



## **Impact of Student Leaders' Participation in School Open Forums on Learners' Discipline in Public and Private Secondary Schools in Machakos Sub-County, Kenya**

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### Abstract

This paper focuses on student leaders' participation in school open forums as a worthwhile practice of incorporating student leaders in school governance. Active participation of student leaders in school open forums is an opportunity for learners to participate in initiating and owning academic and discipline decisions made during the forums. Ownership of decisions translates to improved learners' discipline and academic performance. The study was carried out in Machakos sub-county, Machakos County Kenya to investigate the impact of student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-county. The study was guided by two objectives; to establish the status of student leaders' participation in school open forums and determines the impact on learners' discipline. The study embraced a descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were employed to get the sample size. Data were collected using questionnaires for the students and teachers and interview schedules for the deputy principals, principals, board of management (BoM) chairpersons, and private school directors. Further, document analysis was done for triangulation of the information. The data collected was processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21. The statistics were tabulated and subjected to regression analysis using ANOVA and coefficient models.

The study established student leaders' participation in school open forums was opportunity to express learners' views and suggestions on school routines, rules, and regulations. The participation resulted in ownership of school rules and regulations hence improving learners' discipline. In contrast, student leaders who did not actively participate in school open forums missed an opportunity to express learners' views and hence did not embrace reforms in the school routine, rules, and regulations citing their views were not put into consideration resulting in deteriorated student discipline levels. The study concluded that participation of student leaders in school open forums was significantly higher at (p) 0.003 than student leaders not participating in school open forums (p) 0.047. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The study recommended that school principals should organize frequent school open forums and encourage openness to encourage student leaders and other learners to air their views.

Keywords: Students, Student Leaders, Participation, Learners Discipline, Open Forums

### **Introduction**

Students' participation in school governance leads to active student engagement in school administration (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). In participative decision-making, all members of the organization have the right to be heard, express their views; feelings, and offer knowledge and information (Owen & Valesky, 2011). Schools are organizations where students and their parents, sponsors, and guardians are the main clients. As such, they must participate in arriving at decisions taken in the school. According to Kiprop (2012), discipline is about how students behave toward each other, the school administration, and how the school administration behaves towards students. He points out that establishing a standard set of values is not easy because the values held by the school administration and implemented in the behavioral policy may sometimes conflict with those held by the school administration and the student body. To address this challenge, Sushila (2004) recommends the inclusion of students at various levels of decision-making.

In Britain, a school called St Mary's stressed the entanglement of students' participation in the school's management. Their extensive duties were frequently overseeing attendance, punctuality, and fiction mentoring activities (Allen, 2010).

Further, at Georges High School (Georgeshal -P.Schools 2010), an English International school in America, all the prefects assist in administering young pupils when working during lunch break and give a further pair of eyes to the teachers at interval sessions. Furthermore, a study undertaken by Sagle and Kowlosky (2000) in the U.S.A., the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands on students' involvement in management deduced that managers in the Netherlands perceived student councils' participation in guaranteeing punctuality in school as a social necessity. In contrast, the American managers saw it as a mechanism for ensuring the smooth running of the school.

In South Africa, Harber and Mncube (2015) concluded that in the enactment of the SASA, the state focused on encouraging democratic school governance and thereby suggested school leadership arrangements that included teachers, students, and parents. According to Chemutai and Chumba (2014), a well-formed council of students will be capable of serving the student association on issues regarding them wholly; assisting in the forging of an ideal learning environment, and assisting lessen the various incidences of unrest witnessed in secondary schools. Notwithstanding, school governance and participation have been outlined in real precise terms that stress student leaders' participation for efficient logistics instead of involving students for democratic reasons. Jeruto and Kiprop (2011), in their research on the scope of student involvement in decision-making in secondary schools in Kenya, established that student participation in public and private secondary schools was deemed weak and required broadening to encompass matters above student well-being.

