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**ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENT
LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
THARAKA SOUTH SUB COUNTY, KENYA****Jeremy Gitonga Mubiu & Joyline Mugero Muchiri***

Department of Education, Chuka University

P.O. Box 109-60400, Chuka

Corresponding Author*Abstract**

Student leadership in public secondary schools is very important. Student leaders assist the school administration to manage the school by bridging the gap between students and teachers. Effective student leadership is able to address many administrative problems by communicating the students' needs to the relevant authorities for timely and necessary action. For a school to have effective student leadership, factors affecting these student leaders within the school framework must be addressed. There are several factors that affect students' leadership in secondary schools. The purpose of the current study was to determine administrative factors affecting students' leadership in public secondary schools in Tharaka South Sub County. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study was 3850 subjects comprising of students, student leaders and deputy principals in the 25 public secondary schools. A sample of 25 deputy principals, 100 student leaders and 225 students participated in the study. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Piloting was conducted prior to data collection in the neighboring Tharaka North Sub County. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient formula was used to estimate reliability of the instruments and a correlation coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. Validity of the instruments was established through experts' judgment from the university supervisors. The data collected was analyzed using frequencies, mean and percentages with the help of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 17.0. Study findings established that schools offered minimal training programs for student leaders' development, and very little motivation programs like tours for the student leaders. Most schools provided physical facilities like offices for student leaders and gave full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers. The findings also revealed that most schools did not have student leaders' election period in their calendar. The study recommended that schools should look for ways of offering training programs to student leaders to better their leadership skills and also initiate motivation programs for student leaders.

Key Words: *Administrative Factors, Student Leadership, Student Leader, Deputy Principal*

1.0 Introduction

Student leaders are learners who are given some authority over other students by the school administration to assist in administrative duties which mostly touch on student affairs. The idea of student leadership has proven to be a more effective way of school administration, more so the student council system. This has necessitated a widespread need for education leadership reforms across the world to entrench student leaders in education systems (Guskeys, 2002). Countries like United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Norway and South Africa have active student councils in their school systems. In United States, student leaders literally ensure that students are duly permitted to be out of class during lessons (Arekenya, 2012). In United Kingdom, student leaders are charged with responsibility of ensuring students don't report to class late hence have the full authority to run the school program outside the classroom (Bondo, 2011). In the republic of Ireland, student unions in secondary schools were formed since 2001 to run student affairs. Norwegian laws require all schools to set up student councils elected by the students themselves to take care of their welfare (Critchle, 2003). All these countries have seen the need for a reformed and democratic student leadership which is associated with more democratic and equitable forms of school management. In addition, countries in Latin America and Caribbean regions have recognized the need for effectively entrenching student leadership in the school administrative arms to enhance realization of aims and objectives of various education reforms being carried out (Borden, 2002).

In Africa, the rapid expansion of student enrolment in most of its countries since the attainment of political independence coupled with inadequate resources has made school management a very complex and difficult undertaking recently (Mabena, 2002). This implies that, effective student leadership development in Africa has faced many hurdles. In South Africa for instance, education reforms involving student leadership are slowly taking effect though the bureaucratic structures militates against any rapid change that is introduced (Grobler, 2012).

In Kenya, student leadership is slowly being adopted. In most of the public universities and tertiary colleges, student bodies are fully operational (KSSSC, 2010). Olembo, Wanga and Karagu (2000) also noted that, in most of the country's public universities like Nairobi, Kenyatta, Egerton, Moi and Maseno, student councils have served as training grounds for the country's top political and social leaders. In secondary schools where management rests with the Board of Management (BoM) and administration rests with the principal and teachers, the ministry of education allows student leaders to be selected from the student community to assist in some duties directly affecting students (MOEST, 2000). Having student leaders in school administration prepares them for future leadership roles as well as giving teachers time to attend to other important school duties hence making them more responsible and accountable (Williams, 2009). Otieno (2001) observes that student leaders participation in school administration greatly contribute to effective management of the school because it improves communication which lead to better understanding and cooperation hence helping in resolving nonacademic problems. Student leaders assist the staff with general discipline. They may carry out some special responsibilities in the school like; manning queues during meals, maintaining order and tranquility in the school, supervising duties, representing other students and giving directions to other students (MOEST, 2000).

