync with the findings of Obonyo (2019) which reports that senior students are preferred for leadership.

Participatory Decision-Making

Principals View on the Participatory Decision-Making

How often Principals Hold Parent Meetings

The researcher was interested in finding out how often principals hold parent meetings to speak with parents about school-related matters. The results obtained are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1: How often Principals Hold Parent Meetings

Parent Meetings frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	0	0
Rarely	6	11
Occasionally	11	21
Frequently	21	40
Always	15	28
Total	53	100

As seen in Table 1, 28% of principals always held parent meetings, 40% held them frequently, 21% occasionally, and 11% rarely held parent meetings. This suggests that the majority of principals were likely to hold meetings with parents and a high percentage of them held parent meetings at all times. The results corroborate those of Muthoni (2021) who reported that regular parent-teacher association meetings in Kenyan schools' foster accountability in the well-being of children. Additionally, the findings are in line with the findings of the study conducted in the United Kingdom by Goodall (2018) which summarized that frequent meetings between school and parents will have a positive impact on collaborative decision making and student support systems.

Effectiveness of Sharing Ideas

The researcher's focus was on the effectiveness of parent–school idea sharing. The results were as shown in table 2

Table 2: Effectiveness of Sharing Ideas

Effectiveness	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very ineffective	0	0
Ineffective	3	6
Neutral	8	15
Effective	28	53
Very effective	14	26
Total	53	100

Based on the results of table 4.8 none of the principals rated the idea sharing process as very ineffective, 6% rated it as ineffective, 15% rated it as neutral, 53% rated it as effective and 26% rated it as very effective. This translates to the fact that the majority of the principals believed that the idea sharing process with parents was effective, with a majority indicating that it is very effective. This also supports Murray et al. (2015) in Australia who identified that good idea-sharing schools have more effective governance and better parent-teacher partnerships.

Extent of Parental Involvement

The researcher wanted to know the extent of parents' involvement in school discussions. The results were as seen in Table 3.

Table 3: Extent of Parental Involvement

Extent	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not involved	1	2
Slightly	3	6
Moderately	15	28
Involved	22	42
Very involved	12	23
Total	53	100

As seen in Table 3, 2% of principals indicated that no parents are involved, 6% indicated a slight involvement, 28% indicated a moderate involvement, 42% indicated a certain involvement, and 23% indicated a very high involvement of parents. This suggests most principals considered parents to be involved or very involved. The findings are found to be consistent with the findings of Ochieng (2018) who identified that parents' involvement in schools increases when parents feel valued by the school(s). Moreover, findings are consistent with those of Wang and Sheikh-Khalil (2015) in the United States who found that discussions about school with parents positively influence decision-making and student outcomes.

Deputy Principals View on the Participatory Decision-Making

Frequency of Parent Meetings Held to Involve Them in School Decisions

The researcher sought to find out the frequency of parent meetings for parent participation in school decision making. The outcomes were as illustrated in figure 1

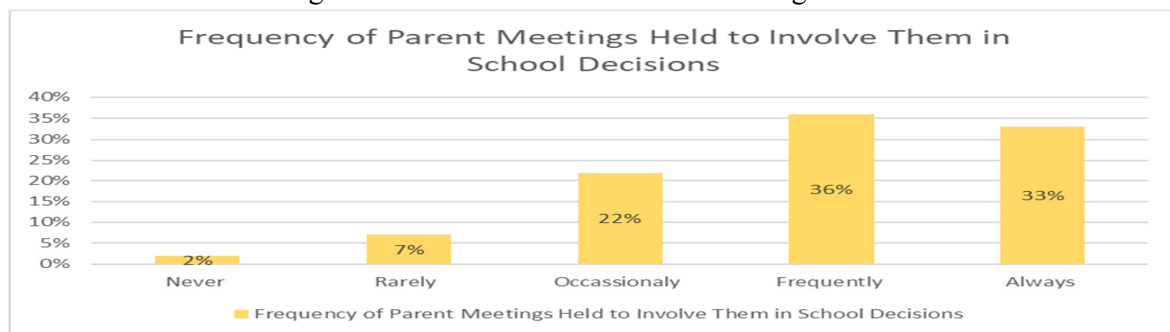


Figure 1: Frequency of Parent Meetings Held to Involve Them in School Decisions

The results in table 1 showed that 2% of deputy principals did not have parent meetings, 7% had parent meetings rarely, 22% occasionally, 36% frequently and 33% always. This indicates that meetings with parents were very often or always, in most schools, which means there was a level of involvement of parents in the decision making process within the school. It is concluded that the findings of this study are similar to the previous study conducted by Shatkin and Gershberg (2017) in the Philippines, which revealed that frequent parent conferences improve positive parent-school relationships and that students are supported in their well-being.