In support of this view, a study carried out in the Eastern Region of Kenya by

Mulwa, Kimosop, & Kasivu (2015), ascertained that the essential structures that permit students to participate in decision-making exercises had not been constituted in both public and private secondary schools. Thou, the Ministry of Education, have stressed the need for shared leadership between teachers, parents, and learners. The reviewed literature indicates a different practice where the students' views are mostly disregarded, and the student leaders mostly promote the interests of the school administration over those of the student body (Awiti, 2009). This study concurs with the views of these studies that support students' participation in school governance; however, the studies above have not established the extent of student leaders' participation in school open forums and whether there is any impact on learners' discipline, indicating the comparative aspect of public and private secondary schools. The study, therefore, sought to ascertain the status of student leaders' participation in school open forums and the impact on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos sub-county, Kenya.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Private and public secondary schools in Kenya have continued to witness cases of student disturbance. This is despite the adoption of student leaders' participation in school governance as a directive of the Ministry of Education (MOE) as an assessment of bettering the learners' discipline in Kenya, reported incidences of learners' indiscipline persist in being on the increase report by the Machakos Sub County Director of Education shows that 20 secondary schools were involved in strikes in 2018. Statistics indicated both Public and private secondary schools were involved thou the public schools were more affected. To address this gap, the Government of Kenya encouraged students' participation in school open forums to ensure students' ownership of reforms in school routines, rules, and regulations. The study will make recommendations to broaden, strengthen and make operational student leaders' participation in school open forums in both public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, Kenya.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed to investigate the impact of student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in the Machakos sub-County.

### **Objective of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

1. To establish the status of student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-

County.

2. To determine the impact of student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-County

### **Research Hypothesis**

The study sought to test the following null hypothesis:

H1: Student leaders' participation in school open forums does not statistically impact learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-County, Kenya.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Open forums entail discussions that lead students to air their concerns (Fletcher, 2009). A study by Keogh & White 2005, established that students, via student leaders, needed to affect management decisions through policy formulation and implementation of policies, rules, and regulations. Further, a study by Kilonzo, 2017 argued that the main task of the student councils is to help run the school on behalf of the teachers. The studies supported students' involvement in enacting school rules and regulations. In affirmation of this perspective, Cotton (2005), in cross-sectional research on public school discipline on students in the U.S.A., established that since a majority of the school rules and regulations were developed in the absence of students' involvement, students don't have respect and ownership of them.

On the contrary, a study by Kiprop (2012) outlined that most principals adopt a master or servant superior or inferior attitude in dealing with students. They rarely listened to students' views and grievances because they believed they had nothing to offer. On the contrary, students always like to understand why things are done the way they are. They would like to give their views about change and to have those views heard (Fielding & Rudduck, 2002). Further, Fielding (2001), points out that there is a cost of ignoring students' views. Though he talks of the cost as having consequences in an inspection report or public perception of the school, this study argues that the consequences manifest in student indiscipline, especially those experienced in public and private secondary schools in Kenya. Students always protest when they feel that their views are not sought in the governance of their schools. This creates a lot of tension, stress, and misunderstanding, eventually leading to frustrations and violence as manifested in strikes. Additionally, in a study done by Nyamwamu (2007) on students' involvement in enhancing public secondary school discipline, she stated that school indiscipline problems are caused due to absence of dialogue between the students and the school administration. Given this, principals must cultivate a democratic and participatory environment in the school by engaging in the

students' participation and encouraging regular fora (barazas) where teachers and students are encouraged to express their views (MOEST, 2001).

In the same vein, studies done by Jeruto & Kiprop (2011) showed that calls for the inclusion of students in the decision-making structure in schools have led to various attempts by the Ministry of Education to put in place structures for inclusion. The most prominent of these was the Kenya Secondary School Student Council (KSSSC), formed in 2009 to make secondary school governance more participatory. In this new arrangement, students would be part and parcel of school management to ensure their interests are adopted in the administration of secondary schools. However, it was recommended that opportunities be created to enable teachers, students, and school administrators to freely sit down and discuss issues affecting their schools without inhibition, intimidation, or victimization. Hence, for effective management of school discipline, the concerted effort between the principal, staff, students, parents, and the community is a prerequisite. It is observed that when students are denied a chance to express their views and vent out frustrations, it breeds a situation that could result in disruptive behaviors.