Principals who want to be successful in their management must involve student leaders in every aspect of school change to strengthen student commitment to education (Maitles & Deuchar, 2006) Most principals who face administrative problems attribute it to lack of proper coordination among the administrative arms of the school (Harber & Davies, 2002). The quality of education and categorically good academic performance depends

primarily on the way schools are managed while the capacity of schools to improve quality of teaching and learning is strongly influenced by the quality of student leadership provided by the school (Grauwe, 2000).

Several factors affect student leadership in secondary schools, among them are the administrative factors. For the student leaders to carry out their roles effectively, the effect of the administrative factors should be well understood. Little is known about administrative factors affecting student leadership especially in Tharaka South Sub County. Many studies have been carried out on principals' leadership, but very few have majored in student leadership especially on the factors affecting their effectiveness at work. This knowledge is necessary if student leaders are to carry out their roles effectively. In order to fill this gap, the present study sought to determine administrative factors that impede effective student leadership in Tharaka South Sub County.

2.0 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine administrative factors affecting student leadership in public secondary schools in Tharaka South Sub County.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. This design seeks information as it exists without manipulation of the variables (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). In the present study information was sought on administrative factors affecting students' leadership in public secondary school in Tharaka South Sub County. There was no manipulation of the variables. The target population for the study, were the deputy principals, student leaders and students in all the 25 public secondary schools in Tharaka South Sub County making a total of 3850 accessible population.

Using Kathuri and Pals (1993) guidelines a sample size of 350 respondents was selected. This comprised of 25 deputy principals, 100 student leaders and 225 students.

Deputy Principals were purposively sampled from each of the 25 schools. Simple random sampling was used to sample 9 students and 4 student leaders per every school. The principals were used to help identify student leaders from other students. Table 1 gives a summary of the population, sample size, method of sampling and the category of respondents used per school in the study.

Table 1: Sampling Matrix

Category	Population	Sampling Method	Sample Size Per Sch
Deputy Principals	25	Purposive	25
Student Leaders	425	Simple Random	100
Student	3400	Simple Random	225
Total	3850		350

The study used questionnaires for data collection from the respondents. Each questionnaire had two sections: section A gathered general information and section B had items on administrative factors that affect student leadership. Questionnaires were used because they give respondents freedom to express their views and time to interact with them (Gay, 2002). Both open and close ended items were used to capture more information. The close ended items were rated on a 5-point likert scale while open ended items were used to give room for opinions and suggestions. Before the actual data collection, pre testing of questionnaires was done in the neighboring Tharaka North Sub County which had similar characteristics as the study location. According to Johanson (2009)

10% of the sampled population is acceptable for piloting. Three schools were randomly sampled for piloting. The sample for piloting comprised of 3 deputy principals, 24 students and 9 student leaders. The piloting helped in estimating the reliability and assessing the validity of the instruments as well as familiarizing with the data collection procedures.

Test-retest technique of estimating reliability was employed in testing the reliability of the instruments. Correlation coefficient for the two tests was calculated using Spearman Rank Correlation formula. After the piloting, a reliability coefficient of 0.81 was realized. Therefore, the instruments were reliable, hence suitable for data collection. Face validity was ascertained through piloting of the instrument (Wilkinson, 2001). Content validity was ensured through expert judgement of the university supervisor.

Before the data collection the researcher notified the County Director of Education (CDE) of the intended study. The researcher afterwards notified the principals of the sampled schools and then booked an appointment to administer the instruments to the respondents in person. Permission for the students to participate in the study was sought from the teachers. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages and mean with the help of Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 17.0. (Martin & Acuna, 2002) advises that, SPSS is suitable for data analysis where large amount of data is involved, as it is more efficient. The final results were presented in form of tables, charts and graphs.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Response Rate

The study administered the research instruments to the respondents and the response rate was as shown by the data on Table 2.

Table 2: Response Rate

Category	Distributed	Returned	Response Rate
D/ Principals	25	25	100
Student Leaders	100	100	100
Students	225	225	100
Total	350	350	100

The data on Table 2 indicates that, 100% of the questionnaires were returned by all the categories of the respondents.

4.2 Demographic Data of the Respondents

The demographic profile provides vital information about the population structure, and helps create a mental picture of the subgroups that exists in the overall population. In this study, the researcher investigated the respondent's characteristics by establishing their gender, academic qualification and experience, as well as the position held in school.