Comfort Level of Parents in Sharing Ideas

The researcher was interested in finding out parents' degree of comfort in presenting their ideas in the school. The data in the figure 2 were obtained.

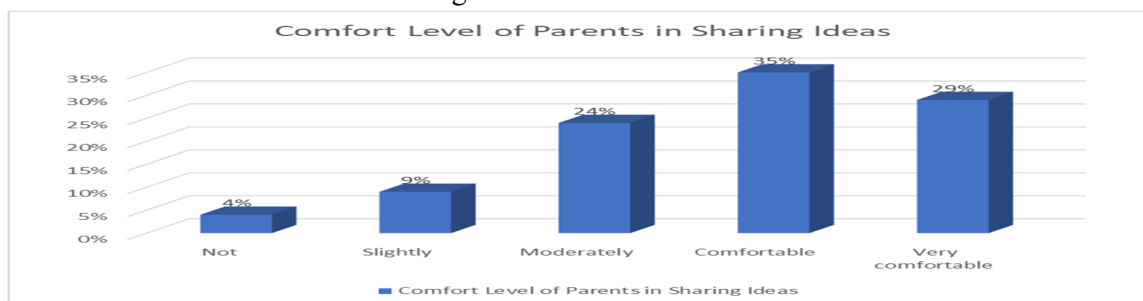


Figure 2: Comfort Level of Parents in Sharing Ideas

As seen in figure 4.2, parents are not comfortable (4%), slightly comfortable (9%), moderately comfortable (24%), comfortable (35%) and very comfortable (29%) to share ideas. This suggests that the majority of parents were fairly comfortable to share ideas with a very high proportion of parents were very comfortable to share ideas. The results were similar to the ones of Symeou et al. (2019) in Cyprus, where parents were more comfortable in providing ideas and cooperating in inclusive school environments.

Parent Participation in School Discussions

The researcher aimed to evaluate how active parents are in school discussions. The results so obtained were as shown in the figure 3

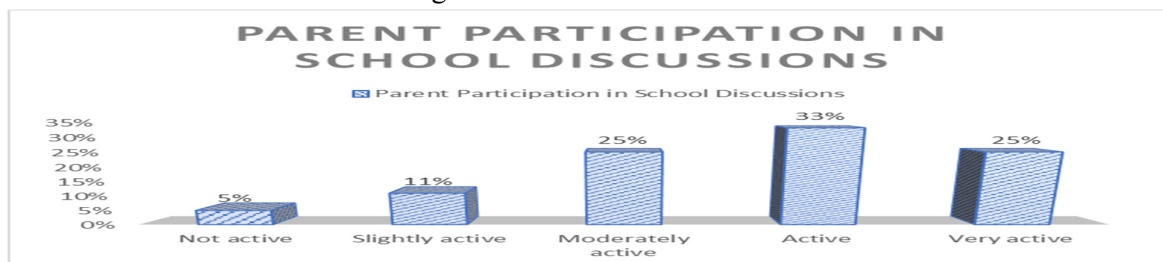


Figure 3: Parent Participation in School Discussions

Figure 3 revealed that 5% of the deputy principals agreed that parents in the school were not active, 11% agreed that parents were slightly active, 25% agreed that parents were moderately active, 33% agreed that parents were active and 25% agreed that parents were very active in school discussions. In the sense that the majority of parents were involved with the school in discussions, and around a third were very involved. The results showed that positive shift in governance as well as for the supporting system of the students were obtained through active parental participation in the school discussion as stated by Goodall (2018) in the United Kingdom.

BOM Chairpersons Perception on the Participatory Decision-Making

Frequency of Parent Meetings on Governance

The researcher wanted to know how often parents meet with regard to school governance. The following are the obtained results, as shown in Table 4.

Table 41: Frequency of Parent Meetings on Governance

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	1	3
Rarely	3	7
Occasionally	16	33
Frequently	19	39
Always	10	21
Total	49	100

Table 4 shows that 3% of the BoM Chairpersons reported that parent meetings were never held, 7% reported seldom held, 33% reported sometimes held, 39% reported often held and 21% reported always held. This is because the highest percentage of schools reporting that parent meetings occur 'always' or 'often' (high level of school – parent interaction) attribute this to this. The results are consistent with Posey-Maddox et al. (2016) in the USA who found that increased parent/school communication in the area of governance results in greater partnerships between the school and community.

Level of Parental Encouragement to Share Ideas

The researcher sought to determine the extent of parent encouragement to share ideas. As demonstrated in Table 5 the results were as follows:

Table 5: Level of Parental Encouragement to Share Ideas

Encouragement Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not encouraged	2	10
Slightly	5	16
Moderately encouraged	17	20
Encouraged	15	26
Very encouraged	10	28
Total	49	100

Of the BoM chairpersons responding to 5, 10% said it was not encouraged, 16% said it was slightly encouraged and 20% said it was moderately encouraged, 26% said it was encouraged, and 28% said it was very encouraged, for sharing ideas with parents. The majority of parents were encouraged or very encouraged to get involved with school governance.

