

Students' Participation in Making Rules and Regulations on Discipline in Public Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County

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Abstract

Discipline remains a key factor influencing the learning environment and academic performance in secondary schools. Traditionally, school rules and regulations on discipline have been designed and implemented by administrators and teachers, with minimal input from students. However, contemporary approaches to school governance emphasize participatory decision-making, where learners are seen as stakeholders in shaping a just and orderly school culture. Involving students in developing rules that govern their conduct promotes a sense of ownership, accountability, and respect for the regulations, which can enhance compliance and reduce disciplinary problems. In several secondary schools in Kenya, the effectiveness of disciplinary policies continues to face challenges. These issues raise questions about the inclusivity of the disciplinary rule-making process and the extent to which students' voices are considered. Therefore, this study evaluated assessed the extent to which students' participation in making school rules and regulations influence discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai sub-county, Nakuru County, Kenya. The study was grounded in the theory of participation and adopted a mixed-method approach with a convergent parallel mixed design. The target population consisted of 29 public schools, 29 principals, 230 teachers, and 4998 students. Simple random sampling was used to select 9 out of 29 public secondary schools. All the 9 principals of the selected schools were automatically included in the study. The study used proportionate stratified sampling to select 144 out of 230 teachers. Proportionate stratified sampling was also used to select 370 out of 4998 students. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for students and teachers while interview guides were used to collect data from the schools' principals. Instrument validity was ensured through experts' review, and Reliability was tested using the test-retest technique, and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.8 was obtained, which was considered acceptable. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and means, and standard deviation, which were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented in narratives and direct

quotations. The findings showed a clear disconnect between students' and teachers' perceptions of student involvement in rule-making. Most students reported limited participation in decisions on prep schedules, use of digital devices, dress code, school menu, and disciplinary measures. Their average rating ($\bar{x} = 2.04$, $s = 0.81$) pointed to minimal involvement, while teachers gave a higher rating ($\bar{x} = 3.03$, $s = 0.86$), suggesting moderate involvement. Interviews with school principals confirmed that student involvement is often limited and mostly consultative when new rules are introduced. The study concludes that the limited genuine involvement of students in disciplinary rule-making contributes to student disengagement and may be a factor influencing disciplinary challenges within the schools. The study recommended that principals should enhance collaboration between teachers and students, emphasizing active student participation to promote discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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Introduction

Students' participation in decision-making regarding school discipline is crucial for maintaining the smooth operation of schools. When students are meaningfully engaged in setting expectations and rules, schools tend to experience fewer discipline-related problems. Today, student participation is increasingly recognized as a key factor in promoting positive behavior and accountability. Research shows that when learners take part in decision-making, they develop a stronger sense of ownership and

motivation (UNICEF, 2020). Furthermore, scholars such as Padayachee (2021) contend that students' participation in collaborative governance cultivates a culture of adherence to established rules and regulations within educational institutions. In order for a school to function effectively, there is a need to consider the opinions of its students and incorporate them in decision-making.

Engaging students in decision-making goes beyond mere compliance; it gives the students the power to pursue individual and group goals. This inclusive

approach not only fosters a conducive learning environment, but also nurtures a culture of mutual respect and responsibility among students. Encouraging students to participate in decision-making processes is therefore essential to developing a positive behavioural ethos in learning environments.

M'muyuri, Kibaara and Severina (2021) argue that students' participation in decision-making positively influences school discipline by fostering a positive school culture and reducing instances of indiscipline. The aspect of students' participation emphasizes on the importance of school principals to encourage active students' engagement in decision-making to promote a positive school culture environment (Koech, 2020). The concept of student participation in decision-making has a foundation in the United Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC) of 1989. Article 12 advocates for children and young people's active participation as a right to participation in the decision-making process.

The study highlights impactful finding: when students feel included in classroom decisions, it fosters a sense of ownership and belonging. This inclusive approach does not only improve the learning environment but also enhances mutual respect and collaboration between students and teachers. By acknowledging students' input, teachers and principals create a balanced and conducive setting for effective learning and maintaining discipline. This shows that teamwork is critical for successful schools and a conducive atmosphere for students

From a global perspective, studies have been conducted to understand the relationship between students' participation in decision-making on discipline in schools.

