



Influence of Teacher-related Factors on Timely Coverage of KCSE Biology Syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya

Bett Benard Kiprono,
School of Education, Kabarak University

Frederick B. J. A. Ngala,
School of Education, Kabarak University

Bernard Chemwei,
School of Education, Kabarak University

Abstract

It has been noted that timely coverage of Biology syllabus is lacking in most of the secondary schools in Kenya. The need for timely coverage of secondary school syllabi is crucial in Kenya and the world at large. The study sought to determine influence of teacher related factors on timely coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya. The objective of this study is to establish influence of teacher related factors on time of coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya. The study adopted survey design. The study was based in Nakuru Rongai Sub-County secondary schools. The target population of this study comprised of 174 Biology teachers across 54 schools in Rongai sub County. Moreover, census method was used to select all the Biology teachers, constituting sample size of 174 teachers. Data was obtained using a questionnaire. The findings revealed that there exist a positive and statistically significant relationship between Teacher Related Factors and Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus ($r=0.608^{**}$; $p<0.01$). It can be concluded that, teacher related factors cause a significant positive variation on timely coverage of Biology Syllabus. Therefore, these factors are central to timely coverage of Biology syllabus. They are worth considering when adequate and timely coverage of Biology syllabus is sought. From the study findings, it can be recommended that teacher related instructional administrators should put factors and specifically selection of appropriate teaching methods, teachers' workload, teacher availability and time management in place in order to ensure that timely coverage of Biology syllabus is achieved in schools.

Keywords: Timely Coverage, Biology syllabus, Teacher-related factors

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Globally, science teachers have been shown to have difficulties in implementing science curriculum in secondary schools. Vasconcelos, Torres, Mountinho, Martins and Costa (2015) conducted a study on Portuguese teachers' difficulties in implementing sciences curriculum. They showed that the major difficulties experienced by science teachers when implementing the curriculum includes length of curriculum, and unsuitable laboratory facilities among others thus affecting coverage of syllabus in good time.

In Saudi Arabia, research has shown that teachers have some difficulties in addressing practical problems with covering the current Biology curriculum, using sufficient supplementation for



teaching methods, and understanding validation of the evaluation process as presented by students on the teachers' achievements (Alshehry, 2014). In Nigeria, following the non-development of sound science education in schools, it was reported that some critical science education activities have suffered serious setback including non-coverage of science schemes of work. This is attributed to insufficient time allocation in school time table and persistent use of lecture method in science teaching (Ajaja, 2009).

In Kenya, a study carried by Mbalaka (2016) to establish the extent to which teachers' relational factors which includes communication, conflict resolution, coordination and attitude influence timely syllabus coverage in public secondary schools within Migwani sub-county, Kitui County. The findings revealed that teachers' relational factors have positive influence on timely syllabus coverage. However, this study never investigated on Biology syllabus which is the focus of the present study.

Lack of coverage of Biology syllabus may lead to poor academic performance. According to DQUASO report (2015-16), the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) analysis report for Rongai Sub-county is disturbing. It was observed that Biology mean scores for the sub-county were 4.4291 and 2.8013 for the year 2015 and 2016 respectively. This indicates that there is a downward trend in the academic performance in Biology. This may be an indicative of lack of timely coverage of Biology syllabus in the sub-county, hence the need for this research. No study has been conducted in Nakuru to determine factors influencing time of coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus. The present study therefore focused on the influence of teacher related factors on timely coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

According to Kenya National Examinations Council (2011) teachers should cover the syllabus adequately to enable students to have a clear grasp of the content. However, the background to this study, timely coverage of Biology syllabus is lacking in most of the secondary schools in Kenya. Kananu (2011) also confirms that there is still inadequate syllabus coverage in Kenyan schools and that whatever was covered was not done effectively. It implies that if Biology syllabus is not covered in good time, performance in National examination could be affected as confirmed by the Biology mean scores of 4.4291 and 2.8013 for the year 2015 and 2016 respectively in Rongai Sub-County (DQUASO, 2016). This problem therefore led the researcher to investigate factors, which influence time of coverage of Biology Syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County.

Research Objective

The objective of this study was to establish the influence of teacher related factors on timely coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: Teacher related factors have no significant influence on timely coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.



Scope of the Study

The study was carried in secondary schools in Rongai sub-county. Rongai sub-county is located in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study sought to look at timely syllabus coverage in relation to teacher related factors. The study was carried out between the months of February to May 2018. Finally, the study limited itself to teachers of Biology in Rongai Sub-County schools who were the source of primary data.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus

Timely syllabus coverage is critical to learners as pertains to performance in end of secondary school course examinations. In West Africa, a study by Olusegun (2017) revealed that around one million students who sat for West African Examination Council (WAEC) in 2016 failed. The researcher further argues that the cause of massive failure in WAEC was attributed to inadequate coverage of syllabus and students' lack of strong reading spirit, lack of knowledge of common pitfalls, coupled with and non-familiarity with test format.