4.2.1 Gender

The study sought to establish how the sample population was distributed by gender, which enabled cross tabulation of the responses. The data on Table 3 reveals how the study respondents were distributed by gender.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	D/Principals	Student Leaders	Students
Male	16 (64%)	66 (66%)	125 (55.6%)
Female	9 (36%)	34 (34%)	100 (44.4%)
Total	25 (100%)	100 (100%)	225 (100%)

The data shows that 55.6% and 66% of students and student leaders respectively were male as compared to 44.4% students and 34% student leaders who were female. The data also indicates that majority (64%) of deputy principal’s respondents were male as compared to (36%) female. The average overall gender of the population was 61.9% male and 38.1% female. It can be concluded from the findings that gender was fairly distributed in the sample population, with a slight bias in favor of male respondents.

4.2.2 Academic Qualification of the Deputy Principals

The study sought to establish the academic qualification of the deputy principals and the results are presented in Figure 1.

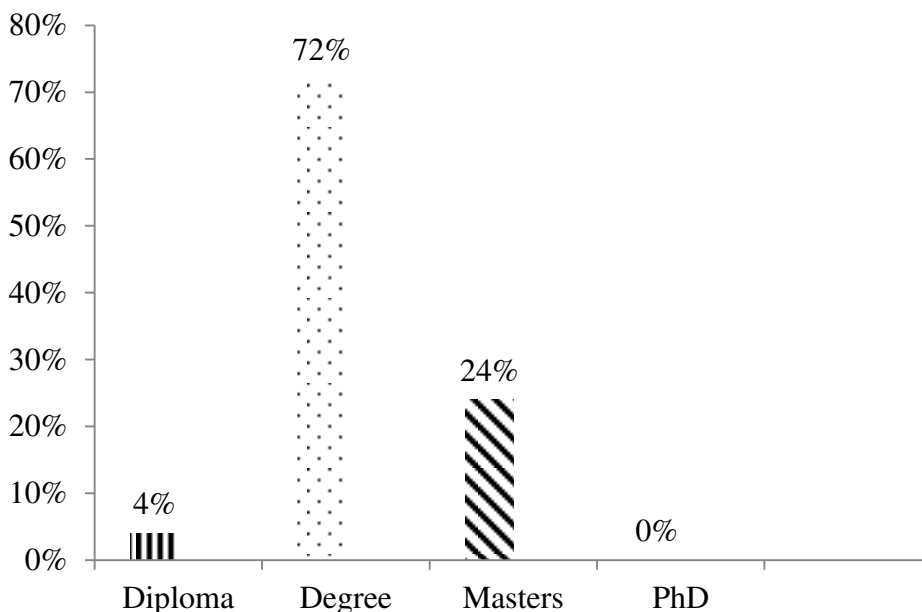


Figure 1: Academic Qualification of the Deputy Principals

The data in the Figure 3 shows that, majority of the deputy principals (72%) had a bachelor’s degree, (24%) had a masters degree while only 4% of the deputy principals had diploma in education. None had PhD mainly because they may have moved to higher ranks or exited to other fields. These findings indicate that all the deputy principals met minimum qualification and training requirements for a deputy principal in secondary school, which is a diploma. The deputy principals further indicated that their major duties were discipline management and were in charge of running the school programs.

4.2.3 Length of Service for Deputy Principals

The study sought to establish the number of years the deputy principals had served as deputy principals. Results are shown in Figure 2.