In the United Kingdom, Hardwicke et al. (2022) observed a notable deficiency in students' opportunities to freely express their opinions regarding co-curricular activities within their schools. Specifically, the study highlighted a case involving rugby, whereby it was a compulsory sport although not every student had interest in playing rugby. This underlines the necessity for schools to afford students the platform to voice their preferences and opinions in the decision-making process. This highlights a crucial need for greater collaboration and inclusivity within school decision-making processes to ensure the varied needs and preferences of students are adequately considered. Thus, school principals have a critical role to promote cohesiveness in schools by way of accommodating views from every stakeholder including students. Students have a right to be listened to and their views to be included in decision-making process.

In Tunisia, Abdelhafidh et al. (2021) in their study observed that when school principals encourage participation in decisions of co-curricular activities, students have the opportunity to enhance their communication, critical thinking, and conflict resolution skills. Consequently, these skills improvements contribute to enhanced discipline within the school environment. Furthermore, the study of Abdelhafidh et al. (2021) found students' social behavior in particular; their aggressiveness tends to diminish when they participate in decisions in co-curricular activities.

In South Africa, public schools have been directed to form governing bodies that include student representation to participate in administration decisions (Mncube & Harber, 2014). This initiative aims to provide students with the freedom to speak their preferences and influence in shaping school policies and practices. For

example, students can give feedback about lesson delivery, classroom group formation, and sitting arrangements among others.

In 2009, Kenya Secondary Schools Student Council (KSSSC) was established to promote students' participation in decision-making processes and addressing issues of indiscipline, such as drugs and substances abuse, strikes, arson, and property damages (Masele, 2019). Before the establishment of student councils in Kenya, school management was primarily handled by the Board of Governors (BOGs) and Parents, Teachers Association (PTA). However, neither, the BOGs nor the PTAs had students' representation in their decision-making forums (Masele, 2019). Consequently, students' ideas were not heard in critical decisions processes that directly affected them. Many schools relied on the prefect system as a forum for student leadership, but often, prefects prioritized the interests of the teachers and principals rather than representing the students' interests (Apollo, 2017).

In Rongai Sub-County, Kenya, Chebon (2022) study found that schools where students were asked to share their views in meetings, students demonstrate positive attitudes toward rules and regulations they respond positively towards them. The study indicated that in such schools, cases of students' misbehavior are minimal. A school requires a conducive learning environment to be able to offer successful education. Principals play a big role in ensuring students adhere to rules and regulations for safe learning environment. A previous study by Kiprop (2016) investigated principals' practices in the management of discipline in Rongai Sub-County. The study revealed that principals who act without involving students and consider students as subject without a voice have problems of discipline in their schools. The schools experience tension,

stress and misunderstanding. Therefore, where views of students are not considered, indiscipline cases were witnessed. Similarly, Lagat et al. (2023) assessed whether students' council help to mitigate students' indiscipline in school. The study found that although students' council existed in schools, the role of the students' council was yet to show positive outcome and help in reducing instances of indiscipline in schools. Although the study focused on students' council involvement, discipline in schools have not improved in public secondary school in Rongai Sub-County. Thus, this study examined students' participation in decision-making on discipline in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Studies across the globe have recognized that student participation in decision-making is essential in enhancing student discipline in schools. A study conducted in Kenya by Chepkwony, Matere and Ndaita (2024) argues that principals who involve students in decision-making, such as creation of school rules, find it easier to manage discipline issues. Allowing students to participate in decision-making promotes a sense of responsibility, ownership, and respect for rules which enhances students' discipline. Student discipline in schools the country is taken very seriously. As a result, the government is making efforts to enhance learners' discipline by ensuring that teachers and school heads are well-trained in effective discipline management strategies in addition to equipping of schools with counsellors to support the handling of disciplinary issues (Nkarichia, 2023).