In Kenya, Okode (2013) conducted a research to determine the influence of secondary schools' strategic planning on students' academic performance in Rachuonyo North District. The finding indicated that a majority of the Head of Departments and principals specified that they set targets for syllabus coverage by mid of June. The Study further revealed that teachers use syllabus in lesson preparation and teaching. This show that time of coverage of syllabus is central to students' performance of exams. Early coverage of school syllabus allows time for working on the students' self-efficacy and mathematical self-concept which are very important in developing self-confidence and improving performance of individual students (Ferla, Valcke, & Cai, 2009).

Teacher Related Factors and Coverage of Biology Syllabus

Teachers need a wide range of different skills and attitudes if they are to assist their students achieve high outcomes. These should include relationships with students, subject matter knowledge and also an understanding of pedagogical processes to develop the understanding that is required. According to Takbir (2012), teachers need to make instructional selections from among an array of choices comprising teaching methods and models, teaching acts and instructional strategies such as practical work, interactions through group work or pair work, presentations, whole class discussion, application of knowledge, use of creative motivational techniques, questioning and applying problem solving or inquiry-oriented instructional strategies. It can be inferred that appropriate instructional selection will promote attainment of what is to be learnt in a lesson. The study by Takbir (2012) did not show the influence of instruction selection on time of coverage of Biology syllabus necessitating the present study.

In United Kingdom, a report by Dickens (2017) revealed that teachers are working an average of 54.4 hours a week – nearly 11 hours per day, the government's first comprehensive survey into workload has revealed. Precisely, secondary school senior leaders worked 62-hour weeks – which equates to 12.4 hours a day. Dickens (Ibid) further reports that a third of part-time teachers said 40 per cent of their total hours were outside of school hours. It was further revealed that that teachers and head teachers are dealing with unsustainable workload demands on a daily basis, and much of their time is being spent on activities which are either unnecessary or which could



be undertaken by staff other than teachers. It can be construed that unsustainable work load may hinder a teacher to fully cover the prescribed syllabus as nearly most of instruction time is spent on activities which are of least important. The report by Dickens (2017) did not investigate influence of teachers’ work load on time of coverage of Biology syllabus, which present study endeavors to examine.

According to Kenya GPE Secretariat (2017), teacher absenteeism has been an increasing problem in Kenya and that up to 20% teacher absenteeism occur due to the fact that they miss classes because of illness, a family emergency, or for official work other than teaching. Regardless, the outcome is the same in that their students miss out on their education. Teachers will be spending more time going back to uncovered material with limited time thus affecting time of coverage of topics to be studied later in the term. Kenya GPE Secretariat (2017), did not determine the influence of teachers’ absenteeism on time of coverage of Biology syllabus, which this present study strives to investigate.

Theoretical Framework

This study will be guided by the curriculum implementation theory advocated by Gross, Guacuinta and Berstein (1971). This theory posits that the implementation of any educational programme encompasses availability of facilities, teachers’ capability, management support and compatibility with organizational arrangement and clarity of the implementer of what is to be done. This theory was used to guide the study, because the factors that Gross et al. (1971) propounded are also relevant in the implementation of Biology syllabus.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey design and correlation research design. This enabled researcher to gather information concerning teacher-related factors influencing timely coverage of KCSE of Biology syllabus in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

Location of Study

The study was based in all Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County. Rongai Sub County is one of nine Sub counties in Nakuru County. It consists of five wards namely Menengai west, Soin, Visoi, Mosop and Solai. It is estimated that the current population is 130,132 people covering and area of 1,049.10 Sq. Km (KNBS, 2010).

Population of Study

Table 1: Target Population

Zone	No of secondary schools	No. of Biology Teacher
Kampi ya Moto	12	48
Ngata	13	39
Rongai	16	48
Solai	13	39
Total	54	174

Source: TSC (2017)

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size



Sampling Procedure

This study adopted census method. This is because the number of cases per school was few to be sampled.

Sample Size

Table 2: Sample Size

Zone	No of schools	Secondary	No of Biology Teachers per School	Sample Size
Kampi ya Moto	12		4	48
Ngata	13		3	39
Rongai	16		3	48
Solai	13		3	39
Total	54			174

Instrumentation

The questionnaire comprised of the Likert type with a 5-point scale which was divided into sub-sections encompassing factors influencing time of coverage KCSE of Biology syllabus in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

Validity of the Research Instrument.

In this study, validity of the instrument was determined by seeking assistance from the research supervisors from Kabarak University who were able to read the content, look at the items and ensure that they reflect the actual content area. Corrections were made with respect to items which are not valid.