Such incidences could be prevented by the involvement of students in collaborative decision-making; further, research has shown that young people want to be involved in participative decision-making in their schools (Alderson 2000). According to the Republic of Kenya (2001) and Kindiki (2009), school administrators used poor communication channels. The undemocratic school administration did not consider meetings as important channels of communication. This concurs with Kiprop (2012), who observed that principals adopt master/servants as superior/inferior attitudes in dealing with students. However, this is inconsistent with Brasof (2012), who established that principals frequently or sometimes involve students in their schools. However, they communicate clearly to students but frequently retain the final authority over most issues. This study sought to establish the extent to which student leaders were involved in school open forums to air issues affecting the other learners as a strategy to control learners' discipline. Khewu (2012) observed that principals' roles in instilling discipline were focused mainly on reactive administrative and management functions rather than on giving leadership designed to inspire alternative ways of behaving and solving emerging issues. Similarly, Brasof (2011) argues that solutions created with students are successful since they tend to have more students' buy-in. The students know better their problems and the origin of the problems and therefore are in a better position to solve them. Sometimes the students need guidance from the teachers to decide how best to solve their problems. This helps them to grow and develop into responsible adults. Mati et al. (2016) promoted that student participation in disciplinary issues helps them grow responsibly and accept the consequences of their own decisions and actions. In his study, Hannam (2001) found that participative activities in both public and private schools improved school attendance, students' self-esteem, motivation, and attainment among the students. Additionally, Harris

(2010) found that failure of discipline in the classroom resulted in classroom hooliganism. On the contrary, a more recent study by Kilonzo (2017) found that most respondents said that students were not involved in enacting school rules and policies.

This study posits that public and private secondary school students should be included in important decisions that affect the learners. This will allow the learners to propose views on preferable methods of intensifying discipline. The study agrees with the studies mentioned above that student leaders' participation in school open forums is important; however, it did not determine the range of participation of student leaders in school open forums and how it impacts learners' discipline in both public and private secondary schools. Since the law in Kenya provides for the establishment of Student Councils, which are democratic organizations whereby students are involved in formulating crucial decisions in schools (the Republic of Kenya, 2012), it is of concern to identify if students' leaders' participation in school open forums has an impact on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools

### **Research Methodology**

The study utilized a descriptive survey design. The targeted population was 44 public and 14 private secondary schools. Secondly, the study entailed all the 300,029 and 185,651 students in public and private secondary schools, respectively. The study also focused on all the 1943 and 937 secondary school teachers in public and private secondary schools, respectively. The study further targeted 14 deputy principals, 14 principals, 14 school directors in private secondary schools, 44 deputy principals, 44 principals, and 44 BOM chairpersons in public secondary schools. The study employed Simple random sampling to get the sample size of students, Probability sampling was utilized to choose teachers from the sampled school. Census sampling was applied to establish all the BOM chairpersons in Public schools /directors in private schools, principals, and deputy principals of the 22 sampled schools were included in the study. Subsequently, the total number of sampled respondents constituted 16 BOM chairpersons (public secondary schools), 6 directors (private schools), 22 principals, 22 deputy principals, 110 teachers, and 528 students, adding up to a total of 704 respondents.

Data were collected using questionnaires for teachers and students, interview schedules for the deputy principals, principals, BOM chairpersons, and private schools' directors as well as document analysis. Personal-administered questionnaires were utilized to gather data from the students and the teachers.

The content validity of the research instruments was ascertained through, analysis by experts in comparative education, comparative studies on the subject, and piloting of the questionnaires. Instruments reliability was ascertained after the pilot study by calculating Cronbach's alpha by applying the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The alpha coefficient value ranged from 0 to 1 and was used to portray

the reliability of the aspects derived from the scales. A greater value demonstrated a better reliable produced Likert scale. If the alpha coefficients were greater than the degree of significance (0.7), the researcher concluded that the instruments had a tolerable reliability coefficient and hence ideal for the study.