Despite the government's efforts to enhance discipline, public schools in Rongai Sub-County continue to struggle with persistent cases of indiscipline. A study by Ngonga (2018) revealed a rise in

serious disciplinary issues, including rampages, arson, and property damage, which have posed significant challenges to the educational environment and disrupted effective teaching and learning. A report from Rongai Sub-County also revealed that school stakeholders, including parents, are complaining about the state of student discipline in schools (Sub-County Office Report, 2025). A study by Lagat et al. (2023) in the area revealed the severity of the situation, noting a 45.1% increase in indiscipline cases, with substance abuse contributing 34.9% and student strikes accounting for 54.3% of these cases.

It is worrying that if student discipline in the area continues to deteriorate, academic performance may decline, school property may suffer damage, and the overall learning environment may become unsafe. There has also been limited research assessing the extent to which students' participation in making school rules and regulations influence discipline in public secondary schools in the area. These gaps raised the need for this study, which assessed the extent to which students' participation in making school rules and regulations influence discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

To assess whether students' participation in making school rules and regulations influence discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County.

Research Question

How does students' participation in making school rules and regulations influence discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County?

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on participation theory by Lundy (2007). Theory posits that participation of students in decision-making is important because it empowers them to speak out their views in the school. The theory lays emphasis on the importance to provide a safe environment for students to be able to speak out their minds without fear of intimidation or judgment. Furthermore, Lundy observes there is need for students to be offered an opportunity to be listened to. The argument is that it is not enough to give a chance to students to speak while there is no one to listen to what they are saying. Hence, the importance to speak to an audience whose aim is to discuss the issues together with students, and present the students' issues to be considered in the decision-making process.

Lundy points out that students' participation in decision-making can bring peace and harmony in a school and improve students' discipline because the school provides a space to speak out their views and demands. The theory of participation emphasizes on creating a safe and inclusive environment for students' participation in decision-making process. This ensures that all students regardless of their background or abilities have equal opportunity to contribute meaningfully. Therefore, by applying this theory it is presumed that students' issues that make them uncomfortable in school can be addressed and their voices are heard.

Literature Review

Influence of Students Participation in Making School Rules and Regulations on School Discipline

Rules and regulations are the major indicators of what is expected of students in a particular school. According to Fekadu (2018), rules are a set of guiding principles that instruct and enjoin

students to behave in a certain way while abstaining from other behavior. Regulations can be considered to focus on daily activities that instruct students on what they ought to accomplish at a specific time.

In Australia, Sewyn and Bulfin (2016) conducted a study in three schools on students' decision-making regarding rules and regulations on the use of technology in schools. The study used case study design. Data was collected in two phases in a year between September and December 2015 and February and June 2016 for a period of two years. The researcher used online questionnaires to collect the data that was self-administered. The study findings indicated rules and regulations were important guiding principles in a school and students need to be involved in formulating them. The study recommended that there was need to involve students in decision-making on digital use. The study by Sewyn and Bulfin (2016) adds significantly to the current study by investigating student decision-making in school. The study, however, differs from the current study since the research design was qualitative of a case study method, and data collection was through online questionnaire. In order to fill this gap, this current study will use mixed method of convergent design. Data collection was through questionnaires that were dropped in the sampled schools at a given time.

In Ethiopia, Fekadu (2019) studied the impact of school rules and regulations on students' perceptions of promoting good behavior in a secondary school. The respondents were students in grades nine, ten, eleven, and twelve. Stratified and random sampling was used to select 438 students. The research instruments were administered through email. The Pearson chi-square was used for inferential analysis. The study's findings revealed a

link between students' attitudes towards school rules and regulations and the promotion of good behaviour, which the current study will attempt to address. This study is different from the current study in that the study targeted participant from one school while the current study will target 29 public secondary schools. The study was also conducted in grades nine, ten, and twelve. This also marks a population gap since the current study was conducted in public secondary schools. In the current study, the data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science rather than chi-square. Further, the current study was conducted in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya as opposed to Dire Dawa in Ethiopia creating a geographical gap.

In North Rift Kenya, in peri-urban mixed secondary schools, Hellen (2020) explored the attitudes of students toward rules and regulations in secondary schools. The study used a qualitative methodology study in particular case study design. The study had 6 participants sampled using non-probability sampling, particularly purposive technique. There were 3 boys and 3 girls, selected.