Reliability of Research Instruments

Table 3 represents test-re-test reliability statistics

Table 3: Test-re-test reliability statistics

Variable	N	No. of Items	Pearson(r)	p-value	Decision
Teacher Related Factors	17	11	0.710**	0.001	Reliable
Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus	17	5	0.770**	0.000	Reliable

RESULTS

Teacher Related Factors

This section presents statistics related to the respondent's opinion concerning teacher related factors. Statistics related to Percentages, Means, chi-square, t test and ANOVA are presented.

Frequencies of Teacher Related Factors

Table 5: Teacher Related Factors

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	χ^2	p-value
Use of ICT resources during Biology lesson encourages student creativity and participation	0.0	6.0	2.4	42.5	49.1	117.57	0.000
There is a lack of streamlined guide to ICT use in teaching Biology	1.2	29.9	8.4	35.3	25.1	70.87	0.000



Teachers absenteeism in lessons always hinder biology syllabus coverage	1.8	3.6	7.8	49.7	37.1	160.75	0.000
Audio-visual aids enhance teaching and learning by increasing teaching pace	1.2	4.2	3.6	74.9	16.2	325.30	0.000
I Rarely use audio-visual teaching aids in biology lesson	6.0	27.5	3.0	37.7	25.7	74.28	0.000
Biology syllabus is very wide, making it difficult to complete.	0.6	7.8	10.8	54.5	26.3	153.68	0.000
I'm well equipped with ICT skills and knowledge for biology instruction	3.6	9.6	1.2	67.7	18.0	251.11	0.000
We have few teachers in the department to assist in completing the syllabus.	6.0	21.6	4.8	57.5	10.2	161.29	0.000
I have unsustainable workload which does not allow me to complete biology syllabus	2.4	26.9	2.4	45.5	22.8	110.75	0.000
Some topics are difficult to teach due to lack of materials	12.6	16.2	6.6	40.1	24.6	56.38	0.000
Some teaching approaches for Biology require a lot of time	2.4	3.0	6.6	33.5	54.5	179.67	0.000

Key:SA=Strongly Agree; A=Agree; N=Neutral; D=Disagree; SD=Strongly Disagree; %=Percentages and χ^2 =chi-square.

According to Table 5 shows that 91.6% significantly agreed that use of ICT resources during Biology lesson encourages student creativity and participation ($\chi^2=117.57$; $p<0.05$). It was notable with 91.1% of respondents who significantly agreed that audio-visual aids enhance teaching and learning by increasing teaching pace ($\chi^2=325.30$; $p<0.05$). It can be inferred that when ICT resources are utilized during teaching, both teaching and learning will be enhanced. This finding corroborates with Bitok (2012) who argues that technology allows learning to take place anywhere at any time; not just in one particular place. Bitok further states that ICTs also provide depth of learning through interactive simulations and illustrations as they also foster collaboration; students can work collaboratively on projects with others who may not be physically close. In the same way, this finding agrees with a research by Mbugua , Gori and Tanui (2015) on integration of Information Communication Technology in Teaching in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru County, revealed that ICT facilities were inadequate and teachers had only basic or no ICT skills. This means that when teachers lack ICT skills may affect the manner in which syllabus is covered since use of ICT is expected to improve teaching pace and stimulate learning. Therefore, syllabus may not be adequately covered in good time.

Despite the fact that teachers assured that they were well equipped with ICT skills and knowledge for Biology instruction (85.7%), it was noted that 63.4% opined that they rarely used audio-visual teaching aids during Biology lesson. This observation was upheld by (60.4%) who aver that there was a lack of streamlined guide to ICT use in teaching Biology. It can be argued that lack of ICT resources may affect timely coverage of biology syllabus. This observation agrees with Ochieng' (2013) who opines that in Kisumu East district, majority of science teachers rarely use ICT to deliver their lessons. It can be inferred that lack of utilization of ICT by teachers may reduce their ability to integrate new dimension of concept delivery during teaching thereby affecting their timely coverage of Biology syllabus. Nevertheless, it was observed that



respondents disagreed that Biology syllabus is very wide, making it difficult to be completed and that Teachers absenteeism in lessons always hinder biology syllabus coverage with 8.4% and 5.4% respectively. These observations are not significant meaning that the breadth of the syllabus and Teachers absenteeism may not be the main factors affecting syllabus coverage.

Regarding availability of teaching staff, material for teaching and time for delivery, it was overwhelmingly supported by respondents that they have few teachers in the department to assist in completing the syllabus (67.7%) consequently leading to unmanageable workload which does not allow completion biology syllabus in good time (68.3%). It was reported by 64.7% and 88% of respondents that some topics were difficult to teach due to lack of teaching materials and that teaching approaches for Biology required a lot of time. This finding shows that when there are inadequate teachers and unmanageable workload, timely coverage of the syllabus will not be achieved. This finding concurs with that of Sigilai (2013) who concluded that effective curriculum implementation factors such as adequate teachers and physical facilities aid in achieving better learning outcomes. Similarly, Mucai (2013) established that unavailability of textbooks affected learning especially in mixed day schools. Since reference material such as textbooks are important in teaching and learning, unavailability of these resources may hinder timely coverage of Biology syllabus.