### Study Findings

The study's first objective was to establish the extent of student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-County.

The students and teachers were asked to respond to statements related to student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline. They were requested to indicate their responses as; EP=Extensive participation, M=Moderate participation, and N=No participation on their level of agreement with statements regarding student leaders' participation in school open forums. The results were as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Extent of student leaders' participation in school open forum

	Extent of Participation	Students		Teachers	
		Public School	Private School	Public School	Private School
		%	%	%	%
The school administration controls school open forum sessions	No participation	18.6	9.7	0.0	0
	Moderate participation	16.0	28.5	33.3	57.1
	Extensive participation	65.4	61.8	66.7	42.9
The students' leaders control school open forum sessions	No participation	26.1	9.7	72.2	0.0
	Moderate participation	25.5	30.6	16.7	21.4
	Extensive participation	48.4	59.7	11.1	78.6
Students leaders freely share their concerns without fear of victimization	No participation	26.1	25.0	0.0	0.0
	Moderate participation	62.2	38.9	52.8	14.3
	Extensive participation	11.7	36.1	47.2	85.7
All students free to share their concerns	No participation	67.0	6.9	47.2	0.0
	Moderate participation	19.7	29.2	27.8	21.4
	Extensive participation	13.3	63.9	25.0	78.6

The data contained in Table 1 showed that 65.4 percent and 16.0 percent of students in public secondary schools were of the view that the school administration extensively and moderately controlled school open forums, with only 18.6 percent indicating the school administration did not control the sessions, compared to 61.8 percent and 28.5 percent of students in the private secondary of the opinion that the school administration extensively and moderately controlled school open forums with only 9.7 percent indicating no school administration control. Further, 48.4 percent and 25.5 percent of students in public secondary schools were of the view that the student leaders extensively and moderately controlled school open forums, with 26.1 percent indicating the student leaders did not control the open forums compared to 59.7 percent, 30.6 percent and 9.7 percent respectively of students in private secondary schools of the same opinion.

Additionally, 11.7 percent and 62.2 percent of students in public secondary schools indicated student leaders extensively and moderately, respectively, freely shared their concerns during open school forums, with 26.1 percent indicating student leaders did not freely give their views. On the contrary, 36.1 percent and 38.9 percent of students in private secondary schools indicated student leaders extensively and moderately, respectively, freely shared their concerns during school open forums, with 25.0 percent indicating student leaders did not freely give their views during school open forums. Lastly, 13.3 percent and 19.7 percent of students in public secondary schools indicated all students extensively and moderately, respectively, freely shared their concerns during school open forums, with 67.0 percent indicating all student leaders did not freely share their concerns. On the contrary, 63.9 percent and 29.2 percent of students in private secondary schools indicated all students extensively and moderately, respectively, freely shared their concerns during open school forums, with 26.9 percent indicating all students did not freely give their views during school open forums sessions.

The results indicate that public and private secondary schools have embraced open forums as a channel for learners to air their views, with the public secondary schools controlling the sessions more than the private schools. The results agree with a study by Alimi (2014), which concluded that students' participation in the maintenance of school discipline allows them to solve their problems and develop proper conduct, self-control, cooperative efficiency, and fairness, among other things. Similarly, Brasof (2011) argues that solutions created with students are successful since they tend to have more students' buy-in. This explains the fewer school unrests in private secondary schools compared to public schools; the reason is through the open forums, the students in private schools freely air their feelings and concerns, unlike the public secondary schools where the control hinders the learners from airing all their views.