According to the findings of Hellen (2020) study, the school did not have a process of including students in decision-making. Students like to be included in decision-making processes about school rules and regulations. Hellen's (2020) study is related to the current study and provides significant insights into students' views regarding school rules and regulations. However, the study differs from the current study in that it used a qualitative design focusing on a small population of six participants, as it was a case study. While this approach allowed for in-depth exploration of individual experiences, it may limit the generalizability of the findings due to the small sample size and lack of quantitative data to support broader conclusions. The

current study will bridge the gap by using mixed method design. Using a mixed methods design enhances the study by combining quantitative breadth with qualitative depth, allowing for richer insights, data triangulation, and a more comprehensive understanding of students' participation and discipline. The study used non-probability technique and the current study bridged the gap by using both probability and non-probability technique to sample participants thus, strengthening the research findings.

A study conducted by Mati et al. (2016) assessed students' involvement in decision-making and their academic performance in Embu West Sub-County of Kenya. The research used survey design. Sampling technique included random sampling to select 4 public day schools out of 12 schools. A proportionate sampling was used to select students who participated in the study from each school. A questionnaire with open and closed-ended questions were used to collect data from students, teachers, and principals while focus group discussion was used to gather data from parents with the aid of research assistants. Document analysis was also used to collect information on the performance of students. The study findings established that students' participation in key decisions that involve the process of their education is a source of motivation that compels them to own the set rules and therefore abide by them.

The current study is related to Mati et al. (2016) as both studies highlight the influence of students' involvement in school affairs. However, the studies differ in scope and focus. The present research specifically investigates students' engagement in decision-making on school discipline, whereas Mati et al. (2016) focused on learners' academic performance. Furthermore, this study was conducted in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru

County, while Mati et al.'s study was carried out in Embu County. The current study bridges the gap by shifting the focus from the general academic impact of student involvement, as examined by Mati et al. (2016), to a more specific aspect, students' participation in disciplinary decision-making. By exploring this dimension, the study adds depth to the understanding of how student involvement affects school governance and discipline management. Additionally, conducting the research in a different geographical setting (Rongai Sub-County) provides comparative insights and expands the contextual relevance of findings, which may lead to more informed policy recommendations applicable across diverse regions.

Kiprop (2016) carried out a study on the role of principal's leadership practices in managing discipline in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County. The study examined how teachers, students, and parents agreed or disagreed that principal management and leadership qualities were important in school discipline management. The study used a survey design. The population of the study included all the teachers, students, and parents from all of the public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County. Stratified and random sampling were used to sample 12 public schools. Random sampling was used to select 40 students and 100 teachers respectively. Additionally, convenient sampling was used to sample 20 parents. Data was collected through questionnaires and analysed through SPSS version 25. The findings of the study established that principals' leadership practices play a key role in maintaining discipline in school. The study recommended the need to for principal to involve have all stakeholders in students' discipline and wellbeing. The study by Kiprop differs from the current study because it adopted a survey design

and used only a quantitative approach, which may have limited the depth of insights into participants' experiences and perceptions. In contrast, the current study employed a mixed-methods convergent design, which allowed for both statistical analysis and deeper qualitative understanding, thereby providing a more comprehensive and balanced view of the research problem. The current study's sampling method included purposive sampling for principals, as they are believed to possess unique and authoritative information regarding student discipline. This contrasts with Kiprop's (2016) study, which did not include principals in its sample, thereby creating a methodological gap in capturing key administrative perspectives. The current study sought to fill this gap by incorporating principals' insights, thus enhancing the depth, relevance, and credibility of the findings related to decision-making and discipline in schools.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a mixed-method approach with a convergent parallel mixed design. The target population consisted of 29 public schools, 29 principals, 230 teachers, and 4998 students. Simple random sampling was used to select 9 out of 29 public secondary schools. All the 9 principals of the selected schools were automatically included in the study. The study used proportionate stratified sampling to select 144 out of 230 teachers. Proportionate stratified sampling was also used to select 370 out of 4998 students. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for students and teachers while interview guides were used to collect data from the schools' principals. Instrument validity was ensured through experts' review, and Reliability was tested using the test-retest technique, and a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.8 was obtained, which was considered

acceptable. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics including frequencies, percentages, and means, and standard deviation, which were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 29. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and presented in narratives and direct quotations.

