Influence of Student Councils' Involvement in School Governance on Students' Discipline in Secondary Schools in Migori County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The establishment of student councils in Kenyan secondary schools following the 2009 ban on corporal punishment aimed to foster learner discipline through participatory governance. However, persistent student unrest from 2015 to 2018, with Migori County recording the highest incidence rate at 31.2% (compared to Homabay at 11.7%, Kisii at 10.2%, and Narok at 5.7%), and continuing into 2024, highlighted gaps in implementation despite government directives. This study investigated the influence of student councils' involvement in school governance on students' discipline in secondary schools in Migori County, Kenya. Specifically, it examined councils' roles in supervising student welfare activities (e.g., hygiene, meals, and extracurriculars), formulating school rules and regulations, establishing communication channels (e.g., barazas, suggestion boxes, and BOM meetings), and participating in decision-making processes (e.g., on routines, canteen operations, and remedial teaching). Employing a mixed-methods approach with descriptive and correlational research designs, the study was grounded in Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999), which posits that active student engagement enhances responsibility and outcomes. The conceptual framework illustrated how these independent variables (welfare supervision, rule formulation, communication, and decision-making) impact discipline, measured by indicators like academic performance, strikes, complaints, and petty offenses. The target population included 283 principals, 283 deputy principals, 283 guidance and counseling teachers, 283 student council presidents, and 8 sub-county quality assurance officers (SCQAOs) across Migori's eight sub-counties (Awendo, Kuria East, Kuria West, Nyatike, Rongo, Suna East, Suna West, and Uriri). Stratified random sampling selected 85 schools, yielding samples of 85 principals, 85 deputy principals, 85 guidance teachers, and 85 council presidents, while purposive sampling included all 8 SCQAOs. Data were collected via questionnaires (for quantitative data) and interview schedules (for qualitative data), with instruments validated through expert review and pilot testing, achieving a reliability coefficient of 0.74 via Cronbach's alpha. Hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at a 0.05 significance level, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis. Quantitative results revealed statistically significant positive correlations between student council involvement and discipline: welfare supervision ($r=0.45$, $p<0.05$), rule formulation ($r=0.52$, $p<0.05$), communication channels ($r=0.48$, $p<0.05$), and decision-making ($r=0.50$, $p<0.05$), rejecting all null hypotheses. Qualitative insights from SCQAOs corroborated these findings, emphasizing that effective discipline stems from properly constituted councils with clear responsibilities, training, and integration into governance. Challenges included leadership absenteeism, underutilization of councils, inadequate sensitization, reluctance from administrators to delegate authority, and external factors like proximity to economic hubs (e.g., quarries and plantations) exacerbating indiscipline. Systemic barriers, such as symbolic rather than substantive participation, were noted as undermining councils' effectiveness. In conclusion, meaningful student council engagement in governance significantly enhances discipline by promoting ownership, peer accountability, and a positive school climate. The study recommends policy reforms for mandatory council training, inclusive decision-making, and resource allocation to empower councils. Findings offer practical insights for students, school leaders, policymakers (e.g., MOE, TSC, KEMI), and stakeholders to reduce unrest and improve educational outcomes. Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and NACOSTI/MUSERC approvals, were upheld throughout. This research addresses gaps in empirical evidence on student councils' statistical impact in Kenyan contexts, advocating for democratic governance to align with global best practices.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Throughout the evolution of formal education, diverse models of student leadership have developed, each serving specific roles within the teaching and learning environment. These range from conventional hierarchical structures, such as prefects, monitors, captains, and councilors, to more participatory and representative formations like student councils. Monahan (2009) offers a historical account of these leadership forms, emphasizing their deep integration within institutional cultures and administrative frameworks.

In institutions of higher learning, particularly universities, the establishment of Students' Governing Councils (SGCs) has become a significant facet of student representation. These councils typically comprise elected student representatives who serve as intermediaries between the student body and university administration, articulating student concerns and influencing institutional decisions. In other tertiary contexts, such as teacher training colleges, student leadership is often structured around a ministerial system, coordinated by a chief minister, with each student leader overseeing specific domains related to student welfare and liaison with college authorities.

At the secondary school level, the structure of student leadership assumes various titles such as captains, prefects, or monitors, each signifying authority, albeit with differing functions and modes of selection. In primary schools, leadership is usually limited to prefects or monitors appointed by school authorities, often based on academic performance and perceived alignment with institutional values. According to Schwartz (2015) and O'Gorman (2004), this prefecture model reflects a markedly hierarchical and top-down governance system, privileging conformity and obedience over participatory engagement.

In contrast, student councils represent a more democratic and inclusive model of school leadership. Elected by their peers, student council members are entrusted with the mandate to advocate for student interests, mediate between students and staff, and facilitate the enforcement of institutional norms and rules. Empirical findings by Vaccar (2015) indicate that student councils are perceived as instrumental in enhancing discipline and promoting participatory school governance. Specifically, 73.7% of respondents credited student councils with ensuring compliance with institutional rules, while 81.3% emphasized their contribution to discipline through dialogue and peer influence.

The importance of providing students with a voice in governance is a recurring theme across international scholarship. Bryant (2008), in a study conducted in San Francisco, asserts that peer-elected student leaders often hold greater influence over their contemporaries than those appointed by school authorities. This underscores the motivational impact of authentic representation. Brandes and Ginnis (2010) further argue that student engagement with real-world responsibilities fosters a heightened sense of accountability, cultivating civic-mindedness and producing positive developmental outcomes both individually and collectively. Scholars such as Monahan (2009), Schwartz (2015), and O'Gorman (2004) highlight the institutional embedment of traditional models that emphasize obedience and order over active participation.

In contrast, student councils are portrayed as inclusive mechanisms that promote participatory governance, especially when their roles are clearly defined and institutionally supported. Evidence from multiple studies (Vaccar, 2015; Bryant, 2008; Brandes & Ginnis, 2010) reveals that councils are effective in promoting discipline, encouraging civic engagement, and amplifying student voice, particularly when students are elected by their peers rather than appointed by teachers.

Internationally, the prevalence of Student Representative Councils (SRCs) is notable in contexts such as Italy and Australia. Hart (2011) observes their extensive presence in secondary schools and notes the support they receive at both institutional and governmental levels. In Australia, for example, the Department of Education and Training endorses formal mechanisms for student representation in policy deliberations. Similarly, Bäckman and Trafford (2007) report that, across Commonwealth nations, SRCs, often composed of senior students, play influential roles in shaping school governance, particularly through their involvement in formulating and implementing discipline policies, thereby reinforcing academic success and fostering a sense of ownership (Brandes & Ginnis, 2010).

In North America, Australia, and South Africa, student representative bodies operate under various appellations, such as Student Council, Student Government, or Student Activity Council, but serve a common purpose: advocating for student welfare and serving as communication conduits with school authorities (Norman, 2015). These councils commonly handle a wide range of responsibilities, including relaying student grievances, supporting disciplinary processes, and addressing essential welfare issues like sanitation, food quality, lighting, and teacher absenteeism (Glover, 2015).

From an African perspective, student councils continue to serve pivotal roles. In Ghana, for instance, Hawkes (2011) and Alexia (2014) underscore the function of these councils in protecting student welfare and promoting conducive academic environments by voicing student concerns. Such representation reduces the pastoral burden on teachers and empowers students to take active roles in their educational communities. In Ethiopia, Abebe (2017) points out that student participation in school management, including supervision and evaluation, is often driven more by external pressures for decentralization than by internal policy innovation. Alexia (2014) adds that there remains a lack of clarity concerning the scope and strategic frameworks within which student councils operate, particularly regarding their authority over administrative functions. Tanzania offers a distinct model where student councils are functionally empowered, with advisory and supervisory responsibilities. Nyagiati and Yambo (2018) report that council chairpersons routinely advise school heads on student, related matters and contribute significantly to school discipline, while class leaders ensure order, hygiene, and active co-curricular participation.

In the Kenyan context, the establishment of student councils as a participatory governance model, following the prohibition of corporal punishment in 2009, was intended to foster improved learner discipline. However, data from 2015 to 2018 revealed persistent challenges with student unrest in secondary schools, with Migori County exhibiting a particularly high rate of 31.2%, followed by Homabay (11.7%), Kisii (10.2%), and Narok (5.7%), despite governmental directives mandating the involvement of student councils in school management alongside other conflict reduction strategies. This issue persisted into 2024, exemplified by student demonstrations reaching the county education office and instances of parents and students locking teachers out of a school in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County.

The table 1.1 shows cases of indiscipline in Kenya and four counties neighboring Migori which are Narok, Kisii and Homa Bay. These violence and disruptions in schools are likely caused by many factors ranging from the fact that students are not involved in decision making on matters affecting them, in the formulation of rules and regulations, in the communication channel to the supervision of their welfare activities among other factors (MOEST, 2022).

Table 1.1 Unrest, poor performance and rampage incidences in secondary schools in Kenya, Narok, Kisii, Migori and Homa Bay counties between the years 2015-2018.