From the teachers' perspective, data in Table 1 showed that 66.7 percent and 33.3 percent of teachers in public secondary schools believed that the school administration extensively and moderately controlled open forum sessions in the schools. On the contrary,



42.9 percent and 57.1 percent of teachers in private secondary schools believed that the school administration extensively and moderately controlled school open forum sessions, with none indicating no school administration control. Further, 11.1 percent and 16.7 percent of teachers in public secondary schools believed that student leaders extensively and moderately controlled open forum sessions in the schools, with 72.2 percent indicating no student leaders' control of open forum sessions. On the contrary, 78.6 percent and 21.4 percent of teachers in private secondary schools believed that the student leaders extensively and moderately controlled open forum sessions in the schools, with none indicating no participation. Additionally, 47.2 percent and 52.8 percent of teachers in public secondary schools indicated that student leaders extensively and moderately freely shared their concerns during school open forum sessions, with none indicating no participation.

On the contrary, 85.7 percent and 14.3 percent of teachers in private secondary schools opined that student leaders extensively and moderately freely shared their concerns during school open forum sessions. Lastly, 25 percent and 27.8 percent of teachers in public secondary schools thought that all students extensively and moderately shared their concerns during school open forum sessions, with 47.2 percent indicating students did not freely share their concerns during open forum sessions. On the contrary, 78.6 percent and 21.4 percent of teachers in private secondary schools believed that all learners extensively and moderately shared their concerns during open forum sessions.

The teachers' views were in agreement with the student's views. This point out that student leaders' participation in school open forum sessions was embraced in public and private secondary schools, with private schools indicating a higher percentage of participation than public schools. Similarly, student leaders and other learners' participation and free sharing of concerns in open forum sessions recorded a higher percentage in private secondary schools than in public secondary schools. The results indicate that student leaders and other learners are free to air grievances. An explanation to why private schools recorded better discipline of learners compared to the public schools is due to the accessible environment provided through open forum sessions hence an avenue for learners to express their views and concerns. The teachers' results agreed with the students indicating consistency in public and private secondary schools. The information availed through open forum sessions enabled the teachers and the school administration to effectively address the emerging issues. Information obtained from the KII confirmed the existence of open forums in most private and public secondary schools.

Additionally, most schools had operational suggestion boxes and encouraged learners to share their views without fear of victimization. The document analysis confirmed the existence of term programs indicating set days of class and the general school open forum days. In one of the private schools, the principal reported they had joint open forums sessions for parents with their daughters and sons which turned out to be

useful in solving the emerging discipline issues among the learners, indicating such forums are essential in a school out to record meaningful learners' discipline.

### **Impact of Student Leaders' Participation in School Open Forum on School Discipline**

Concerning the participation of student leaders in school open forums, it was significant to investigate how student leaders' participation in school open forums impacted learners' discipline. The study, therefore, sought the students, teachers, deputy principals, and principals' views on how the participation of student leaders in school open forum sessions impacted their endeavor to improve learners' discipline. Their responses were as presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Impact of students' participation in open forums on learners' discipline

Responses	Students				Teachers			
	Public schools		Private schools		Public schools		Private schools	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
No influence	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	1.4	0	0.0
Low influence	16	4.3	4	2.7	4	5.6	2	7.1
Moderate influence	82	21.8	44	30.6	31	43.0	8	28.6
High Influence	278	73.9	96	66.7	36	50.0	18	64.3
Total	376	100	144	100	72	100	28	100

The data contained in Table 2 showed that 73.9 percent, 21.8 percent, 4.3 percent of students in public secondary schools were of the view that student leaders' participation in open forum sessions was highly influential, moderately influential, and lowly influential respectively on the efforts to address learners discipline issues in schools. This is compared to 66.7 percent, 30.6 percent, and 2.7 percent of students in private secondary schools who had the same view, respectively. Similarly, 50.0 percent, 43.0 percent, 5.6 percent, and 1.4 percent of the teachers in public secondary schools said that student leader's participation in school open forums was very influential, influential, less influential, and not influential respectively towards the achievement of better discipline levels among the learners in secondary schools, compared to 64.3 percent, 28.6 percent and 7.1 percent of teachers in private secondary schools who had the same view respectively.

This means that participation of student leaders in school open forums sessions was embraced in both public and private schools but impacted more on the learners' discipline in private secondary schools than in public schools. The more significant influence on learners' discipline in private schools can be explained by the less control by the school administration, which allowed the students to air their views openly. Information

on issues affecting the learners enabled the teachers and school administrators to put suitable measures in place to improve the discipline of the learners.