Results and Discussions

Influence of Students' Participation in Making School Rules on Discipline

The study assessed whether students' participation in making school rules and regulations influenced discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County. The rating scale on a Likert scale ranged from Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5). The responses obtained were used to compute frequencies and percentages as well as an aggregate mean score ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (s) for all the items used to rate the influence of students' participation in making school rules on discipline. The results were presented in Table 1.

From results tabulated in Table 1, respondents were asked on involvement of students in setting for morning and evening preps. According to the findings, higher number of student respondents (38.0%) and (24.3%) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that students are involved in morning and evening reading sessions. Data from interviews also indicate that school principals involve the students in setting school routine including time for reading. The findings make a point of divergence between views of teachers and school principals and students on the other hand.

Table 1: Perceptions of students regarding their participation in making school rules and regulations

Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$
Students (n=343)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
I am involved in setting time for morning and evening preps.	130(38.0%)	83(24.3%)	38(11.1%)	58(17.0%)	33(9.6%)	342	2.36
I participate in updating school rules and regulations.	152(44.3%)	88(25.7%)	44(12.8%)	40(11.7%)	19(5.5%)	343	2.08
I am involved in making rules on the use of digital devices like phones and laptops and websites.	207(60.3%)	65(19.0%)	28(8.2%)	26(7.6%)	17(5.0%)	343	1.78
I participate in developing rules for dressing code.	129(37.6%)	97(28.3%)	63(18.4%)	35(10.2%)	19(5.5%)	343	2.18
I give suggestion on type of shoe colours, length of hair and fingernails.	192(56.0%)	76(22.2%)	27(7.9%)	26(7.6%)	22(6.4%)	343	1.86
I am involved in formulating the school menu.	180(52.5%)	83(24.2%)	36(10.5%)	23(6.7%)	21(6.1%)	343	1.90
I am allowed to give my opinion on school rules and regulations	131(38.2%)	66(19.2%)	55(16.0%)	59(17.2%)	32(9.3%)	343	2.40
I am involved to setting rules and regulations on school assignments	148(43.3%)	77(22.5%)	44(12.9%)	52(15.2%)	21(6.1%)	342	2.18
I am involved in deciding punishment for late comers	195(56.9%)	76(22.2%)	33(9.6%)	18(5.2%)	21(6.1%)	343	1.82
Aggregate Mean Score ($\bar{x}$) = 2.90, Standard Deviation (s) = .68							

Table 2: Perceptions of teachers regarding their participation in making school rules and regulation

Statement	SD (1)	D (2)	N (3)	A (4)	SA (5)	<i>n</i>	$\bar{x}$
Teachers (n=121)							
Teachers involve students in setting time for morning and evening preps.	11(9.2%)	23(19.2%)	17(14.2%)	52(43.3%)	17(14.2%)	120	3.34
Students participate in updating school rules and regulations.	17(4.0%)	27(22.3%)	23(19.0%)	42(34.7%)	12(9.9%)	121	3.04
Students are given the opportunity to recommend best practices for the use of digital devices like phones and laptops and websites.	19(15.8%)	32(26.7%)	28(23.3%)	27(22.5%)	14(11.7%)	120	2.87
Students participate in developing rules for dressing code.	23(19.2%)	31(25.8%)	29(24.2%)	27(22.5%)	10(8.3%)	120	2.75
Students are allowed to suggest shoe colours, length of hair and fingernails.	35(28.9%)	36(29.8%)	21(17.4%)	16(13.2%)	13(10.7%)	121	2.47
Students are involved in formulating the school menu	22(18.2%)	37(30.6%)	31(25.6%)	24(19.8%)	7(5.8%)	121	2.64
Teachers listen to opinion of student on school rules and regulations	15(12.5%)	16(13.3%)	21(17.5%)	50(41.7%)	18(15.0%)	120	3.33
Teachers and students agree on rules and regulations for school assignments	11(9.1%)	14(11.6%)	24(19.8%)	47(38.8%)	25(20.7%)	121	3.50
Teachers involve students in deciding punishments for latecomers	15(12.6%)	25(21.0%)	19(16.0%)	42(35.3%)	18(15.1%)	119	3.19
Aggregate Mean Score ($\bar{x}$) = 3.03, Standard Deviation (s) = .86							

Perhaps the kind of participation of students in setting school routine including time for preps does not meet the expectations of students. Students tend to resist imposed rules and regulation including study schedules. According to Akech, Ngwacho and Nyatuka, (2022) failure to adequately involve students in coming with study routine may raise discontent which is a recipe of indiscipline.