Counties	Schools	2015	2016	2017	2018	Total	Percentage
KENYA	8913	98	483	123	107	811	9.1%
NAROK	262	2	6	4	3	15	5.7%
KISII	364	11	5	6	15	37	10.2%
MIGORI	283	16	18	23	31	88	31.2%
HOMABAY	324	9	12	5	12	38	11.7%

Source; Adopted from Ministry of Education in Narok, Kisii, Migori and Homa Bay

Kenyan data reveals a paradox: while student councils were institutionalized to foster discipline following the abolition of corporal punishment, student unrest and school disruptions persist, particularly in counties like Migori (31.2%). This suggests a gap between policy intentions and practical implementation, as students may not be meaningfully involved in decision-making processes regarding rules, welfare, and institutional communication.

The studies affirm that student leadership, particularly through elected student councils, can be a transformative force in school governance, discipline, and student engagement when implemented authentically. However, in

the Kenyan context, the persistent high levels of indiscipline in counties like Migori signal the need for a critical re-evaluation of how student councils are integrated into school systems. Merely institutionalizing councils without empowering them undermines their potential. The gap between symbolic participation and real authority limits their effectiveness in influencing student behavior and fostering a sense of ownership.

Kyalo, Kanori, and Njagi (2017) in Kenya observed that excluding student councils from welfare decision-making correlated with higher indiscipline rates. They emphasized the need for deeper investigation into the specific welfare domains councils could supervise and the institutional support needed to empower student leaders, also suggesting comparative regional studies on welfare supervision and discipline outcomes.similarly, Kyalo, Kanori, and Njagi (2017) and Apollo and Kamau (2017) emphasize the important role of student councils in promoting discipline through participatory mechanisms.

Kyalo et al. found that limited involvement of student councils in welfare and regulatory decision-making correlated with higher indiscipline, and called for deeper investigation into student participation in rule-making and its reception by school authorities. Similarly, Apollo and Kamau observed that student involvement in rule formulation positively influenced disciplinary standards, recommending further research into how participatory governance affects students' compliance and perceptions of fairness. However, a key research gap remains regarding whether student councils' participation in formulation of rules and regualtions in schools has a statistically significant impact on discipline, particularly within schools in Migori County.

This empowerment extends to overseeing dormitory life, meal provision, and communal activities (Kambuga & Omollo, 2017). Olel and Oloo (2017) suggest that the realization of optimal educational outcomes is closely linked to the adequacy of institutional resources, an area in which student councils can play a monitoring role. Furthermore, student councils have proven to be instrumental in conflict prevention and resolution within schools. As Nzioki (2015) contends, these councils enhance communication between students and administrators, monitor discipline, oversee academic programs such as evening preps, and coordinate participation in both manual and co-curricular activities. Despite the contributions of these studies, a significant research gap remains: the influence of student councils' involvement in the supervision of student welfare on discipline in secondary schools has not been sufficiently assessed. In particular, there is a pressing need to establish whether student councils' involvement in welfare oversight has any statistically significant impact on disciplinary outcomes in schools in Migori County.

Empirical evidence on their practical role, especially in formulation of rules and regulation influencing discipline, remains limited. Existing research acknowledges their potential but does not thoroughly evaluate their functional impact. These studies stop short of providing empirical evidence on the statistical significance of this involvement. There is a critical gap in understanding whether student council involvement in the formulation of rules and regulations in schools has a statistically significant impact on discipline, particularly within schools in Migori County. Research highlights that student councils also serve as crucial communication bridges between students and school administrations, influencing discipline outcomes. Nonetheless, further research is needed on best communication practices and the long-term impact of student council communication structures on school discipline.

Studies recognize that student councils can bridge communication gaps between students and administrators and promote school culture and discipline through social and CO-curricular engagement. However, their communication efforts are often ineffective or poorly structured. Gaps remain regarding their effectiveness in relaying information and enforcing discipline. There is a critical gap in understanding whether student council involvement in the communication in schools has a statistically significant impact on discipline, particularly within schools in Migori County.

On the involvement of Student Councils in Decision Making on Discipline in Secondary Schools. Research consistently shows that involving student councils in school decision-making, particularly on discipline, positively influences student ownership, compliance, and school climate (Mager & Nowak, 2012; Mitra, 2004; Flutter & Rudduck, 2004). However, studies highlight major gaps, especially in African contexts: student involvement is often symbolic, teachers dominate disciplinary processes, and students lack sufficient leadership training (Tambo, 2014; Mutua & Wambua, 2016). While some studies (Nyamwange & Ondima, 2016;

Luyombya & Ssekamwa, 2017; Oduor et al., 2014) found that empowered and structured student councils reduce disciplinary cases and promote peer responsibility, most research lacks empirical evidence on whether student council participation in on decision Making has a statistically significant impact on discipline. Specifically, no study has addressed this gap in schools in Migori County.

In conclusion, while existing literature highlights the theoretical benefits of student councils in promoting school discipline, there is a significant gap in empirical research, particularly in Migori County. The lack of statistical evidence on their roles on discipline in schools underscores the need for context-specific, quantitative studies. Further research should provide statistically significant data on how student councils influence disciplinary outcomes, focusing on their participation in welfare activities supervision, formulation of rules and regulations and enforcement, communication channels, and decision-making processes related to discipline management

Statement of the Problem

Despite the institutionalization of student councils in Kenyan secondary schools following the 2009 ban on corporal punishment, aimed at fostering participatory governance and enhancing student discipline, persistent unrest and indiscipline, particularly in Migori County, indicate a disconnect between policy intent and practical outcomes. Between 2015 and 2018, Migori County recorded the highest rate of student unrest in Kenya at 31.2%, surpassing Homabay (11.7%), Kisii (10.2%), and Narok (5.7%), with issues persisting into 2024, as evidenced by student demonstrations and confrontations with school authorities in Nyatike Sub-County. While student councils are intended to promote discipline through active involvement in supervising welfare activities (e.g., hygiene, meals, extracurriculars), formulating rules and regulations, establishing communication channels (e.g., barazas, suggestion boxes), and participating in decision-making (e.g., on routines, canteen operations), their impact remains underexplored and often superficial. Existing literature globally and in Kenya highlights the theoretical benefits of student councils, such as fostering responsibility, peer influence, and ownership of school policies, yet empirical evidence on their measurable impact on discipline is limited, particularly in Migori County. Studies (e.g., Kyalo et al., 2017; Apollo & Kamau, 2017) suggest that limited or symbolic involvement in governance correlates with higher indiscipline, but they lack statistical analysis of specific roles, welfare supervision, rule formulation, communication, and decision-making, and their direct influence on disciplinary outcomes. In Migori, challenges such as leadership reluctance, inadequate training, and systemic barriers (e.g., proximity to economic hubs like quarries) further undermine councils' effectiveness, leaving a critical gap in understanding whether their involvement yields statistically significant improvements in discipline.

This study addresses these gaps by investigating the extent to which student councils' engagement in these four governance areas impacts discipline in Migori County's secondary schools. Without robust, context-specific data, policymakers and administrators lack evidence-based strategies to empower councils, risking continued unrest and compromised educational outcomes. By providing statistical and qualitative insights, this research seeks to clarify whether student councils serve as meaningful mechanisms for discipline management or remain symbolic structures with limited practical impact, informing targeted interventions for stakeholders.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the influence of student councils on discipline management in secondary schools in Migori County. Specifically, the study seeks to Examine the extent to which student councils'

involvement in governance processes affects discipline in schools

Objectives of the Study

The study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To assess the influence of student councils' involvement in the supervision of student welfare activities on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

2. To examine the influence of student councils' participation in the formulation of school rules and regulations on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

3. To investigate whether students' councils' engagement in communication channels has a statistically significant impact on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

4. To examine if students' councils' participation in decision-making process has a statistically significant influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

Research Hypotheses

The study will test the following hypotheses:

1. **H_{01}**: Student councils' involvement in the supervision of student welfare activities has no statistical significant influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

2. **H_{02}**: Student councils' participation in the formulation of school rules and regulations has no statistical significant influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

3. **H_{03}**:students' councils engaugement in school communication channel has no statistical significant influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori schools.

4. **H_{04}**: Student councils' role in decision-making has no statistical significant influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999), a robust framework in educational research that posits student engagement—defined as the investment of physical and psychological energy in meaningful educational activities—directly influences developmental outcomes, including discipline, personal growth, and academic success. The theory is particularly relevant for analyzing how student councils' active participation in school governance enhances discipline in secondary schools in Migori County, Kenya. Astin's framework emphasizes that the quality and extent of student involvement, rather than merely institutional resources, drive positive behavioral and learning outcomes, making it ideal for examining councils' roles in welfare supervision, rule formulation, communication, and decision-making.Astin (1999) outlines five core assumptions guiding this study:

Involvement as a Continuum: Student involvement ranges from general participation (e.g., attending school events) to specific roles (e.g., student councils overseeing welfare or rules). This study explores both broad and targeted council activities, hypothesizing that structured, meaningful roles enhance discipline by fostering responsibility and ownership.

Dynamic and Individual Variability: Involvement varies across students and over time, influenced by personal motivation, institutional support, and contextual factors (e.g., school leadership attitudes). In Migori, factors like administrative reluctance or inadequate training may affect council engagement, necessitating adaptive governance strategies.

Measurable Engagement: Involvement can be quantified (e.g., frequency of council meetings, participation rates in barazas) and qualitatively assessed (e.g., perceptions of council authority). This dual approach informs the study's mixed-methods design, using regression analysis and thematic interviews to evaluate councils' impact on discipline.