Extent of Parental Participation in Governance Discussions

The researcher was interested in how engaged parents were in governance discussions in the school. The outcomes achieved are as in table 6.

Table 6: Extent of Parental Participation in Governance Discussions

Participation Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not at all	1	8
Slightly	5	14
Moderately	14	26
Very much	17	28
Extremely	12	24
Total	49	100

From the results shown in table 6, 28% of the chairpersons of BoM said that they very much and 24% extremely did not at all, 14% a little, 26% moderately do not at all. The majority of the BoM chairpersons rate parent participation in BoM conversation as very important or extremely important (the highest percentage). The findings echo those of Shatkin and Gershberg (2017) in the Philippines who discovered that when parents were involved in discussions around governance, decision-making at school was enhanced.

PTA Chairs Perception on Participatory Decision-Making

Frequency of PTA Meetings

The researcher wanted to find out how frequently PTA meetings took place to involve parents and the findings are represented in Table 7.

Table 7: Frequency of PTA Meetings

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Never	3	5
Rarely	5	9
Occasionally	11	21
Frequently	17	33
Always	15	29
Total	51	100

As shown in table 7, 5% of PTA Chairs stated that meetings are never held, 9% stated that meetings are rarely, 21% stated that meetings are occasionally, 33% stated that meetings are frequently and 29% stated that meetings are always held. This translates to parent-school communication in general that is increased due to PTA meetings that are held quite frequently. This finding corroborates that of Muthoni (2021) who posited that regular PTAs meetings inculcate the notion of collective responsibility in the welfare of students.

Comfort Level of Parents Sharing Ideas

The researcher's curiosity to know the comfort level of the parents to share ideas during the PTA meetings were as follows as reflected in Table 8

Table 8: Comfort Level of Parents Sharing Ideas

Comfort Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not Comfortable	2	3
Slightly Comfortable	6	11
Moderately Comfortable	19	37
Very Comfortable	24	49
Total	51	100

Table 8 reveals that, 3% of the parents were not comfortable while 11% were slightly comfortable, 37% were moderately comfortable, and 49% were very comfortable aspects of sharing ideas. This indicates that the majority of parents are able to attend PTA meetings.

Level of Parental Engagement in PTA Meetings

The researcher was interested in how involved parents are in PTA discussion and the outcomes of the parents' level of involvement are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Level of Parental Engagement in PTA Meetings

Engagement Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Not engaged	2	3
Slightly	6	11
Moderately	16	31
Engaged	17	33
Very Engaged	10	21
Total	51	100

As illustrated in table 9, 11% and 31% of parents were not engaged and slightly engaged, respectively. This translates to most parents talking with PTA. The results are consistent with Ochieng (2018) who found that parents will be more involved when they feel needed in school activities.

Student Presidents View on the Participatory Decision-Making Frequency of Parental Participation in Meetings

The researcher was interested in how involved parents were in the school meetings, and the outcome is presented in figure 4.4.

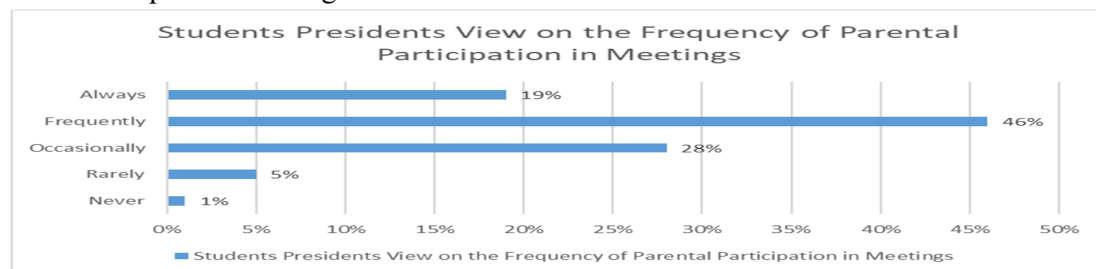


Figure 4: Frequency of Parental Participation in Meetings

From the results of figure 4.4, 1% of parents said that they never attended, 5% never often, 28% now and then, 46% often and 19% always attended meetings. That is, a lot of parents attended the meetings in the schools. This is in line with the result of Mugisha (2020) which revealed that active involvement of parents in school meeting positively affects the discipline and performance of children in schools in Uganda.

Freedom of Parents to Share Ideas

The researcher aimed to investigate how much freedom parents have to present an idea in the school discussions and the findings are presented in figure 5.