Regarding the participation of students in updating of school rules and regulations, 44.3% of students strongly disagreed and 25.7% disagreed that they are involved in the process. To the contrary, 34.7% of teachers strongly agreed and 9.9% agreed and respectively that students are involved in updating of schools' rules and regulations. Similarly, school principals are of the view that students are involved in updating school rules and regulations. The contrast points at possibility that students are not adequately involved in formulation and updating of school and regulations. The findings are consistent with observation of Akech, Ngwacho and Nyatuka, (2022) who reported that students are hardly involved in making decisions on school rules which attracts resentment and resistance leading to incidences of discipline.

The aggregate mean score of 3.03 indicates a moderate level of student involvement in setting prep times and updating school rules. However, the relatively high standard deviation of 0.86 suggests varied responses, reflecting inconsistent practices and perceptions among respondents.

Respondents were asked to give their opinion on whether students are given an opportunity to recommend best practices for the use of digital devices like phones and laptops and websites. According to the findings, 60.3% of students strongly disagreed while 19% disagreed that they are involved in making decision on use of digital devices.

Similarly, 15.8% of the students strongly disagreed that they were involved in making decisions on use of digital devices. The school principals also reported that students cannot be involved in all aspects of management. Kiprop (2021) also noted that student's involvement in decision making is not wholesome and often rare and tokenistic which is a recipe of resentment and possible indiscipline.

Students were asked on their opinion on whether students' views were considered when developing rules on dress code. According to the findings, high number of students, (37.6% and 28.3%) strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with the statement. Similarly, (19.2% and 25.8%) of teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that students are involved in making decisions on dress code. The school principals also reported that dressing code was decided long ago hence no need of consultation. One of the school head-teachers elaborated that; "schools have long held culture which is not easy to change." Arguing on similar vein, Whitman (2020) point out that dress code for a school is mandatory practice based on school norms.

Respondents were asked for their perspectives on students' opinions are regarding shoe colours, hair length, and fingernail length. According to the findings, majority of the students (56.0%) and 22.2% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that students are consulted. Majority of teachers (28.9% and 29%) strongly agreed and disagreed respectively that students are involved in making decisions about colour of shoes, length of hair and finger nails. Data from school principal also corroborate that some decisions are definite and rigid based on standards and culture of the school community. Perhaps this rigidity of the school norms with limited room for negotiation may be the recipe for

consistent indiscipline reported in schools. The issue of grooming in schools in Kenya has been controversial with students petitioning to be let free to adopt their choice of lifestyles.

Respondents were asked whether students are allowed to give their views on school menu. An overwhelming majority of students (52.5%) strongly disagreed and 24.2% disagreed agreed that they are involved in making decision over the school menu. Similarly, majority of teachers concurred with (18.2% and 30.6%) strongly disagreeing and agreeing respectively that students are involved in making decision on the menu. School principals also pointed out that school menu is predetermined due to cost implication otherwise yielding into the demands of students may perhaps be untenable. One of the school principals elaborated:

The type of menu that students may request is not feasible due to budgetary constraints, as accommodating their preferences would require additional resources that exceed the school's financial capacity. Any attempt to modify the menu based on student opinions would inevitably lead to increased costs, resulting in higher levies that many parents may struggle to afford. Given the need to maintain affordability while ensuring that all students receive a nutritious meal, the school has opted to retain githeri as the primary dish. This decision is made pragmatically, prioritizing financial sustainability and equitable access to meals rather than engaging in extensive debate over menu options (Head-teacher 7, August 18, 2024).