Policy Effectiveness: Educational policies are most effective when they maximize student involvement. Policies empowering councils to supervise welfare, formulate rules, communicate effectively, and participate in decisions are expected to reduce indiscipline by aligning rules with student needs and fostering peer accountability.

Behavioral, Emotional, and Cognitive Dimensions: Burch et al. (2015) extend Astin's framework, noting engagement encompasses observable behaviors (e.g., council activities), emotional commitment (e.g., sense of ownership), and cognitive investment (e.g., problem-solving in governance). These dimensions frame the analysis of how councils influence discipline indicators like reduced strikes or improved compliance.

Astin's theory aligns with global evidence (Kuh, 2009; Trowler, 2010) that active student roles in governance enhance responsibility and school climate. In Migori, where student unrest persists, the theory provides a lens to assess whether empowered councils can bridge the gap between symbolic participation and substantive impact. By focusing on councils' specific governance roles, the study tests the theory's applicability in a Kenyan context, addressing gaps in empirical evidence on discipline outcomes. This framework supports a nuanced understanding of how structured, supported, and meaningful student involvement fosters a disciplined, cooperative school environment, guiding policy and practice for stakeholders.

Conceptual Framework of the Study

The conceptual framework, presented in Figure 1.1, is a visual representation of the hypothesized relationships among key study variables, as derived from the theoretical framework.

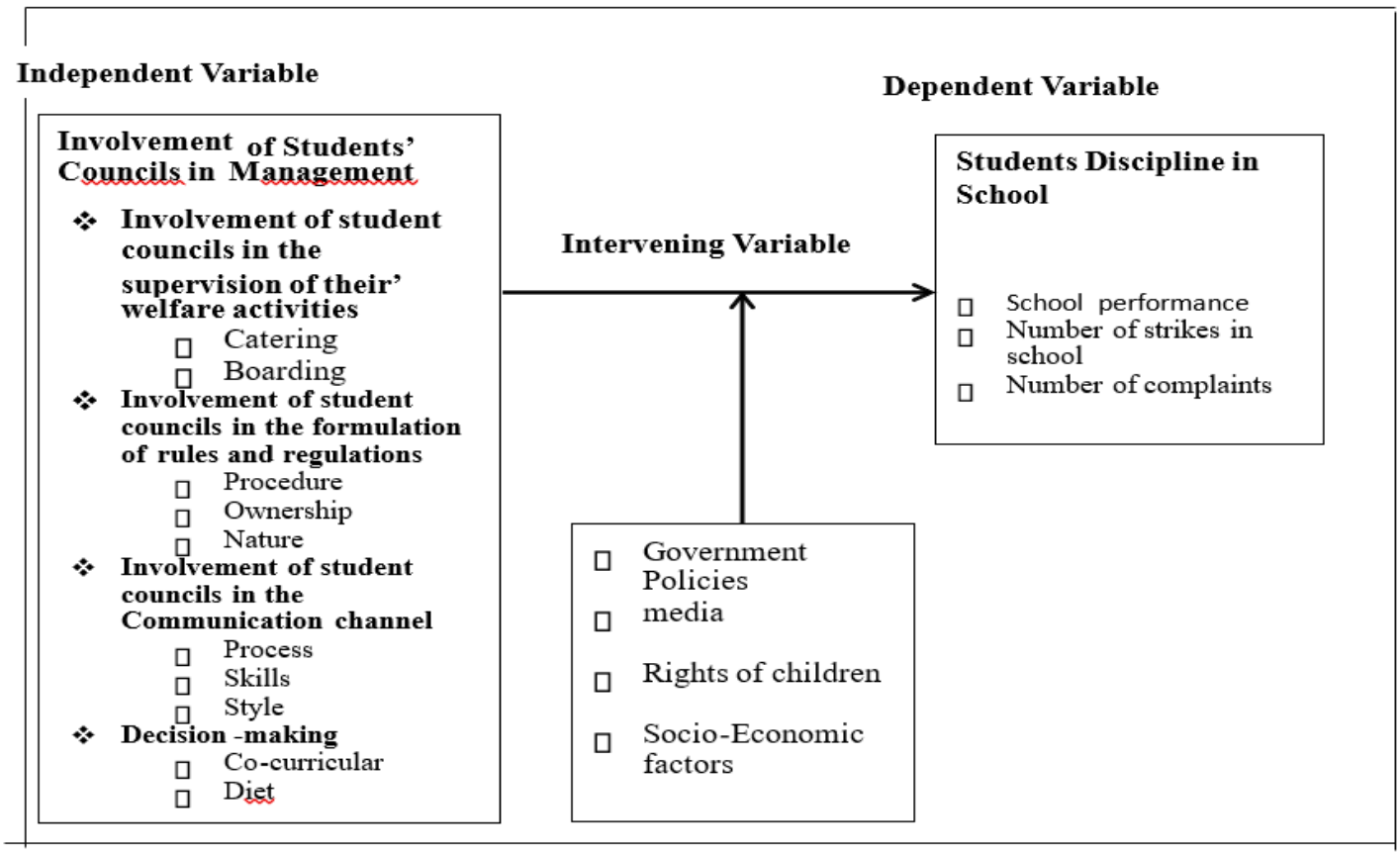

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: The author

The conceptual framework presented explores the relationship between student council involvement and school discipline. It identifies four key areas of students' councils participation: supervision of students' welfare activities, involvement in formulation of rules and regulations, engagement in communication channels, and involverment in decision-making. These independent variables are hypothesized to directly impact school discipline, measured through indicators like academic performance, strikes, complaints, and petty offenses.

The framework emphasizes that when students are involved in decision-making and rule-setting, they are more likely to perceive the rules as fair, leading to greater adherence and improved discipline. It highlights the importance of inclusive governance, where student councils foster ownership of school policies. This approach aligns with Astin's theory of student involvement, suggesting that effective educational practices improve when students actively participate.

In conclusion, the framework provides a theoretical basis for assessing how student council engagement influences school discipline, offering insights for both research and policy

LITERATURE REVIEW

Influence of Student Councils' Involvement in the Supervision of Welfare Activities on Discipline in Secondary Schools

The supervision of welfare activities by student councils, such as hygiene management, meal services, and coordination of extracurricular activities, has been widely recognized as a mechanism for promoting positive school climate and reducing indiscipline. This role is grounded in **Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999)**, which posits that active engagement in meaningful institutional responsibilities enhances students' emotional attachment, responsibility, and behavioural outcomes. When students participate in managing their school environment, they develop ownership and peer accountability, which in turn discourages deviant behaviour and strengthens discipline.

Despite this theoretical expectation, evidence from Migori County indicates persistent student unrest, including vandalism, truancy, and protests linked to welfare concerns such as food quality and sanitation (MOEST, 2022; National Newspaper, 2024). This suggests a possible disconnect between the existence of student councils and their effective participation in welfare supervision. The literature reviewed therefore synthesizes global and regional evidence to examine whether student councils' involvement in welfare supervision consistently translates into improved discipline outcomes.

International Evidence on Welfare Supervision and Discipline

Across Europe and North America, research generally demonstrates that student councils' involvement in welfare activities contributes to improved discipline, although the magnitude of impact varies depending on institutional support and autonomy. Studies in Sweden and other European countries (Van der Smissen, 2017; Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018) show that when councils are entrusted with responsibilities such as sanitation monitoring and extracurricular coordination, schools experience reduced vandalism, improved cleanliness, and fewer behavioural disruptions. Similarly, UK-based research (Hart, 2011; Bäckman & Trafford, 2007) links higher levels of student participation in welfare decisions to lower exclusion rates and improved school climate.

In the United States, findings from the National Association of Student Councils (2018), Truss (2006), and Watson and Neilsen (2012) reinforce this pattern, showing that councils involved in organizing welfare-related programs, such as peer mediation, meal oversight, and wellness activities, contribute to reduced disciplinary referrals and absenteeism. However, these studies consistently caution that the effectiveness of student councils depends on the degree of institutional support and whether their roles are substantive or merely symbolic.

Despite these positive findings, a critical limitation in much of the Western literature is its focus on well-resourced educational systems, where student councils operate within supportive governance structures. This raises questions about the transferability of such outcomes to resource-constrained contexts such as Kenya.

Evidence from Africa and Emerging Economies

Studies from African contexts present a more complex and context-dependent picture. In South Africa, research on Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) (Magadla, 2010; Moyo et al., 2014; Phaswana, 2013) indicates that when councils are meaningfully empowered, they can reduce bullying, vandalism, and minor infractions through sanitation campaigns and peer mediation. However, these benefits are often constrained by teacher resistance, limited training, and weak institutional authority.

Similar findings emerge in West Africa. In Ghana, Hawkes (2011) and Ocansey (2018) report that student councils involved in welfare oversight improve student satisfaction and reduce truancy, although funding limitations and unclear mandates restrict their effectiveness. In Nigeria, Okon et al. (2022) and Okeke and Okeke (2016) also find that councils supervising hygiene and extracurricular activities contribute to improved discipline, but outcomes remain inconsistent due to weak formal structures and insufficient authority.

East African evidence similarly highlights both potential and limitations. In Tanzania, Mkulu and Pastory (2021) and Lema (2025) show that councils involved in sanitation and meal supervision reduce truancy and complaints,

yet lack of autonomy and resources limits sustained impact. Ugandan studies (Ndagire, 2012; Nakijoba, 2019) report comparable outcomes, where welfare supervision improves school climate but is hindered by inadequate training and infrastructure.