Difference in Teacher Related Factors by Type of School

An independent sample t-test was run to show mean difference in Teacher related factors between public and private Schools at 0.05 level of significance. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: t-test on Teacher Related Factors by type of school

Type of school	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	t-value	p-value
Public School	124	3.96	0.60	165	3.411	.001*
Private school	43	3.50	0.81			

*Significant at 0.05 level

The result of the independent sample t test indicates that the difference in teacher related factors between Public and Private school was statistically significant at 0.05, $t(165) = 3.411$, $p < 0.05$. This shows that since public schools had a higher mean ($M=3.96$), teacher related factors influencing timely coverage of Biology syllabus were seen to be prevalent in these schools as compared to private schools ($M=3.50$).

Correlation between Independent and Dependent Variables

In this study, Pearson Correlation was conducted in order to determine the existence and significance of the relationship between teacher- related factors and timely coverage of Biology syllabus. Table 7 shows Pearson Correlation between Independent and Dependent Variables.

Table 7: Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Teacher Related Factors and Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus

	Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus	Teacher Related Factors
Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus	1	.608**
Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)		.000



** . Correlation Is Significant at the 0.01 Level (2-Tailed).

Table 7 shows that there exists a positive and statistically significant relationship between Teacher Related Factors and Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus ($r=0.608^{**}$; $p<0.01$). This means that as undesirable teacher related factors under investigation become prominent, it correspondingly increases time required to cover the syllabus. However, a decrease in undesirable teacher related factors leads to timely coverage of syllabus.

Regression Analysis

The effect of independent variables on the dependent variable was presented using the regression model. The result is shown in Table 8

Table 8: Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	-0.430	0.274	-1.571	.118
Teacher Related Factors	0.211	0.094	2.233	.027

a. Dependent Variable: Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus

On the basis of unstandardized coefficients, the model indicates that Teacher Related Factors influences up to 21.1% positive variation on Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus. This means that when these teacher-related factors increase, it causes a significant increase by 21.1% on Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus.

Hypotheses Testing

In this study, the null hypothesis was tested as follows: Reject $H_0: \beta_x = 0$; if $p < 0.05$, Otherwise fail to reject the $H_0: \beta_x = 0$.

H₀₁: Teacher related factors have no significant influence on timely of coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

From Table 8, the Unstandardized Beta coefficient for Teacher related factors variable has a corresponding $p=0.027$ which is less than 0.05 alpha, leading to a rejection of the null hypothesis. Accordingly, a decision is made that Teacher related factors have significant influence on timely of coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya. Therefore, teacher related factors are important predictor of timely coverage of KCSE Biology syllabus in Secondary Schools.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

Summary of Key Findings

Teacher Related Factors and Timely Coverage of KCSE Biology Syllabus

Teacher related factors that may affect timely coverage of Biology syllabus spans from teaching approaches, teachers' workload, school discipline and time management among others. Regarding teaching resources and teaching time, the study found out that some teaching approaches for Biology required a lot of time. Similarly, it was noted that teachers' absenteeism



in lessons always hinder biology syllabus coverage with means of 4.35, and 4.17 respectively. This is an indication that timely coverage of Biology syllabus could be disadvantaged when appropriate resources and time is lacking.

Concerning ICT utilization, it was observed that even though respondents assert that they were well equipped with ICT skills and knowledge for Biology instruction (mean \approx 4.00) as well as that use of ICT resources during biology lesson encourages student creativity and participation (mean \approx 4.00), it was noticed that they rarely use audio-visual teaching aids in biology lesson (mean \approx 4.00). This situation was multifaceted by the fact that there was lack of streamlined guide to ICT use in teaching Biology (mean \approx 4.00).

Conclusions

From the finding of the analyzed data, it can be established that there exist a positive and statistically significant relationship between Teacher Related Factors and Timely Coverage of Biology Syllabus ($r=0.608^{**}$; $p<0.01$). This means that teacher related factors being investigated affect positively timely coverage of Biology syllabus.

Recommendations

Teacher related factors and specifically, selection of appropriate teaching methods, teachers' workload, teacher availability and time management should be put in place by instructional administrators in order to ensure that timely coverage of Biology syllabus is achieved in schools.