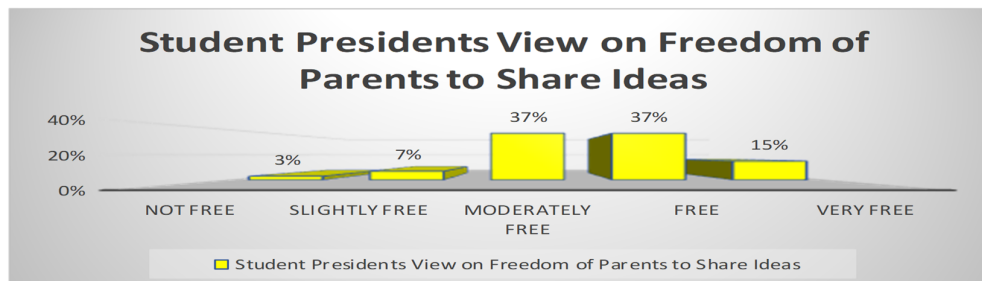


Figure 5: Student Presidents View on Freedom of Parents to Share Ideas

On examination of the results of figure 4.5, it was seen that 3% of the parents were not free to express ideas, 7% were slightly free, 37% moderately free, 37% free and 15% very free. It was clear there was a significant number of parents who were very or even quite free to give their opinion. This finding is consistent with the findings of Agyemang's (2018) study in Ghana that revealed that schools that practice inclusiveness are more likely to engage in involving parents in decision making in schools.

Parental Engagement in Decision-Making

The researcher wished to know how involved parents are in the decision making process of the school and the findings are as presented in figure 6.

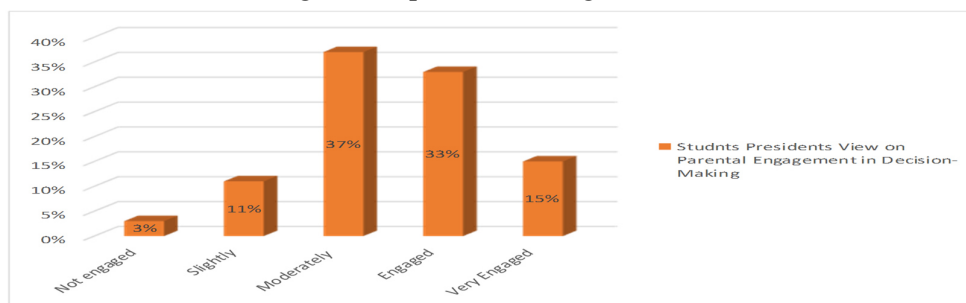


Figure 6: Parental Engagement in Decision-Making

15% of parents are very engaged, 33% are engaged, 37% are moderately engaged, 11% are slightly engaged and 3% are not engaged as shown in the results of figure 4.6. This indicates moderate involvement of most parents in decision making. The results corroborate Osei (2020)'s study on parent involvement in school governance and parent ownership and accountability in public secondary schools.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions of the Study

Conclusions were done in accordance with the objectives:

Participatory Decision-Making on Academic Performance of Students

Based on the results, the association between participatory decision making with the academic performance of the students is statistically significant ($r = 0.646$, $p = 0.000$), meaning that it has a moderate positive correlation. The study found that regular communication with parents was a trait of principals and that a regular communication culture helped to foster a shared understanding and collaboration on school issues.

Likewise, the study found evidence of deputy principals meeting parents regularly (as an indicator of participative governance) when parents were involved in decision making. Among other things, it found that there was a strong culture of free expression in the school, and that most parents voiced their opinions about matters. In conclusion, the study found that parents were actively involved in the key discussions in the school and this was maintained.

The study also noted that BOM chairpersons were aware of the regular governance meetings were with parents to ensure transparency and shared responsibility. Furthermore, it found that parents were invited to participate and offer their opinions frequently, resulting in respect and parent participation in school policy making. So, the results of the study showed that the participation of parents in discussion related to governance was quite high and it contributed to the practice of democracy in the school. Similarly, parent-teacher association chairpersons held PTA meetings regularly to improve parent-school relations, the study found. It also confirmed that parents were confident and able to give ideas and opinions, and were actively involved in decision making.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study and its conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

School administration and boards of management were encouraged to provide opportunities for increased parental involvement in school issues in defined and predictable paths, and regularly. These should extend beyond the standard meeting to the “dialogue” that exists in the school, including in school governance to ensure that parents are listened to throughout the school.

Besides, that study provided suggestions for the Ministry of education to develop and adopt school-community partnership policies which incorporate parent involvement forums at least once a month, and parent involvement in academic and extracurricular activities within the school. It was also suggested that the school administrators and Parent-Teacher

Associations should foster a culture of transparency and respect by maintaining effective communication with all stakeholders in the school to ensure that communication is timely, clear and effective. Schools should be equipped with digital and/or non-digital mechanisms to adequately inform parents and ensure their voice is heard and responded to.

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