Collectively, African studies suggest that while student councils can positively influence discipline through welfare supervision, their effectiveness is highly dependent on structural support, training, and institutional willingness to delegate authority.

Kenyan Context and Identified Gaps

In Kenya, available evidence (Simba et al., 2016; Ochieng et al., 2017; Odindo & Yambo, 2015; Simatwa, 2012) indicates that student councils contribute to improved discipline when involved in welfare-related activities. However, these studies also reveal inconsistencies, particularly in rural and under-resourced counties where councils often lack meaningful authority. In Migori County specifically, Rakiro (2022) and MOEST (2022) report continued unrest linked to poor welfare conditions, suggesting that student councils may not be effectively integrated into school governance structures.

A critical gap in Kenyan literature is the *limited availability of rigorous quantitative evidence demonstrating the statistical relationship between student councils' welfare supervision and student discipline outcomes***,** particularly in high-unrest contexts such as Migori County. Additionally, most studies are descriptive in nature and do not sufficiently explore mediating factors such as leadership training, administrative support, and resource availability.

Synthesis and Conceptual Gap

Overall, the literature indicates a generally positive relationship between student councils' involvement in welfare supervision and improved discipline outcomes across diverse contexts. However, the strength of this relationship is highly contingent upon institutional support, clarity of roles, and student empowerment. While developed countries demonstrate more consistent positive outcomes due to structured governance systems, African and Kenyan contexts reveal mixed results due to systemic constraints.

In Migori County, where student unrest remains prevalent despite the existence of student councils, there is a clear need for empirical investigation into whether welfare supervision by student councils translates into measurable improvements in discipline. This study therefore addresses a critical gap by providing *context-specific, quantitative and correlational evidence* on the influence of student councils' welfare supervision on discipline in secondary schools.

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Influence of Students' Councils' Involvement in the Formulation of Rules and Regulations on Discipline in Schools

The involvement of student councils in the formulation of school rules and regulations is widely regarded as a key strategy for enhancing discipline by promoting fairness, ownership, and compliance among learners. This perspective is anchored in **Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999)**, which posits that when students actively participate in meaningful institutional decision-making processes, their emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement increases, thereby fostering responsible conduct and reducing indiscipline.

In the context of Migori County, persistent student unrest, including protests linked to perceived authoritarian rules on uniforms, attendance, and academic workload, suggests limited student participation in rule-making processes (MOEST, 2022; National Newspaper, 2024). These challenges point to potential dissatisfaction arising from exclusion in decision-making structures, reinforcing the need to examine the role of student councils in participatory governance.

Global Evidence on Participatory Rule-Making and Discipline

International literature consistently demonstrates that student involvement in formulating school rules contributes to improved discipline, though outcomes depend on the degree of institutional support and genuine student autonomy. In Europe, particularly in Nordic countries, studies indicate that student councils involved in developing behaviour policies, attendance regulations, and anti-bullying rules significantly enhance compliance and reduce disciplinary incidents (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018; Van der Smissen, 2017). These improvements are largely attributed to collaborative governance structures that allow students to negotiate rules alongside teachers, thereby increasing legitimacy and adherence. However, evidence also shows that where student participation is symbolic rather than substantive, disengagement and continued indiscipline persist.

Similarly, research from the United Kingdom, Germany, and France reinforces the positive relationship between participatory rule-making and improved school climate. Hart (2011) found that schools involving student councils in behaviour and attendance policies recorded reduced exclusions and improved discipline, while O'Gorman (2004) reported that self-governance structures in German schools strengthened compliance through shared responsibility. Nonetheless, centralized education systems, such as in France, often limit student autonomy, resulting in tokenistic participation with weaker disciplinary outcomes.

In the United States, empirical studies further confirm that councils engaged in formulating rules such as dress codes, attendance policies, and grievance procedures contribute to reduced disciplinary referrals and improved school climate (Truss, 2006; Watson & Neilsen, 2012). However, these studies also highlight that the effectiveness of participatory rule-making is strongly dependent on institutional willingness to share decision-making authority. In schools where student roles are advisory rather than influential, the impact on discipline is significantly reduced.

Evidence from Africa and Emerging Contexts

African studies present a more contextually complex picture. In South Africa, research on Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) shows that when students participate meaningfully in rule formulation, such as behaviour codes and facility use policies, schools experience reductions in bullying, vandalism, and classroom disruptions (Magadla, 2010; Moyo et al., 2014). However, these positive outcomes are often constrained by teacher resistance, limited training, and weak enforcement of student input.

Comparable findings emerge from Ghana and Nigeria, where student councils involved in developing attendance, hygiene, and behavioural rules contribute to improved discipline and reduced truancy (Hawkes, 2011; Okeke & Okeke, 2016). Nevertheless, the effectiveness of such participation remains inconsistent due to inadequate authority, insufficient training, and weak institutional frameworks.

In East Africa, studies from Tanzania and Uganda similarly indicate that student involvement in rule formulation enhances perceptions of fairness and reduces disciplinary incidents, particularly where councils are allowed to influence attendance and classroom behaviour policies (Mkulu & Pastory, 2021; Ndagire, 2012). However, limited autonomy and resource constraints frequently undermine sustained impact.

Kenyan Context and Research Gap

In Kenya, available evidence suggests that student councils' participation in rule-making is associated with improved discipline and reduced unrest (Ochieng et al., 2017; Odindo & Yambo, 2015; Simatwa, 2012). However, most schools still operate under highly centralized and teacher-dominated decision-making structures, limiting meaningful student engagement. In Migori County specifically, studies and reports indicate that exclusion of student voices in rule formulation contributes to dissatisfaction and unrest, particularly regarding uniform policies, academic demands, and disciplinary procedures (Rakiro, 2022; MOEST, 2022).

Despite these observations, existing Kenyan studies are largely descriptive and lack robust empirical evidence quantifying the relationship between student councils' involvement in rule formulation and actual discipline outcomes. There is also limited exploration of how institutional factors such as administrative support, leadership style, and student training influence this relationship.

Synthesis and Conceptual Gap

Overall, the literature consistently suggests that student councils' involvement in formulating school rules enhances discipline by promoting fairness, ownership, and legitimacy of school regulations. However, the strength of this relationship varies significantly across contexts, depending on the extent of student autonomy, institutional support, and clarity of roles. While developed countries demonstrate more structured and effective participation models, many African contexts—including Kenya—face challenges related to tokenism, weak implementation, and resource constraints.

In Migori County, where student unrest remains prevalent despite the existence of student councils, there is a clear need for empirical investigation into whether participatory rule formulation by student councils has a measurable influence on student discipline. This study therefore addresses a critical gap by providing context-specific quantitative evidence on the relationship between student councils' involvement in rule-making and discipline in secondary schools.

Influence of Students' Councils' Involvement in Communication Channels on Discipline in Secondary Schools

Effective communication channels within schools, such as student assemblies (barazas), suggestion boxes, grievance committees, and representation in Board of Management (BOM) forums, play a critical role in linking students with school administration. When effectively utilized by student councils, these channels enhance transparency, build trust, and provide structured avenues for addressing grievances, thereby reducing misunderstandings that often escalate into indiscipline. This perspective is grounded in **Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999)**, which emphasizes that meaningful participation in institutional

communication strengthens students' emotional investment in school life, ultimately promoting responsible behaviour and discipline.

In Migori County, persistent student unrest, including protests linked to unresolved grievances such as bullying, poor academic feedback, and perceived administrative insensitivity, highlights weaknesses in school communication systems (MOEST, 2022; National Newspaper, 2024). These challenges suggest that ineffective or inaccessible communication channels may contribute to escalation of conflict and indiscipline, making the role of student councils in facilitating communication particularly important.

Global Evidence on Communication Channels and Discipline

International literature consistently demonstrates that student council involvement in communication processes improves school discipline by enhancing trust, responsiveness, and inclusion. In European contexts, particularly Nordic countries, studies show that structured dialogue platforms such as student forums and suggestion systems significantly reduce conflicts, improve student-administration relationships, and lower disciplinary referrals (Bergmark & Kostenius, 2018; Van der Smissen, 2017). These outcomes are attributed to continuous feedback loops that allow student concerns to be addressed before escalating into disruptive behaviour. However, where student participation is symbolic or poorly supported, communication breakdowns persist, leading to continued unrest.

Similar findings are reported in the United Kingdom, Germany, and France, where student councils involved in structured communication systems contribute to improved school climate and reduced exclusions (Hart, 2011; Bäckman & Trafford, 2007). Nevertheless, differences in education governance influence effectiveness: decentralized systems tend to support stronger student voice, while centralized systems often limit genuine participation, resulting in tokenistic communication structures with limited impact on discipline.

In the United States, empirical studies further confirm that student councils managing communication channels, such as suggestion boxes, assemblies, and grievance committees, contribute to reduced suspensions, improved trust, and better school climate (Truss, 2006; Watson & Neilsen, 2012). However, the effectiveness of these systems depends heavily on institutional responsiveness. Where feedback is ignored or poorly acted upon, communication channels lose legitimacy and fail to influence behaviour meaningfully.