### Teachers and Students' Views on the Impact of Student Leaders' Participation in School Open Forums on Learners' Discipline

The study explored the degree to which student leaders' participation in school open forums governance influenced learners' discipline on 10-point critical factors. The findings are in Table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' and students' views impostor student leaders' participation in school open forums on learners' discipline

		Students		Teachers	
		Public Schools (%)	Private Schools (%)	Public Schools (%)	Private Schools (%)
Punctuality	No influence	0.0	0.0	2.8	7.1
	Moderate influence	19.4	20.1	27.8	32.1
	High influence	86.6	79.9	69.4	60.7
Lesson attendance	No influence	11.2	4.2	5.6	7.1
	Moderate influence	22.1	4.9	41.7	0.00
	High influence	66.8	91.0	52.8	92.9
Cleanliness	No influence	5.1	1.4	2.8	0.00
	Moderate influence	18.4	18.8	30.6	0.00
	High influence	76.6	79.9	66.7	100
Accountability	No influence	0.0	13.9	0.00	7.1
	Moderate influence	19.4	24.3	30.6	32.1
	High influence	80.6	61.8	69.4	60.7
Completion of assignments	No influence	5.1	1.4	5.6	7.1
	Moderate influence	18.4	15.3	33.3	32.1
	High influence	76.6	83.3	61.1	60.7
Use of decent language	No influence	4.3	8.3	2.8	0.00
	Moderate influence	17.0	4.2	30.6	14.3

	High influence	78.7	87.5	66.7	85.7
Decent dressing	No influence	12.8	6.2	8.3	35.7
	Moderate influence	14.9	22.9	36.1	28.6
	High influence	72.3	70.8	55.6	35.7
Positive attitude	No influence	7.2	7.6	1.4	10.7
	Moderate influence	11.2	20.1	40.3	7.1
	High influence	81.6	72.2	58.3	82.1
Progression	No influence	0.3	28.5	47.2	46.4
	Moderate influence	16.0	30.6	37.5	7.1
	High influence	83.6	41.0	15.3	46.4
Mentorship	No influence	1.9	0.0	34.7	14.3
	Moderate influence	23.9	10.4	15.3	57.1
	High influence	74.2	89.6	50.0	28.6

The data results in Table 3 indicate student leaders' participation in school open forum sessions in both public and private secondary schools recorded a strong influence on all the learners' discipline parameters considered in this study. In some incidences, such as punctuality, accountability, and use of decent language, none of the students in the public secondary schools indicated student leaders' participation in school open forums had no influence. Further, the results indicate student leaders' participation in open forums strongly influenced all discipline parameters considered in the study. The student's views agree with the teachers' views, indicating that creating opportunities for learners to express their views was an opportunity to understand issues affecting the learners, inviting timely intervention and hence improving learners' discipline in both public and private secondary schools.

However, the influence was more in the private secondary schools compared to the public secondary schools in most discipline indicators. The difference can be explained by the high participation of student leaders in private secondary schools in school open forums, as indicated by earlier results in this study. This is in line with a study by Alimi (2014), who concluded that students' participation in the maintenance of school discipline allows them to solve their problems and develop proper conduct, self-control, cooperative efficiency, and fairness, among other things. On the other hand, the public secondary schools' teachers' views indicate lesser influence than the students' views, confirming

earlier results that teachers have reservations about student leaders' participation in school open forum sessions. On the contrary, their counterparts in the private secondary schools recorded more significant influence, which explains the absence of strikes and manifestation of good discipline among the learners in the private secondary schools in the Machakos sub-county.

Further reports from the KII in both public and private secondary schools postulated that the participation of student leaders in school open forum sessions positively affected learners' discipline. The results further indicated the student leaders easily enforced the outlined discipline parameters as the learners owned the school rules and regulations and the school routine. The views were confirmed by the analyzed documents, which confirmed that open forum sessions were operational in both public and private secondary schools, explaining the influence in both categories of schools at different levels.