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Influence of Roles Played by Student Councils on Curbing Frequency of Student Unrests in Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-County, Kenya

Simatwa Leslie Kimame,
School of Education, Kabarak University

Frederick B. J. A. Ngala,
School of Education, Kabarak University

Betty Tikoko,
School of Education, Kabarak University

Abstract

The government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Education, established Student Councils in Secondary Schools in 2009 to assist schools to manage student affairs. However, student unrests, which are manifested in strikes, go-slows, rioting, burning of school property and violent behaviors, still continue unabated. For instance, during the last eight years, some schools in Bungoma County, Kenya, witnessed unprecedented rise in incidences of student unrests. The purpose of this study was to assess the influence of decision-making roles played by student councils on curbing the frequency of student unrests in Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-county, Kenya. The study was based on Social Systems Theory. In the conceptual framework, the frequency of student unrests depends on decision-making roles played by student councils. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Census method was used to sample the three secondary schools because these are the only Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools. Stratified sampling technique was used to sample respondents from the categories of students and members of student councils. The target population for students was 750 while that of members of student councils was 78. The study used Students' Questionnaire and Questionnaire for members of Student Councils as research instruments. Likert type items with a 4-point response scale were used to collect information. Respondents (77.7%) maintained that student councils never participate in decision-making regarding bullying in schools (mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.86). Another 95.9% of respondents averred that student councils never participate in decision making regarding congestion in dormitories in school). Further, 77.4% of the respondents reported that student councils sometimes participate in decision making on matters regarding lack of sanitation services. It was found out that there exists a negative, strong and statistically significant relationship between decision making roles played by student councils and the frequency of student unrests ($r = -0.809^{**}$; $p < 0.01$). This implies that when student councils decision-making roles are enhanced in schools, the frequency of student unrest may decline. Based on the findings of this research it is concluded that decision making roles played by student councils influence frequency of student unrests in Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-county, Kenya. The study recommends that student councils should be thoroughly prepared for their roles through seminars, workshops. Student councils should have regular meetings with the principals. Student councils to strengthen capacity to make effective decisions should do benchmarking with good schools regularly.

Keywords: Student Councils, Student Unrests and roles played by student council

INTRODUCTION



Student Councils are representative bodies of students elected by students to voice their grievances to school management authorities (Wachira, 2010). In Nigeria, it is reported that student unrests were attributed to lack of effective decision making by school management. Students resorted to violence to vent their frustrations and disagreements (Arekenya, 2012). Ndong'u and Kwasira (2015) opine that Student Councils facilitate discussion of issues raised by students before they resort to violence.

The Ministry of Education, United Nations Children Education Fund and the Secondary Schools Heads Association in the year 2008 formed the Kenya Secondary Schools Student Councils (UNICEF, 2011). Its main aim was to find a long-lasting solution to unceasing student unrests in schools. Article 1 section 11 part (4) of the KSSSC constitution stipulated that students' councils should be committed to the constructive management of indiscipline by reducing student unrests (KSSSC, 2009). Yet, student unrests continue unabated. KSSSC (2009) observed that there is good evidence which exists in in-cooperating student councils in administration, improving staff and student relationship, reduction in indiscipline cases, student unrests in school and improved performance in academic and co-curricular programmes.

Table 2: The Frequency of Student Unrests in Schools in Bungoma County 2014-2017

Schools	Frequency of student unrests
Teremi high school.	4
Kimungui secondary	5
Milo secondary	7
Kaptama boys	6
Kapsokwony boys	7
Kimang'eti boys	5
Khasoko boys' high school	8

Statement of the Problem

Despite students and schools having functional student councils, many schools in Elgon Sub-county were particularly affected by the wave of student unrests which led to the loss of property. In 2016, three public schools from Elgon Sub-county went on student unrests, burnt dormitories and boycotted joint exams leading to the closure of schools (County Education Office, 2016). In particular, students of public boys' boarding schools in Elgon Sub-county burnt down their dormitories in 2016. Boys' schools in Elgon Sub-county, Bungoma County still grapple with the problem of unending student unrests even though they have put in place student councils. The problem of unceasing student unrests was confirmed by research studies conducted by Mukiti (2014), Nzioki (2015), and Kinyua (2015). This therefore raises a question on the efficacy of student councils in addressing the perennial problem of student unrests. It is therefore in light of this question that the researcher purposed to investigate the influence of roles played by student councils on curbing the frequency of student unrests in Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-county, Bungoma County, Kenya.

Objective of the Study

To establish the influence of decision-making roles played by student councils on curbing the frequency of student unrests in Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-county, Kenya.



Research Hypothesis

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant influence of decision-making roles played by student councils on curbing the frequency of student unrests in Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-county, Kenya.

The Scope of the Study

The study was conducted in Elgon Sub-county, Bungoma County, Kenya. The study was delimited to students and student council members in Elgon Sub-county. All the 3 Public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon Sub-county were sampled for the study. The study was limited to decision-making roles played by student councils in curbing student unrests.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Role of Student Councils in Addressing Student Unrests

The elected student councils help to modify behavior, character and improve students discipline in school by adhering to set rules and regulations (UNICEF, 2013). According to Mutua (2014), most school administrations appoint student councils with or without student participation. Time has come for students to participate actively in electing their leaders to air their grievances to school management. This could assist in managing the frequency of student unrests in schools. School principals give Ministry directives, laws and school policies to student councils. These provide the student councils with the information required to manage the frequency of student unrests in schools (Okonji, 2016). This implies that student councils are oriented on how to conduct their roles to manage the frequency of student unrests in schools.