Evidence from Africa and Developing Contexts

African studies present a more nuanced picture, showing that communication channels are effective only when supported by institutional responsiveness and student empowerment. In South Africa, Representative Councils of Learners (RCLs) that facilitate dialogue forums and suggestion systems have been shown to improve trust, reduce bullying, and enhance discipline (Phaswana, 2013; Moyo et al., 2014). However, their effectiveness is often constrained by teacher dominance and limited authority to act on student feedback.

In West Africa, studies from Ghana and Nigeria similarly show that structured communication channels improve student satisfaction and reduce disciplinary incidents by providing platforms for expressing concerns (Hawkes, 2011; Okeke & Okeke, 2016). However, inconsistent implementation, lack of formal structures, and weak feedback mechanisms limit sustained impact.

East African evidence from Tanzania and Uganda reinforces these findings, indicating that schools with active student communication systems experience fewer strikes, improved discipline, and better school climate (Mkulu & Pastory, 2021; Nakijoba, 2019). However, these systems are often undermined by inadequate resources, weak administrative support, and limited student authority to influence decisions.

Kenyan Context and Research Gap

In Kenya, existing studies suggest that communication breakdown between students and school administration contributes significantly to indiscipline and unrest (Kindiki, 2009; Ochieng et al., 2017). Where student councils are involved in communication processes, such as barazas or suggestion systems, improved discipline and trust are reported (Ndung'u & Kwasira, 2015). However, many schools continue to rely on top-down communication structures, limiting the effectiveness of student voice in governance.

In Migori County specifically, reports indicate that inadequate communication channels between students, administrators, and BOM structures contribute to unresolved grievances and recurrent unrest (Rakiro, 2022; MOEST, 2022). Despite this, student councils are often excluded from formal communication processes, weakening their ability to mediate conflict and address student concerns.

A major gap in Kenyan literature is the *lack of empirical studies quantifying the relationship between student councils' involvement in communication channels and student discipline outcomes***,** particularly in high-unrest counties such as Migori. Additionally, limited research examines how factors such as administrative responsiveness, communication structure, and student leadership capacity influence the effectiveness of these channels.

Synthesis and Conceptual Gap

Overall, the literature indicates that effective communication channels mediated by student councils play a significant role in improving discipline by enhancing trust, transparency, and early conflict resolution. However, their effectiveness is highly dependent on institutional responsiveness, clarity of roles, and the degree of genuine student participation.

While developed countries demonstrate more structured and responsive communication systems that consistently support discipline, many African contexts, including Kenya, struggle with weak implementation, limited student authority, and inadequate feedback mechanisms. In Migori County, where student unrest remains frequent, there is a clear need to empirically examine whether student councils' involvement in communication channels significantly influences discipline outcomes.

This study therefore addresses a critical gap by providing *context-specific quantitative evidence on the relationship between student councils' participation in communication channels and student discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.*

Influence of Involvement of Student Councils in Decision Making on Discipline in Secondary Schools

Student councils' involvement in decision-making processes, such as determining school routines (class and break schedules), overseeing canteen operations (menu planning and meal distribution), and organizing remedial academic support, plays a critical role in promoting discipline in schools. Such participation fosters ownership, accountability, and a sense of belonging among students, thereby reducing tendencies toward indiscipline. This perspective is grounded in Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999), which argues that meaningful engagement in institutional processes enhances students' emotional, cognitive, and behavioral investment in school life, ultimately improving discipline and school cohesion.

In Migori County, Kenya, where the Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2022) reported significant unrest across secondary schools and continued student protests over issues such as meal quality and restrictive school schedules (National Newspaper, 2024), limited student participation in decision-making remains a persistent concern. These challenges suggest that exclusion of student voices in school governance may contribute to dissatisfaction and unrest, underscoring the importance of inclusive decision-making structures.

Global Evidence on Student Council Decision-Making and Discipline

International literature consistently demonstrates that involving student councils in decision-making improves discipline by enhancing legitimacy and acceptance of school policies. However, the effectiveness of such involvement varies depending on the level of autonomy granted, training provided, and institutional support.

In Europe, particularly in Nordic countries, student participation in decision-making is strongly embedded within democratic school governance systems. Studies in Sweden, Germany, and the Netherlands show that when student councils participate in decisions regarding timetables, discipline codes, and canteen services, schools record notable reductions in misconduct and absenteeism. For example, participatory scheduling and meal planning have been associated with reductions in truancy and disciplinary incidents, largely because students

perceive decisions as fair and inclusive. Nevertheless, evidence also indicates that tokenistic participation, where students are included symbolically without real influence, undermines these gains and leads to disengagement.

Similar findings are reported in the United Kingdom, where research shows that councils involved in policy-related decision-making experience lower exclusion rates and improved school climate. The Ladder of Participation framework further suggests that higher levels of student agency in decision-making correlate with stronger discipline outcomes. However, teacher resistance and inconsistent implementation remain barriers to effective student participation across many European contexts.

In the United States, empirical studies reinforce the importance of structured student involvement in decision-making. Schools that allow student councils to participate in planning schedules, extracurricular programs, and behavioral policies report lower rates of disciplinary referrals and improved school climate. Evidence further shows that student participation enhances peer accountability and reduces absenteeism. However, research also highlights disparities in implementation, particularly in under-resourced schools where councils often lack meaningful authority or training.

In South America, particularly Brazil, Argentina, and Chile, decision-making participation by student councils has been linked to improved compliance and reduced school conflict. Reforms emphasizing democratic school governance show that when students contribute to decisions affecting daily school life, discipline improves due to increased trust in institutional authority. However, inequalities in access to training and participation opportunities limit consistent outcomes across rural and urban schools.

In Australia, student representative councils involved in decision-making processes such as event planning and school policy development have been associated with improved student behavior and reduced disciplinary issues. Nonetheless, studies highlight that teacher dominance in decision-making structures often limits the effectiveness of student participation.

Evidence from Africa

Across Africa, similar patterns emerge, though with more pronounced challenges related to resource constraints and limited institutional support. In South Africa, the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) system demonstrates that when students participate in decisions regarding school routines and facilities, discipline improves significantly. Studies show reductions in vandalism, bullying, and classroom disruptions where student input is meaningfully integrated into school governance. However, effectiveness is often constrained by limited authority and adult dominance in decision-making processes.

In West Africa, studies from Ghana and Nigeria indicate that student involvement in decisions such as school scheduling, dormitory management, and welfare planning improves discipline and reduces complaints. However, inconsistent training and weak implementation structures often limit sustained impact. Similar findings are reported in East African countries including Tanzania and Uganda, where schools that allow student participation in scheduling and welfare decisions report improved discipline, while those that restrict participation experience higher levels of unrest and student dissatisfaction.

In Kenya, research shows that student councils often operate at a symbolic level with limited decision-making authority. Studies indicate that where councils are allowed to participate meaningfully in decisions such as meal planning, discipline policies, and school routines, schools experience reduced truancy, fewer conflicts, and improved student cooperation. However, in many schools, administrative resistance and lack of clear policy frameworks limit effective participation. In Migori County specifically, restricted student involvement in decision-making has been associated with recurrent unrest, suggesting a gap between policy intent and implementation.

Synthesis and Research Gap

Overall, global evidence consistently supports the view that student council involvement in decision-making enhances discipline by promoting fairness, ownership, and institutional trust. However, the literature also reveals

persistent challenges, including tokenism, inadequate training, limited authority, and administrative resistance, which weaken the effectiveness of student participation, particularly in developing contexts.

In Migori County, despite recurrent student unrest, there is limited empirical evidence quantifying the extent to which student council involvement in decision-making influences discipline outcomes. Most available studies are descriptive and fail to establish statistical relationships between decision-making participation and student behavior. This creates a significant contextual and methodological gap, justifying the need for the present study to examine the influence of student councils' involvement in decision-making on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodology that was employed in the study. It presents the research design, area of the study, target population, sampling strategies and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures, validity and reliability of the instruments, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations. Collectively, these components provide a systematic framework through which the study on the influence of student councils' involvement in school management and student discipline in secondary schools in Migori County was conducted.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design alongside a correlational research design. The descriptive survey design was appropriate for collecting data from a large population in order to describe existing conditions, attitudes, and practices regarding student council involvement in school management. It enabled the researcher to summarize and interpret findings as they existed without manipulating any variables, thereby providing an accurate reflection of the prevailing situation in secondary schools. In addition, the correlational research design was used to examine the relationships between variables, specifically the extent of student council involvement (independent variable) and student discipline (dependent variable). This design facilitated the determination of the strength and direction of associations between variables using statistical techniques without experimental control. Consequently, hypotheses were tested using correlation coefficients, regression analysis, and significance levels (p-values).

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Migori County, Kenya, which comprises eight sub-counties, namely Awendo, Kuria East, Kuria West, Nyatike, Rongo, Suna East, Suna West, and Uriri. The county has a diverse range of schools, including boys' and girls' schools, mixed institutions, as well as both day and boarding schools. Migori County was selected for the study due to reported cases of student unrest despite the existence of structured student councils in schools. The study therefore sought to examine whether the involvement of student councils in school management has an influence on student discipline in secondary schools within the county.