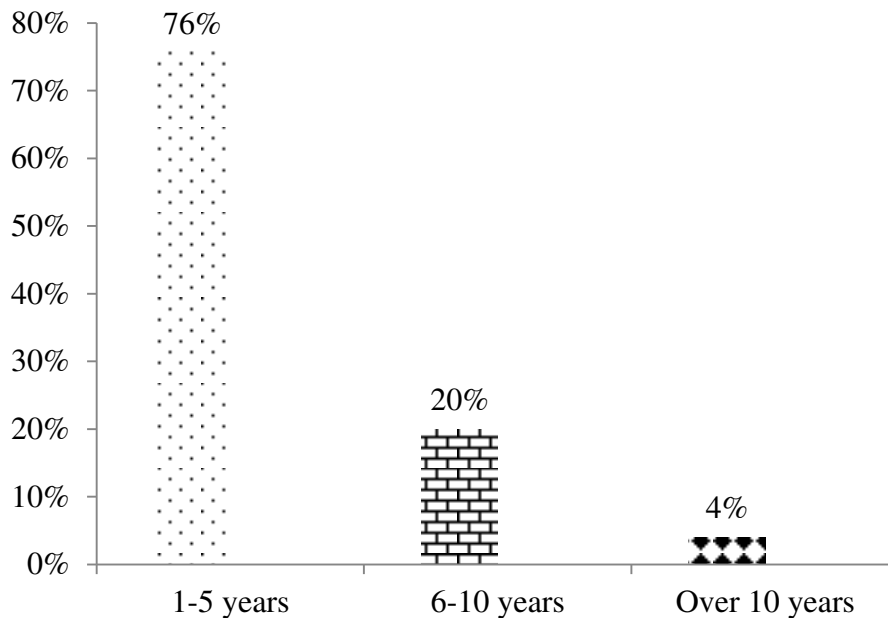


Figure 2: Length of Service for Deputy Principals

The data in the Figure 2 shows that, majority of the deputy principals (76%) had served as deputy principals between 1 and 5 years, 20% of the deputy principals had served between 6 and 10 years while 4% of the deputy principals had served as deputy principals for over 10 years. The results show that young teachers in administration who may have been more active were involved in deputizing the principals who were more experienced. It also reveals that those who served longer as deputies are fewer mainly because of promotions to higher ranks.

4.2.4 Seminars Attended by Deputy Principals

The study further sought to establish whether deputy principals’ attended seminars or not and the results obtained are reflected in Figure 3.

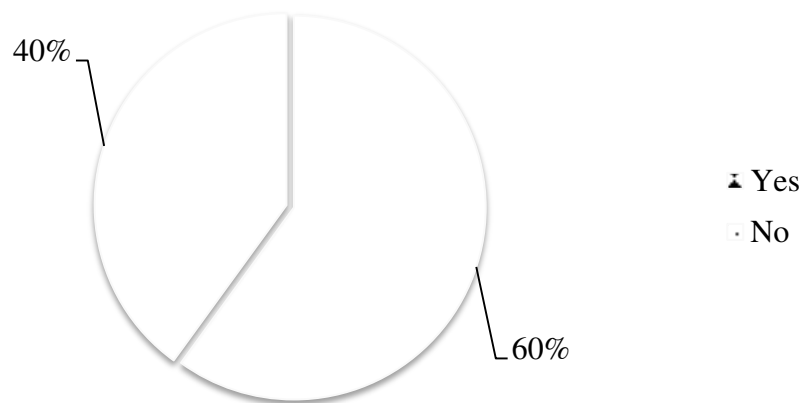


Figure 3: Seminars Attended by the Deputy Principals

The study established that the majority of the deputy principals (60%) attended seminars while 40% did not. This therefore shows that deputy principals had training on leadership through seminars, which is fundamental on effective leadership.

4.2.5 Student Leaders Selection Criteria

Respondents were required to state the criteria used to select student leaders. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Student Leaders Selection Criteria

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Elected	108	33.2
Appointed	217	66.8
Total	325	100.0

The data in Table 5 shows that majority of the student leaders (66.8%) were appointed while 33.2% were elected. This shows that many schools had not adopted the modern democratic way of student council leadership.

4.3 Administrative Factors Affecting Student Leadership

Respondents were required to state the extent to which they agreed with the given statements relating to administrative factors affecting students’ leadership. The statements were based on a 5-point Likert scale with: SA (Strongly Agree-scored 5), A (Agree-scored 4), U (Undecided- scored 3), D (Disagree- scored 2), and SD (Strongly Disagree- scored 1). The findings obtained for each category of respondents is presented in Table 5, 6 and 7.