In Ghana, student councils ensure and safeguard the general welfare of students by acting as the voice of students, airing their grievances in order to create a conducive academic environment (Alexia, 2014). Student councils in Tanzania are charged with advisory and supervisory roles. For example, the chairperson of the student council is supposed to advise Heads of schools on matters concerning students' affairs and maintenance of discipline. They control activities such as games, clubs and societies, supervise communal work within the compound, oversee the organization and life of students in dormitories and ensure that meals are served well and on time (Kambuga, & Omollo, 2017). Research further has it that in Uganda student councils play dynamic roles where students are allowed to participate in the administration of their own affairs. They control on the punishment of students by teachers and reduce congestion of students in staffroom by representing and communicating students' needs. They also empower students to instill morals amongst themselves by arbitrating cases, in the school court before being referred to the disciplinary committee (Mukiti, 2014).

According to UNICEF and Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association, a student Council refers to a student body appointed or elected in a school educational institution to be able to present students' interests and welfare to the school management (KESSHA, & UNICEF, 2013). Therefore, participation of students in issues that affect them like decision making roles played by student councils should be clearly defined to be able to manage indiscipline in schools (Indimuli, 2012). It is on this basis that the researcher sought to establish the influence of roles



played by student councils on curbing the frequency of student unrests in public Boys Boarding Secondary Schools in Elgon sub-county, Kenya.

Student participation in decision-making refers to the effort of student representative bodies such as school council, student parliament and prefectural body. It encompasses all aspects of student life like decision-making, communication and where students have a say, informally through personal negotiation as well as formally through purposely created structures and mechanisms (Kyalo, Konari, & Njagi, 2017). In the United Kingdom, student councils link school administration with students as they have authority over learners in decision-making (Arekenya, 2012). Wambulwa (2004) who states that the involvement of student councils in school management, through decision-making results in an improved school environment corroborates this view.

Theoretical Framework

Social System Theory

The research adopted the Social System Theory of Bertalanffy (1971). It is the interdisciplinary study of systems in general, with the objective of elucidating values that can be applied to all categories of systems at all points. Social system theory explains, predicts and describes organizational behavior in an institution, which has different units interacting and interdependent in carrying out their roles to achieve a common course. The malfunctioning of one system leads to negative effects on another system for instance if student councils can't effectively play their role on curbing student unrest, it may lead to the destruction of school property, student unrests and loss of life (Fish, 2005).

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a survey research design where the researcher interacts naturally with respondents and records observation without undue influence (Kothari, 2011).

Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Elgon Sub-county, Bungoma County, Kenya. Major topographical factors making the Sub-county include rivers, valleys and arable soils with mixed farming of cash crops, subsistence farming and dairy farming. The sub-county borders Uganda in the north and west, Trans Nzoia County to the East and Bungoma town to the South.

Population of the Study

There are 30 secondary schools in Elgon Sub-county (D.E.O Statistic Department, 2017). The study targeted three Boys Secondary Schools, 750 students and 78 members of student council.

Sample Size.

Table 2 Sample Size

Population.	Target population.	Sample size.	Percentage.
Students.	750	254	34%
Student council members.	78	66	85%
TOTAL	828	320	



Table 3: Actual Proportional Allocation of Respondents

School	Students	Members of student councils
School A	85	22
School B	81	20
School C	88	24
TOTAL	254	66

Instrumentation

The study used Students' Questionnaire and Questionnaire for Members of Student Council as research instruments. Closed-ended items with Likert items of a 4-point response scale were used to collect information [in this case 4- Never, 3- Sometimes, 2- Frequently and 1- Always.].

Validity of Instrument

Experts in the area of education management subjected the items to scrutiny to eliminate items which were irrelevant to the content of education management and leadership.

Test-re-test Reliability of instruments

Table 4: Test Re-Test Reliability

Variable	N	Pearson (r)	p-value	Decision
Decision making roles played by student councils	32	0.766 ^{**}	0.000	Reliable
Frequency of student unrest	32	0.796 ^{**}	0.000	Reliable

RESULTS

Frequency of Student Unrests during the Last Three Years in School (2014-2017)

The study sought to get information from respondents regarding the frequency of student unrests in the three schools during the period 2014-2017. The results are presented in the Table 5.

Table 5: Frequency of Student Unrest Reported in All Schools

Variable	Frequency	Percent
1-2	42	13.2
3-4	87	27.4
5-6	114	35.8
7-8	49	15.4
9 and above	26	8.2
Total	318	100.0

From Table 5, 35.8% of the respondent reported that they have had 5-6 student unrests in their schools during the period 2014-2017. Others reported that they have had student unrests as follows: 3-4 (27.4%); 7-8 (15.4%); 1-2 (13.2%) while 9 and above were 8.2% of the respondents. The 35.8% of student unrests indicate that schools are experiencing high number of student unrests due to lack of involving students in their affairs in Elgon Sub-county. Muli (2012) further cautions that student unrests do not just happen due to a single issue which has not been solved, but because of several long-standing issues which the school authorities have either ignored or



given unsatisfactory response. This implies that inclusion of student leaders in addressing issues affecting students could be a better way of addressing the frequency of unrests in schools.