Participants and Target Population

The target population comprised key stakeholders directly involved in school administration and student leadership, thereby providing a comprehensive perspective on the study variables. Specifically, the study targeted 283 principals, 283 deputy principals (administration), 283 heads of guidance and counseling, 283 student council presidents, and 8 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQAOs). These participants were selected due to their critical roles in school governance, discipline management, and student representation. In particular, principals and deputy principals provided administrative and policy-level perspectives, while guidance and counseling teachers contributed insights into student behavior and discipline interventions. Student council presidents represented the student body and offered firsthand experiences of participation in school governance, whereas SCQAOs provided oversight and policy implementation perspectives at the sub-county level.

Sampling Strategies and Sample Size

Sampling Strategies

The study employed a combination of stratified random sampling and purposive sampling to ensure both representativeness and the inclusion of key informants. Under stratified random sampling, the population was divided into homogeneous strata based on respondent categories, namely principals, deputy principals, guidance and counseling teachers, and student council presidents. From each stratum, a proportionate sample was selected randomly, ensuring that all subgroups were adequately represented while minimizing sampling bias. In addition, purposive sampling was used to include all eight Sub-County Quality Assurance Officers (SCQAOs) due to their specialized knowledge and relatively small population size. Their inclusion enabled the study to capture critical policy-level insights relevant to the research objectives.

Sample Size Determination

A sampling fraction of 30% was applied to each stratum, a proportion considered adequate for descriptive and correlational studies as it ensures representativeness while remaining practical. Accordingly, the sample size was therefore as follows:

Respondent Category	Population	Sample Size
Principals	283	85
Deputy Principals	283	85
Guidance & Counseling Teachers	283	85
Student Council Presidents	283	85
SCQAOs	8	8

This yielded a total sample size of 348 respondents.

The selection of the 30% sampling fraction was guided by methodological recommendations that emphasize sufficient representation across subgroups in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the study findings.

Data Collection Instruments

The study utilized structured questionnaires and interview schedules as the main data collection instruments. Questionnaires were administered to principals, deputy principals, guidance and counseling teachers, and student council presidents, and comprised both closed-ended items for quantitative analysis and a few open-ended items to capture additional insights. Interview schedules were used with Sub-County Quality Assurance Officers (SCQAOs) to obtain in-depth qualitative data. The use of multiple instruments facilitated methodological triangulation, thereby enhancing the credibility and validity of the study findings

Validity of Research Instruments

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure. To ensure both content and construct validity, the instruments were reviewed by experts in Educational Management at Maseno University. Their feedback was used to refine the items for clarity, relevance, and alignment with the study objectives. Additionally, ambiguous and leading questions were revised or eliminated to improve the overall quality and accuracy of the instruments.

Reliability of Instruments

Reliability refers to the consistency of a research instrument in measuring variables. To establish reliability, a pilot study was conducted involving 12 respondents drawn from three schools that were not included in the main study. A test–retest method was employed over a two-week interval, and the results were analyzed using

Pearson's correlation coefficient. The average reliability coefficient obtained was 0.74, which was considered acceptable, indicating that the instruments were sufficiently reliable for the study.

Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained all necessary approvals from relevant authorities, including Maseno University, the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI), and the County education authorities, prior to the commencement of data collection. Participants were duly informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained before their involvement. Data were collected through the physical administration of questionnaires, while interviews were conducted with Sub-County Quality Assurance Officers (SCQAOs). Throughout the study, confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and participation was entirely voluntary

Data Analysis Procedures

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis procedures**,** conducted concurrently but analyzed separately for triangulation.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were coded and analyzed using statistical software such as SPSS. The analysis involved both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data and describe emerging trends. Inferential statistical techniques were also applied to test relationships and differences among variables. Specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between student council involvement and student discipline, while regression analysis was employed to assess the predictive influence of the independent variables on discipline. In addition, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to examine differences across groups where applicable. All hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05, and the findings were presented using tables and charts for clarity.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis. The process began with the transcription of responses, after which the researcher familiarized themselves with the data through repeated reading. Key ideas were then identified and coded systematically, leading to the development of themes and sub-themes. These themes were subsequently interpreted in relation to the study's research objectives. This analytical approach enabled the identification of recurring patterns and provided deeper insights into stakeholders' perspectives.

Integration of Data (Triangulation)

Findings from quantitative and qualitative data were compared and integrated to enhance validity. Converging results strengthened conclusions, while discrepancies were further analyzed and explained.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to established ethical principles throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. Measures were taken to ensure confidentiality and anonymity, with respondents' identities protected at all stages of data handling and reporting. Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without any negative consequences. The researcher also ensured that no physical, psychological, or social harm was caused to participants. In addition, all necessary approvals were obtained from relevant authorities before data collection commenced. Overall, the study complied fully with the accepted ethical standards for educational research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Influence of Involvement of Students' Councils in the Supervision of Their Welfare on Discipline in Secondary Schools in Migori County

The first objective of this study was to establish the influence of student councils' involvement in supervising student welfare on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County. Guided by Astin's Theory of Student Involvement (1984; 1999), the study conceptualized welfare supervision as a form of *institutional engagement* through which students develop ownership, responsibility, and emotional attachment to school systems. The theory predicts that when students are meaningfully involved in shaping welfare structures, such as food provision, health access, co-curricular life, and disciplinary processes, they are more likely to internalize school norms, thereby reducing indiscipline.

In the context of Migori County, where recurrent unrest has been partly attributed to welfare dissatisfaction and perceived exclusion from decision-making structures (MOEST, 2022; National Newspaper, 2024), student councils are hypothesized to function as *mediating institutions* that translate student grievances into administrative action, thereby reducing conflict escalation.

Principals' Perspectives on Welfare Supervision and Discipline

Table 4.5: Principals response on Students' councils in the supervision of their welfare on discipline

Responses	VL	L	M	H	VH		
Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students are provided with well balance diet meals	5(7.9%)	6(9.5%)	11(17.5%)	21(33.3%)	20(31.7%)	3.71	1.237
Students participate in all the disciplinary cases	8(12.7%)	4(6.3%)	20(31.7%)	20(31.7%)	11(17.5%)	3.35	1.22
Students get prompt medical attention	10(15.9%)	15(23.8%)	16(25.4%)	12(19%)	10(15.9%)	2.95	1.313
There is conducive learning environment in the school	4(6.3%)	2(3.2%)	6(9.5%)	25(39.7%)	26(41.3%)	4.06	1.105
Clubs and societies are very active in the school	5(7.9%)	12(19%)	14(22.2%)	16(25.4%)	16(25.4%)	3.41	1.278
student councils are allowed to monitor preps	20(31.7%)	20(31.7%)	4(6.3%)	5(7.9%)	14(22.2%)	2.57	1.552
Student councils are to approve the quality and quantity of food for the students	10(15.9%)	6(9.5%)	9(14.3%)	21(33.3%)	17(27%)	3.46	1.401
Overall mean						3.3605	
n = 63							

Findings from principals (Table 4.5) show a moderate-to-high positive perception (overall mean = 3.36) of student council involvement in welfare supervision, though with notable variability across domains. The highest-rated indicator was the existence of a conducive learning environment (M = 4.06)**,** suggesting that principals associate welfare structures with improved school climate and order.

From a theoretical standpoint, this aligns with Astin's (1984) assertion that involvement enhances both *behavioral engagement* (rule adherence) and *psychological investment* (sense of belonging). A conducive environment reflects not only administrative control but also *student co-ownership of school order systems*, which reduces the need for coercive discipline.

However, weaker ratings on student participation in disciplinary cases (M = 3.35) **and** monitoring of prep time (M = 2.57) reveal an important contradiction: while welfare participation is acknowledged, decision authority remains limited. This suggests a *tokenistic model of involvement*, where councils are visible but not fully empowered. This finding is critical because Astin's theory emphasizes that intensity of involvement, not mere presence, determines developmental outcomes**.**

Thus, principals appear to support welfare participation in principle but maintain control over core disciplinary governance, limiting the transformative potential of student councils.

Deputy Principals' Perspectives: Institutional Recognition and Functional Inclusion

Deputy Principals response on Students' councils in the supervision of their welfare

The Deputy Principals who participated on the establishment of the influence of students' council in the supervision of their welfare on discipline in secondary responded as shown in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Deputy Principal response on Students' Councils in the supervision of their welfare

REPONSES	VL	L	M	H	VH		
Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Students are given time to meet and discuss freely	4(5.2%)	5(6.5%)	13(16.9%)	25(32.5%)	30(39%)	3.94	1.139
Students' welfare is fully taken care of in school	7(9.1%)	6(7.8%)	15(19.5%)	23(29.9%)	26(33.8%)	3.71	1.266
Most teachers are collaborative	1(1.3%)	1(1.3%)	12(15.6%)	30(39%)	33(42.9%)	4.21	0.848
The BOM recognizes the student council	3(3.9%)	4(5.2%)	16(20.8%)	26(33.8%)	28(36.4%)	3.94	1.068
Most of students' recommendations are accepted	20(2.6%)	19(24.7%)	15(19.5%)	12(15.6%)	11(14.3%)	2.68	1.39
Student leaders are respected by peers	3(3.9%)	3(3.9%)	20(26%)	24(31.2%)	27(35.1%)	3.9	1.059
Involving students has improved discipline	1(1.3%)	1(1.3%)	12(15.6%)	30(39%)	33(42.9%)	4.21	0.848
Students' welfare has improved	1(1.3%)	1(1.3%)	12(15.6%)	30(39%)	33(42.9%)	4.21	0.848
Overall mean						3.8474	
n = 77							

Deputy principals reported a stronger endorsement of student councils (overall mean = 3.85), particularly on teacher collaboration (M = 4.21) and improvement in discipline (M = 4.21). These findings suggest that where staff collaboration is high, welfare supervision structures are more effective.