### **Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis 1: Student leaders' participation in school open forums does not statistically impact learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools

The first study objective sought to establish the effect of the participation of student leaders in school open forums on learners' discipline. The statistical test was carried out concerning students' and teachers' perspectives. A nominal logistic regression was carried out to determine whether school category and level student leaders' participation influenced learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools. The test was preferred because the ordinal model did not meet the parallel regression assumption.



represents an 8.4% improvement in fit relative to the null model.

The results indicate that the level of student leaders' participation in school open forums does not have a significant ( $p > 0.05$ ) effect on school discipline ranking by students. However, the level of student leaders' participation in open school fora influenced school discipline. For each unit increase in the level of students' leaders' participation in school open fora, the log-odd of the school having "Good" discipline (relative to "Poor" discipline) is predicted to increase by .229 units ( $b = .229$ ,  $SE = .084$ ,  $Wald = 7.436$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). The odds ratio is 1.257 [  $EXP(B) = 1.257$ , 95% CI (1.066, 1.482), indicating that with an increase in score on the level of students' leader's participation in school open fora, the odds of falling in the "Good" category positively changes by a factor of 1.257.

Similarly, for each unit increase in the level of students' leaders' participation in school open fora, the log-odd of the school having "Fair" discipline (relative to "Poor" discipline) is predicted to increase by .180 units ( $b = .180$ ,  $SE = .073$ ,  $Wald = 5.980$ ,  $p = 0.014$ ). The odds ratio is 1.197 [  $EXP(B) = 1.197$ , 95% CI (1.036, 1.382), indicating that with an increase in score on the level of students' leader's participation in school open fora, the odds of falling in the "Good" category positively changes by a factor of 1.257

In addition, the odds of public-school students considering school discipline to be "Good" relative to "Poor" was 2.595 (95% CI, 1.417 to 4.755) times that of private school students, a statistically significant effect,  $Wald \chi^2(1) = 9.532$ ,  $p = 0.002$ . Further, the results show that the odds of public-school students' considering school discipline to be "Fair" relative to "Poor" was 3.301 (95% CI, 1.884 to 5.784) times that of private school students, a statistically significant effect,  $Wald \chi^2(1) = 17.426$ ,  $p < 0.05$ .

Overall, the results suggest that schools, where there is a high score on the level of students' leader's participation in school open fora are more likely to have a "Good or Fair" discipline ranking by students than in schools where there is a lower level of participation of students' leader's in open school fora. Further, the results suggest that students in public schools believed that their schools had excellent or fair discipline levels compared to private schools. The findings imply that public schools should broaden student leaders' participation in school governance to their schools to improve school discipline levels.

Table 5: Model accuracy for student leaders' open school forums (students' perspective)

Observed	Predicted				Percent Correct
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	
Very good	0	0	30	61	0.0%
Good	0	0	58	39	0.0%
Fair	0	0	75	62	54.7%
Poor	0	0	55	140	71.8%
Overall Percentage	0.0%	0.0%	41.9%	58.1%	41.3%

The model correctly predicted school discipline ranking falling under the category "Fair" at 54.7%. Further, the model correctly predicted the ranking of school discipline under the category "Poor" at 71.8%. The overall accuracy for the whole model was 41.3%.

A nominal logistic regression was carried out from the teachers' perspective to determine whether school category and level of student leaders' participation in open school fora influenced school discipline. This was preferred because the ordinal model did not meet the parallel regression assumption.