Decision Making Roles Played by Student Councils on Curbing the Frequency of Student Unrests

Analyses were conducted to determine students' perceptions of decision-making roles played by student councils in their schools. Table 6 presents the findings.

Table 6: Descriptives for Decision Making Roles played by Student Councils

Statement	A	F	S	N	Mean	SD
Student councils participate in decision making against bullying in school.	2.2%	17.6%	2.5%	77.7%	3.56	0.86
Student councils participate in decision making on matters related to too many exams administered in school.	0.6%	0.3%	1.3%	97.8%	3.96	0.23
Student councils participate in decision making on matters related to congestion in the dormitories in school.	0.3%	0.9%	2.8%	95.9%	2.94	0.30
Student councils participate in decision making regarding lateness in provision of meals in school.	1.6%	18.9%	39.0%	40.6%	3.19	0.79
Student councils participate in decision making on matters nonattendance of lessons by teachers.	2.5%	0.3%	39.0%	58.2%	3.53	0.64
Student councils participate in decision making on matters regarding excess punishment meted by teachers in school.	3.5%	0.0%	18.9%	77.7%	3.71	0.64
Student councils participate in decision making on matters regarding lack of sanitation services.	2.2%	0.3%	77.4%	20.1%	3.15	0.52
Student councils participate in decision making on matters regarding lack of water in school.	0.9%	56.9%	19.8%	22.3%	2.64	0.84
Student councils participate in decision making on matters regarding provision of textbooks in school.	0.6%	0.0%	19.5%	79.9%	3.79	0.45
Student councils participate in decision making on matters regarding poor quality of meals in school.	1.6%	0.0%	20.4%	78.0%	3.75	0.53
Decision making roles played by student councils overall index					3.42	0.34
Valid N (listwise)	318					

Key: A=Always; F=Frequently; S=Sometimes; N=Never; SD=Standard Deviation

Only 17.6% reported that student councils frequently participate in decision making on matters regarding bullying in school. It was noted that 77.7% of respondents maintained that student



councils never participated in decision-making regarding bullying in schools (mean of 3.56 and a standard deviation of 0.86). This implies that student councils have minimal participation in decision making on matters regarding bullying in schools. This could have an influence on student unrests.

Additionally, 97.8% asserted that student councils never participate in decision making regarding the number of exams administered in school with only 1.3% reporting that student councils sometimes participate in decision making on numbers of exams administered (mean of 3.96 and a standard deviation of 0.28). According to Education Act (2013), the QASO is charged with specific roles such as conducting the standard assessment in schools, oversees examination (both internal and external) syllabus coverage, curriculum development and implementation. Similarly, 95.9% of respondents averred that student councils never participate in decision making regarding congestion in dormitories in school with only 2.8% reporting that student councils sometimes participated in decision making on matters relating to congestion in dormitories (mean of 3.94 and standard deviation of 0.30). It can therefore be concluded that there is little contribution of members of student councils in decision making on matters affecting students leading to the high number of student unrests in Elgon Sub-county. This is contrary to Kamau (2017), who states that student participation in management of their affairs in school enables them to have a good experience to find a long-term solution to challenging situation in schools to be able to prosper in academics. It's important that students are involved in the decision-making process to curb the frequency of student unrests in schools.

Furthermore, 39.0% of respondents noted that student councils sometimes participated in decision making on the matter of lateness in provision of meals in school. 40.6% reported that student councils never make decisions on lateness in the provision of meals in school (mean of 3.19 and a standard deviation of 0.79). This could curtail the frequency of student unrests in schools as students are incorporated in decision making of issues affecting them. Up to 58.2% reported that student councils never participated in decision making on matters regarding nonattendance of lessons by teachers while 39.0% of student councils sometimes participated in decision making on the same matters (mean of 3.53 and standard deviation of 0.64). Lack of chance to make such decision could lead to student unrests in Elgon Sub-county. To that extent, Aggrawal (2007), found out that student councils did not participate in matters related to the conduct of examinations, evaluation of students' performance, the appointment of teachers and teacher lesson attendance, which made students to resort to unrests. This implies that students could resort to unrests in schools whenever they are not involved in the decision-making process on issues that affect.

Table 7 further shows that student councils sometimes participate in decision making on matters regarding lack of sanitation services (77.4%). Up to 20.1% of the respondents were of the opinion that student councils never participated on decision making on matters related to provision of sanitation (means of 3.15 and standard deviation of 0.52). This would make students feel that they are part of the solutions to their problems. Nzioki (2015) found out in her research that student councils should assist in the maintenance of school hygiene and sanitation.