This supports Astin's model by demonstrating that involvement operates within an ecological system, student engagement alone is insufficient unless supported by institutional actors (teachers and BOM).

A key analytical insight emerges from the finding that students are not fully integrated into decision-making over recommendations (M = 2.68)**.** This represents a structural bottleneck: councils may participate in welfare discussions, but their inputs are not consistently translated into decisions.

This partial inclusion produces what can be conceptualized as an "engagement–implementation gap"**,** where participation does not automatically lead to influence. This gap helps explain why discipline improvements, although present, remain uneven across schools.

Importantly, deputy principals' high rating of BOM recognition (M = 3.94) suggests formal institutional acceptance, but not necessarily *operational empowerment*. Recognition without authority risks symbolic participation, which Astin's theory would classify as low-impact involvement.

Student Presidents' Perspectives: Lived Experience of Partial Empowerment

Table 4.7 Student Presidents response on their councils in the supervision of their welfare

S/N	Statements	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students are given time to meet and discuss freely	8 (9.8%)	18 (22.0%)	17 (20.7%)	19 (23.2%)	20 (24.4%)	3.30	1.321
2	Students' welfare is taken care of in school	6 (7.3%)	16 (19.5%)	12 (14.6%)	15 (18.3%)	33 (40.2%)	3.65	1.373
3	Most teachers are collaborative	3 (3.7%)	10 (12.2%)	10 (12.2%)	29 (35.4%)	30 (36.6%)	3.89	1.144
4	The BOM recognizes the student council	4 (4.9%)	6 (7.3%)	15 (18.3%)	29 (35.4%)	28 (34.1%)	3.87	1.120
5	Most students' recommendations are accepted	4 (4.9%)	6 (7.3%)	16 (19.5%)	27 (32.9%)	29 (35.4%)	3.87	1.131
6	Student leaders are respected by peers	10 (12.2%)	19 (23.2%)	14 (17.1%)	19 (23.2%)	20 (24.4%)	3.24	1.375
7	Involving students has improved discipline	8 (9.8%)	15 (18.3%)	14 (17.1%)	20 (24.4%)	25 (30.5%)	3.48	1.354
8	Students' welfare has improved well-being of students	16 (19.5%)	17 (20.7%)	18 (22.0%)	19 (23.2%)	12 (14.6%)	2.93	1.350

Student presidents reported the lowest overall perception (mean = 3.53), indicating a more critical lived experience of welfare supervision structures.

Although students acknowledge collaboration from teachers (M = 3.89) and BOM recognition (M = 3.87), they express lower confidence in actual welfare outcomes (M = 2.93) and limited influence on discipline systems (M = 3.48)**.**

This divergence between administrative optimism and student experience is analytically important. It suggests that discipline improvement is perceived more strongly by adults than by students themselves**,** raising questions about whose definition of "discipline improvement" is being measured.

From Astin's perspective, this reflects low-quality involvement**,** where students are physically included in structures but not emotionally or cognitively integrated into decision-making. Such partial involvement may generate compliance but not commitment, which is consistent with ongoing unrest patterns in Migori County.

Guidance and Counselling Teachers' Perspectives: Structural Limitations in Welfare Supervision

Table 4.8 G/C Teachers' responses on Students councils in the supervision of their welfare

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students are provided with well-balanced diet meals	5 (7.9%)	6 (9.5%)	11 (17.5%)	21 (33.3%)	20 (31.7%)	3.73	1.268
2	Students participate in all the discipline cases	8 (12.7%)	4 (6.3%)	20 (31.7%)	20 (31.7%)	11 (17.5%)	2.14	1.034
3	Students get prompt medical attention	10 (15.9%)	15 (23.8%)	16 (25.4%)	12 (19.0%)	10 (15.9%)	3.73	1.258

4	There is a conducive learning environment in the school	4 (6.3%)	2 (3.2%)	6 (9.5%)	25 (39.7%)	26 (41.3%)	3.66	1.197
5	Clubs and societies are very active in the school	5 (7.9%)	12 (19.0%)	14 (22.2%)	16 (25.4%)	16 (25.4%)	3.47	1.338
6	Student councils are allowed to monitor preps	20 (31.7%)	20 (31.7%)	4 (6.3%)	5 (7.9%)	14 (22.2%)	2.86	1.525
7	Student councils approve the quality and quantity of food	10 (15.9%)	6 (9.5%)	9 (14.3%)	21 (33.3%)	17 (27.0%)	3.91	1.168

Guidance and counselling teachers provide a more critical institutional lens (overall mean = 3.36), highlighting structural constraints in student participation.

Notably, student participation in disciplinary cases was rated very low (M = 2.14), and monitoring of prep time also remained weak (M = 2.86). These findings indicate that core disciplinary governance remains adult-dominated**,** with student councils largely excluded from sensitive disciplinary processes.

This is theoretically significant. Astin's model emphasizes that development occurs when students are involved in high-stakes, meaningful responsibilities**,** not peripheral welfare tasks. Therefore, limiting student councils to non-critical welfare areas (food quality, clubs) reduces their transformative potential.

However, positive ratings on food quality oversight (M = 3.91) show that councils are more accepted in service-related governance areas**,** suggesting a controlled form of participation designed to avoid conflict.

This reveals an institutional pattern of selective empowerment**,** where students are allowed input in welfare logistics but excluded from disciplinary authority, potentially weakening legitimacy of school discipline systems.

Integrated Interpretation and Theoretical Synthesis

Across all respondent categories, three key analytical patterns emerge:

(1) Welfare involvement is present but unevenly empowered

Student councils participate in welfare supervision, but their influence decreases as decisions become more sensitive (discipline cases, academic control, prep monitoring).

(2) Perception gaps exist between stakeholders

Principals and deputies report stronger positive effects than students and counsellors, suggesting institutional bias in evaluating discipline improvement**.**

(3) Involvement is largely symbolic in high-impact domains

Where councils are most needed (disciplinary decision-making and routine regulation), their participation is weakest.

Influence of involvement of students' councils in the formulation of rules and regulations on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County

This section examined how student councils' participation in formulating school rules and regulations shapes discipline outcomes in secondary schools in Migori County. The analysis is anchored on participatory governance theory and Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, which posits that the educational and behavioural

outcomes of students are a function not simply of their presence in institutional processes, but of the intensity and meaningfulness of their engagement. In this regard, rule-making is conceptualized as a high-level form of participation because it determines behavioural expectations, sanctions, and school culture.

Principals' perspective on rule formulation and discipline

Table 4.12 Principals' response on involvement of students' councils in rules and regulations

Statements	1	2	2	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
Contribution of the student representative in the board helps in the formulation of rules and regulation which are suitable to the students' body	4(6.3%)	8(12.7%)	10(15.9%)	22(34.9%)	19(30.2%)	3.7	1.213
There has not been unrest in your school since	4(6.3%)	4(6.3%)	15(23.8%)	24(38.1%)	16(25.4%)	3.7	1.116
Students are happy with the representation of one of their own	2(3.2%)	2(3.2%)	3(4.8%)	30(47.6%)	26(41.3%)	4.21	0.919
Students do not reject rules and regulation since they own them	22(34.9%)	14(22.2%)	9(14.3%)	8(12.7%)	10(15.9%)	2.52	1.48
Students' council members enjoy privileges which are not enjoyed by the rest of the student body	13(20.6%)	16(25.4%)	11(17.5%)	14(22.2%)	9(14.3%)	2.84	1.37
Student councils are allowed to change some of the already constituted rules and regulations	5(7.9%)	14(22.2%)	10(15.9%)	21(33.3%)	13(20.6%)	3.37	1.261
Student council representative attend all the BOM meetings	22(34.9%)	10(15.9%)	13(20.6%)	8(12.7%)	10(15.9%)	2.59	1.477
The council representative attending BOM meetings are given allowance	13(20.6%)	11(17.5%)	16(25.4%)	14(22.2%)	9(14.3%)	2.92	1.348
Overall mean						3.2302	
n = 63							

Findings from principals (Table 4.12) indicate a moderately positive perception of student council involvement in rule formulation, with an overall mean of 3.23. Principals largely agreed that student representatives contribute to the development of rules that are more aligned with student needs (M = 3.70), suggesting that councils function as a mediating structure between administration and learners. This reflects an emerging form of participatory governance where legitimacy of rules is enhanced through representation.

However, the results simultaneously reveal a structural limitation in decision authority. For instance, student council attendance in Board of Management (BOM) meetings was rated low (M = 2.59), indicating restricted institutional access to the highest decision-making forum. Similarly, the notion that students "own" rules and therefore do not reject them recorded a low mean (M = 2.52), suggesting that ownership is perceived rather than fully institutionalized.

From a theoretical perspective, this pattern reflects a partial application of Astin's involvement principle. While students are included in consultative spaces, their engagement remains largely advisory rather than decisional. Consequently, discipline improvement is explained not by participation alone, but by the degree of authentic influence granted to students in shaping rules that govern them. This supports participatory governance theory, which distinguishes between consultation and shared authority.