Table 5: Deputy Principal Responses on Administrative Factors Affecting Student Leadership

Administrative factors	SA	A	U	D	SD
School offers training programs for student leaders’ development	20%	23%	1%	37%	19%
School has student leaders election period in their calendar	22%	21%	0%	38%	19%
School provides physical facilities like offices for student leaders	19%	32%	3%	24%	21%
School offers motivation programs like tours for the student leaders	18%	26%	2%	34%	20%
School gives full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers	12%	36%	0%	28%	24%

Table 5 shows that 56% (D and SD) of the deputy principles disagreed that school offer training programs for student leaders’ development. Aldag and Kuzuhara (2002) noted that, leadership traits are acquired through training. The study also revealed that most schools have no student leaders’ election period in their calendar as was indicated by 57% (D and SD) of the respondents. The study further established that school provides physical facilities like offices for student leaders as was revealed by most of the respondents 51% (SA and A). On the

statement, school offers motivation programs like tours for student leaders, most respondents 54% (D and SD) disagreed. Bass (2000) advises that, transformational leaders motivate and inspire their subordinates. On the other hand, school gives full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers as was indicated by majority of the respondents 48% (SA and A) who agreed.

Table 6: Students Responses on Administrative Factors Affecting Student Leadership

Administrative factors	SA	A	U	D	SD
School offers training programs for student leaders' development	26%	15%	2%	47%	10%
School has student leaders election period in their calendar	11%	25%	0%	44%	20%
School provides physical facilities like offices for student leaders	12%	43%	3%	28%	14%
School offers motivation programs like tours for the student leaders	17%	24%	2%	35%	22%
School gives full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers	10%	38%	4%	36%	12%

The data obtained from the students revealed that 57% (D and SD) of the respondents disagreed that school offers training programs for student leaders' development. Paauwe and Williams (2000) points out that, in every institution, student leadership development is key to the school success. Majority of the students, 64% (D and SD) disagreed with the statement that school has student leaders' election period in their calendar. Results further indicated that school provides physical facilities like offices for student leaders as was revealed by majority of the respondents 55% (SA and A) who agreed. The students' respondents further revealed that school rarely offers motivation programs like tours for the student leaders as was revealed by 57% (D and SD) of the respondents. The study further revealed that, school gives full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers as was revealed by majority of the respondents 48% (SA and A) who agreed. Saunders (2005) suggests that, schools are often seen as the perfect environment for the development of leadership capabilities.

Table 7: Students Leaders Responses on Administrative Factors Affecting Student Leadership

Administrative factors	SA	A	U	D	SD
School offers training programs for student leaders' development	29%	20%	0%	39%	12%
School has student leaders election period in their calendar	14%	25%	1%	43%	17%
School provides physical facilities like offices for student leaders	26%	45%	0%	19%	10%
School offers motivation programs like tours for the student leaders	20%	29%	2%	14%	35%
School gives full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers	12%	41%	3%	14%	30%

The data obtained revealed that 51% (D and SD) of the respondents disagreed that school offers training programs for student leaders' development. Lavery (2003) argues that, in most schools, leaders are nurtured, promoted and developed as leaders in reflection camps and seminars which prepare them for challenges and responsibilities of leadership. School has no student leaders' election period in their calendar as was revealed by majority of the respondents 50% (D and SD). The findings further indicated that school provides physical facilities like offices for student leaders as was revealed by most of the respondents 71% (SA and A) who agreed. The study also established that schools did not offer motivation programs like tours for the student leaders as was revealed by 35% of the respondents who strongly disagreed. The study further revealed that school gives full authority to student leaders to punish wrongdoers as was revealed by majority of the respondents 53% (SA and A) who agreed. Muli (2011) asserts that, a proper student leadership carries supervisory duties over other students in and out of class.

Other factors suggested that affected student leadership were; insufficient motivation, family background, peer pressure, time management problem, tribalism and nepotism and divided loyalty. Other administrative factors the respondents suggested were; favourism in management, applying double standards and unclear (ambiguous) policies. Lavery (2003) pointed out that, Racism and tribalism; Unclear distinction between governance policies; No mentoring plan for promising staff; Corruption and nepotism; Static staffing structures; Lack of a formal and articulated plan for succession, are also factors that need attention for leadership to work effectively.

5.0 Conclusion

There are some administrative factors that are partially addressed and this hinders student leaders' ability to perform to their full potential. They include the school offering training programs for student leaders' development, having election period allocated time in the school calendar and motivation programs like tours for student leaders. Others administrative factors that affect student leadership are, giving student leaders' full authority to exercise their leadership skills and providing physical facilities like offices for student leaders.

6.0 Recommendations of the Study

From the study findings, it was recommended that school through the administration should look for ways of offering training programs to student leaders to better their leadership skills. The administration should initiate motivating programs for student leaders. The administration should make a point of having election period allocated time in the school calendar.

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