Table 6: Participation of student leaders in school open forums (teachers' perspective)

				No Obs.		100			
				LR chi2 (6)		16.424			
				Prob>chi <sup>2</sup>		.012			
				Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>		.162			
				(Nagelkerke)					
School Discipline rating		B	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp (B)	95% Confidence Interval for Exp(B)	
								Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Very good	Intercept	-3.756	2.038	3.397	1	.065			
	Open_Fora	1.630	.605	7.271	1	.007	5.106	1.561	16.698
	[School_Category=0]	-.994	.877	1.283	1	.257	.370	.066	2.066
	[School_Category=1]	0 <sup>b</sup>	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Good	Intercept	-3.531	2.079	2.885	1	.089			
	Open_Fora	1.454	.613	5.617	1	.018	4.278	1.286	14.233
	[School_Category=0]	-.795	.908	.766	1	.381	.452	.076	2.678
	[School_Category=1]	0 <sup>b</sup>	.	.	0	.	.	.	.
Fair	Intercept	-1.771	1.927	.844	1	.358			
	Open_Fora	1.113	.577	3.722	1	.054	3.043	.982	9.427
	[School_Category=0]	-1.186	.850	1.947	1	.163	.306	.058	1.615
	[School_Category=1]	0 <sup>b</sup>	.	.	0	.	.	.	.

a. The reference category is Poor.

b. This parameter is set to zero because it is redundant.

Based on the log-likelihood test, the model represents a significant improvement in fit relative to the null model [ $\chi^2(6, N = 100) = 16.424, p = .012$ ]. Nagelkerke test results indicated that the model represents a 16.2% improvement in fit relative to the null model.



From the findings, school category as a predictor did not significantly affect the level of school discipline ( $p > 0.05$ ). However, the level of student leaders' participation in open school fora influenced school discipline. For each unit increase in the level of students' leaders' participation in school open fora, the log-odd of the school having "Very Good" discipline (relative to "Poor" discipline) is predicted to increase by 1.630 units ( $b = 1.630$ ,  $SE = .605$ ,  $Wald = 7.271$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). The odds ratio is 5.106 [  $EXP(B) = 5.106$ , 95% CI (1.561, 16.698), indicating that with an increase in score on the level of students' leader's participation in school open fora, the odds of falling in the "Very Good" category positively changes by a factor of 5.106.

Secondly, for each unit increase in the level of students' leaders' participation in school open for the log-odd of the school having "Good" discipline (relative to "Poor" discipline) is predicted to increase by 1.454 units ( $b = 1.454$ ,  $SE = .613$ ,  $Wald = 5.617$ ,  $p = 0.018$ ). The odds ratio is 4.278 [  $EXP(B) = 4.278$ , 95% CI (1.286, 14.233), indicating that with an increase in score on the level of students' leader's participation in school open fora, the odds of falling in the "Good" category positively changes by a factor of 4.278.

Overall, the results suggest that schools, where there is a high score on the level of students' leader's participation in school open fora, are more likely to have a "Very Good or Good" discipline ranking by teachers than in schools where there is a lower level of participation of students' leader's in open school fora.

Table 7: Model accuracy for student leaders' open school forums (teachers' perspective)

Observed	Predicted				Percent Correct
	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor	
Very good	7	0	21	0	25.0%
Good	5	0	16	1	0.0%
Fair	3	0	29	0	90.6%
Poor	0	0	15	3	16.7%
Overall Percentage	15.0%	0.0%	81.0%	4.0%	39.0%

The model correctly predicted school discipline ranking falling under the category "Very Good" at a rate of 25%. Further, the model correctly predicted the ranking of school discipline under the category "Fair" at 90.6%. The model correctly predicted the ranking of school discipline under the category "Poor" at 16.7%. The overall accuracy for the whole model was 39.0%.

## Conclusion

Conclusions based on the participation of student leaders in school open forums

and its impact on learners' discipline in public and private secondary schools in Machakos sub-county, the findings came up with the following conclusions;

Most private and public secondary schools have embraced school open forums which play a key role in managing learners' discipline. However, most sessions were censored by the school administration. The control is more in the public secondary schools than the private secondary schools. Secondly, most public secondary schools lack proper organization of the school open forums sessions.

The school principals should actively involve student leaders in the preparation and expedition of school open forums. Further, the school administration should have programmed open forums for the student leaders and learners to prepare their presentations. Expression of learners' views through their leaders will bring a sense of ownership among the students and, in turn, embrace suggested reforms, hence improving the learners' discipline. Participation of student leaders in school open forums is a worthwhile practice.

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