Moreover, Table 7 clearly shows that student councils never participated in decision making on matters related to lack of water (22.3%). 19.8% of the respondents were of the view that student



councils sometimes participate regarding lack of water in school. Respondents stated that student councils never participated in decision making on matters regarding excessive punishment meted by teachers on students (77.7%). Only 18.9% of the respondent agreed that student councils sometimes participated in decision making on matters regarding excessive punishment meted by teachers (means of 3.71 and standard deviation of 0.64). Mukiti (2014) however noted that student councils' control on the punishment of students by teachers. The study revealed that student councils never participated in decision making on matters regarding poor quality of meals in schools (78%). Only 20.4% of respondents agreed that sometimes student councils participate in decision making regarding poor quality of meals (means of 3.75 and standard deviation of 0.53). When students are not involved in the decision-making process in the school, they could resort to student unrests as their concerns are not been taken care of by the school management. This is the situation in Elgon Sub-county where students are not involved in decision making. They therefore engage in boycotting of exams, public demonstrations, and boycotting of eating meals, attending lessons and burn school property. Majority of the respondents were of the view that student councils never participated in decision making on matters regarding provision of textbooks in school (79.9%). A few respondents agreed that student councils sometimes participated in decision making on matters regarding provision of textbooks (19.5%) (Mean of 3.79 and standard deviation of 0.45).

Differences in the Means of Decision-Making Roles Played by Student Councils across Schools A, B and C

ANOVA test was conducted to investigate whether decision-making roles played by student councils across the three sampled schools differed significantly. Table 8 shows the findings.

Table 8: Decision Making Roles Played by Student Councils across Schools A, B and C

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	0.082	2	0.041	0.355	.701
Within Groups	36.421	315	0.116		
Total	36.503	317			

The results of the ANOVA test show that the differences in the means of decision-making roles played by student councils across school A, B and C was not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, $F(2, 315) = 0.355, p > 0.05$. This implies that students' perception of decision-making roles played by student councils did not vary significantly across the selected schools A, B and C.

Correlation between Decision Making Roles Played by Student Councils and the Frequency of Student Unrests

Correlation analysis was conducted to determine the nature of the relationship that exists between decision-making roles played by student councils and the frequency of student unrests.

Table 9: Correlation between Decision Making Roles Played by Student Councils and the Frequency of Student Unrests

Decision Making Roles by Student Councils	Pearson Correlation	Frequency of Student Unrest
		-.809 ^{**}



	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	318

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9 shows that there exists a negative strong and statistically significant relationship between decision-making roles played by student councils and the frequency of student unrest ($r = -0.809^{**}$; $p < 0.01$). This implies that when student councils decision-making roles are enhanced in schools, the frequency of student unrest may decline.

Influence of Decision-Making Roles on Frequency of Student Unrests

Table 10 shows how decision-making roles were used to predict the frequency of student unrests. To do that a regression analysis was carried out.

Table 10: Influence of Decision-Making Roles on the Frequency of Student Unrests

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	7.218	.182		39.678	.000
Decision making roles played by student councils	-.439	.092	-.261	-4.754	.000

Dependent Variable: Frequency of Student Unrest

Table 10 indicates that decision-making roles played by student councils influences 43.9 % negative variation on the frequency of student unrest. This implies that student councils play a very important role in curbing the frequency of student unrest. If student councils are not involved in decision-making roles, students could participate in unrests to show their frustration and anger in the school.

Testing the Hypothesis of no Statistically Significant Influence of Decision-Making Roles Played by Student Councils on Curbing the Frequency of Student Unrest

Table 10, shows that Decision making roles had beta coefficient of corresponding p-value less than 0.05 alpha. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion made that decision-making roles played by student councils have a significantly influenced on curbing the frequency of student unrest in public boys boarding secondary schools in Elgon Sub-county, Kenya ($p = 0.000$).

Regression analysis

The model shows summative action exerted by independent variable combined on the dependent variable. It is the extent of influence by the summary of independent variable on the dependent variable. Table 11 shows the results of the model summary for the regression.

Table 5: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	1.873 ^a	.762	.759	.27943



Predictor: (Constant), Decision making roles played by student councils.

Table 11, shows that the Adjusted R square value is 0.759. This implies that up to 75.9% variation in frequency of student unrests is due to the variation in the independent variable of the study. It implies that 75.9 of frequency of student unrests can be explained by the decision-making roles played by student councils.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of the Findings

Decision Making Roles Played by Student Councils

the null hypothesis was rejected and a conclusion made that decision-making roles played by student councils have a significant influence on curbing the frequency of student unrest in public boys boarding secondary schools in Elgon Sub-county, Kenya($p=0.000$).

Conclusions

It can be concluded that involving the students in decision making roles influence the roles played by student councils on curbing the frequency of student unrests in schools.

Recommendations

Student councils should be more involved in decision making roles in order to curb frequency of student unrests.

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