The study also showed that majority of students (38.2%) and 19.2% strongly disagreeing and disagreeing

respectively that their opinion is sought on school rules and regulations. The results contradict with the views of teachers with the majority consisting of 41.7% and 15.0% agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively. Additionally, the school principals also support that student opinions are sought on school rules and regulations. The principals elaborated on the approach taken to familiarize students with school regulations that:

At our school, we take students through the school rules and actively seek their opinions to ensure they fully understand the norms and expectations. By involving them in this process, we create a sense of ownership and responsibility, which significantly enhances discipline. When students are well-informed about what is expected of them, they are more likely to adhere to the rules, fostering a more orderly and respectful learning environment (Head-teacher 6, August 16, 2024).

Nevertheless, the contrasting views of teachers and school principals on one hand and students on the hand is an indicator of potential disconnect on how students are involved in formulation of school rules and regulations. Indeed, according to Kiprop (2021) and Amija, Ngwacho and Nyatuka (2022) students are to a very low extent consulted on rules and regulations. Yet, it has been attested involvements of students in formulation of rules and regulations is a significant predictor of student discipline according to Amija et al (2022).

The study further revealed that majority of students (43.3%) and 22.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they are involved in setting rules and regulations on school assignments. To the contrary, 38.8% and 20.0 % of teachers strongly agreed and

agreed respectively that students are involved in setting rules on assignments. The schools' principals also acknowledged that they encourage the teachers to agree with students on how to conduct effective assignments. However, the results indicate that students are not contented with extent of their involvement in the way assignments should be conducted. According to Arafat and Fahmida (2024), effective classroom management entails involving students in all aspects of classroom instruction to achieve designated academic goals.

Finally, the respondents were asked their opinion on whether students are involved in deciding the punishment to be meted out to late comers. According to the findings, majority of students strongly disagreed (56.9%) and disagreed (22.2%) that students participate in deciding punishment for late comers. To the contrary, majority of teachers strongly agreed (35.3%) and agreed (15.1%) that students are engaged in deciding the punishment to administer to late comers. Furthermore, there was a noticeable difference between the views of students and teachers, suggesting that students were dissatisfied with the extent to which they were involved in determining appropriate punishments. Failure to consult students in matters of discipline is contrary to the provisions of the Basic Education Bill which provides full involvement of students in decision making especially through student council to avert indiscipline (Ministry of Education, 2024).

When composite score was calculated, results indicated that on average, students are involved to a low extent $\bar{x} = 2.04, s = .81$ in making rules and regulations. However, data from teachers when the composite score is computed students are involved in making rules and regulations to a moderate extent ($\bar{x} = 3.03, s = .86$). According to Kuhn et al,

(2021) teachers tend to rate participation of students in the management of the school higher than the students. However, it is still indicative that students are not fully involved in making decisions. The findings corroborate with views of school principals who opined that schools are usually pre-set and therefore students may only be consulted when new clauses are introduced. The principals concluded that students can only be involved to some extent but not whole some. Arguing on similar vein, Akech, Ngwacho and Nyatuka (2022) on a study on involvement of students in making school rules the input of students is not full which limits ownership of the regulations- a recipe for resentment.

The findings reveal a significant disconnect between students' perceptions and those of teachers and principals regarding involvement in school decision-making. While teachers and principals believe students are moderately engaged in setting rules for prep time, dress codes, school menus, digital device use, and discipline, the majority of students report low or no involvement. The aggregate mean score ($\bar{x} = 2.04, s = .81$) from students suggests minimal participation, whereas teachers rated involvement higher ($\bar{x} = 3.03, s = .86$). These discrepancies highlight a need for more genuine, inclusive student engagement in school governance to foster discipline, ownership, and a positive learning environment.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study revealed that students' participation in making school rules and regulations positively influences discipline in public secondary schools. It was further concluded that while school staff believe students are moderately involved in decisions regarding reading schedules, dress codes, digital device use, and

disciplinary measures, students report minimal or no involvement. This gap suggests a need for more inclusive and meaningful student engagement in school governance to enhance ownership and reinforce discipline. It was thus, recommended that principals should enhance collaboration between teachers and students, emphasizing active student participation to foster discipline in public secondary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

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