Deputy Principals' perspective: institutional acceptance and behavioural compliance

Table 4.13 Deputy principal response on involvement of students' councils on rules

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council are actively involved in the formulation of rules and regulations	3 (3.9%)	4 (5.2%)	16 (20.8%)	24 (31.2%)	30 (39.0%)	3.96	1.081
2	Students' council propose ideas for amending rules and regulations	5 (6.5%)	8 (10.4%)	15 (19.5%)	24 (31.2%)	25 (32.5%)	3.73	1.210
3	Students' council are actively involved in implementation of rules and regulations	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.6%)	16 (20.8%)	28 (36.4%)	30 (39.0%)	4.09	0.906
4	Students' council do not object to rules because they own them	2 (2.6%)	1 (1.3%)	16 (20.8%)	28 (36.4%)	30 (39.0%)	4.08	0.943
5	Students' council participate in barazas discussing rules affecting students' interests	9 (11.7%)	9 (11.7%)	15 (19.5%)	18 (23.4%)	26 (33.8%)	3.56	1.372
6	School has not experienced unrest due to student council involvement	3 (3.9%)	8 (10.4%)	17 (22.1%)	19 (24.7%)	30 (39.0%)	3.84	1.171
7	Students' council enjoys the privilege of involvement in rule formulation	11 (14.3%)	12 (15.6%)	13 (16.9%)	20 (26.0%)	21 (27.3%)	3.36	1.404

Deputy principals (Table 4.13) reported stronger levels of student council engagement, with an overall mean of 3.80, indicating a more favourable institutional view of participatory rule-making. Notably, high ratings were recorded for active involvement in rule formulation (M = 3.96) and implementation (M = 4.09), suggesting that councils are not only consulted but also function as compliance agents in enforcing rules.

A key analytical insight emerges from the strong agreement that students do not object to rules because they "own" them (M = 4.08). This finding is critical as it suggests that perceived ownership enhances behavioural compliance, thereby reducing resistance to authority. In Astin's terms, this reflects a shift from passive exposure to active psychological investment, which is central to behavioural transformation.

However, participation in broader deliberative platforms such as barazas was comparatively moderate (M = 3.56), indicating uneven inclusion across governance spaces. This unevenness reinforces the idea of selective participation**,** where students are engaged in operational governance but less consistently involved in strategic decision-making forums.

The implication is that discipline improvement is most strongly associated with institutionalized participation structures**,** particularly where student councils are embedded in both formulation and enforcement processes. This supports Astin's assertion that behavioural outcomes are strongest when involvement is continuous, meaningful, and socially reinforced.

Students' Presidents response on their involvement of their councils on rules and regulations

The Students' Presidents who participated on the establishment of the influence of their council in the supervision of their welfare on discipline in secondary responded as shown in table 4.14.

Students' perspectives: perceived agency and behavioural outcomes

Table 4.14 Students Presidents involvement of their councils on rules and regulations

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students are more disciplined as they are involved in formulation of rules and regulations	5 (6.1%)	6 (7.3%)	10 (12.2%)	26 (31.7%)	35 (42.7%)	3.98	1.186
2	Students' council are actively involved in formulation of rules and regulations	10 (12.2%)	9 (11.0%)	12 (14.6%)	18 (22.0%)	33 (40.2%)	3.67	1.415
3	Students' council propose ideas for amending rules and regulations	10 (12.2%)	8 (9.8%)	10 (12.2%)	29 (35.4%)	25 (30.5%)	3.62	1.339
4	Students enjoy a sense of freedom due to involvement in rule formulation	9 (11.0%)	7 (8.5%)	19 (23.2%)	25 (30.5%)	22 (26.8%)	3.54	1.278
5	Students are given time to deliberate on rules before council discussions	10 (12.2%)	12 (14.6%)	13 (15.9%)	15 (18.3%)	32 (39.0%)	3.57	1.440

Student presidents (Table 4.14) reported a generally positive relationship between rule formulation involvement and discipline (overall mean = 3.68). A majority (M = 3.98) agreed that participation in rule-making enhances discipline, suggesting that involvement increases rule legitimacy from the learner perspective.

Importantly, students also associated participation with increased freedom (M = 3.54) and reflection time on rules (M = 3.57), indicating that involvement is experienced as both cognitive and procedural engagement. This aligns directly with Astin's framework, where increased engagement enhances internalization of institutional norms.

However, variability in responses suggests that the quality of participation is inconsistent across schools. Some students experience structured deliberation, while others report limited influence. This reinforces a key conceptual insight: participation does not automatically translate into empowerment unless it is accompanied by deliberative depth and institutional responsiveness**.**

Guidance and counselling teachers' perspective: behavioural regulation and conflict reduction

Table 4.15 G/C Teachers response on involvement of students' councils in rules and regulations

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council are actively involved in formulation of rules and regulations	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)	18 (22.8%)	24 (30.4%)	30 (38.0%)	3.95	1.049
2	Students' council propose ideas for amending rules and regulations	4 (5.1%)	4 (5.1%)	20 (25.3%)	22 (27.8%)	29 (36.7%)	3.86	1.129
3	Students' council are actively involved in implementation of rules and regulations	3 (3.8%)	6 (7.6%)	18 (22.8%)	24 (30.4%)	28 (35.4%)	3.86	1.106
4	Students' council do not object to rules because they own them	1 (1.3%)	4 (5.1%)	19 (24.1%)	26 (32.9%)	29 (36.7%)	3.99	0.967

5	Students' council participate in barazas on rules affecting students' interests	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)	16 (20.3%)	28 (35.4%)	28 (35.4%)	3.95	1.024
6	School does not experience unrest due to student council involvement	1 (1.3%)	8 (10.1%)	12 (15.2%)	26 (32.9%)	32 (40.5%)	4.01	1.044
7	Students' council enjoys the privilege of involvement in rule formulation	12 (15.2%)	14 (17.7%)	16 (20.3%)	15 (19.0%)	22 (27.8%)	3.27	1.430

Guidance and counselling teachers (Table 4.15) provided the most supportive assessment of student council involvement (overall mean = 3.84). They strongly associated council participation with reduced unrest (M = 4.01) and improved rule compliance (M = 3.99). This positions student councils as informal behavioural regulators within the school ecosystem.

The high agreement that councils are actively involved in both formulation and implementation of rules suggests that they serve a dual role: as contributors to policy development and as peer-enforcement mechanisms. This dual function is consistent with behavioural governance models, where peer-led regulation enhances compliance through social accountability rather than coercion.

From a theoretical standpoint, this reinforces Astin's proposition that involvement operates through behavioural reinforcement mechanisms. When students participate in creating rules, they are more likely to internalize them, reducing the need for external disciplinary enforcement.

Integrative interpretation: linking participation, authority, and discipline outcomes

Across all respondent groups, the findings consistently indicate that involving student councils in the formulation of school rules is generally associated with improved discipline. However, this relationship is not uniform and varies according to the extent of authority delegated to the councils in decision-making processes. Where student participation is mainly consultative, characterized by symbolic inclusion and limited influence, the impact on discipline is relatively weak. In contrast, where councils are granted meaningful decisional authority and are actively engaged in shared governance, including both the formulation and implementation of rules, improvements in discipline are more pronounced. Conversely, where participation is restricted to representation without substantive power, such as limited access to Board of Management meetings or minimal influence over rule modification, the effect on discipline remains limited or inconsistent.

Hypothesis testing and statistical interpretation

To examine whether student council involvement in the formulation of rules and regulations significantly influences discipline in secondary schools in Migori County, the study tested the null hypothesis (Ho_2) stating that there is no statistically significant influence of such involvement on student discipline.

Table 4.16 Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.965[a]	.930	.926	.19619
a. Predictors: (Constant), t_formulation of rules and regulations, s_formulation of rules and regulations, p_formulation of rules and regulations, dp_formulation of rules and regulations				

The Model Summary table reveals that the R value is .965, indicating a strong positive correlation between the independent variable's (involvement of students' councils in the formulation of rules and regulations on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County) and the dependent variable (student academic performance). The R Square value of .930 indicates that 93.0% of the variance in students' academic performance is explained by the model, suggesting that the predictors have substantial explanatory power, hence the null hypothesis was therefore rejected that involving. Students' councils in the formulation of rules and regulations on their discipline had a considerable influence. The Model Summary table reveals that the R value is .965, indicating a strong

positive correlation between the independent variable's (involvement of students' councils in the formulation of rules and regulations on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County) and the dependent variable (student academic performance). The R Square value of .930 indicates that 93.0% of the variance in students' academic performance is explained by the model, suggesting that the predictors have substantial explanatory power, hence the null hypothesis was therefore rejected that involving. Students' councils in the formulation of rules and regulations on their discipline had a considerable influence.

Table 4.17 Anova Analysis

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	29.878	4	7.470	194.072	.000b
Residual	2.232	58	0.038		
Total	32.111	62			

The ANOVA table tests provide a F-statistic of 194.072, with a p-value of .000, indicating that the model is statistically significant at .05 significance level. This means that the independent variables provide a significant amount of information for predicting student involvement. The regression sums of squares (29.878) compared to the residual sum of squares (2.232) shows that a large proportion of the total variance in academic performance is explained by the model.

Table 4.18: Analysis of Coefficients[a]

Model	Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.111	0.141	—	15.008	0.000
	dp_formulation of rules and regulations	0.137	0.214	0.205	0.641	0.524
	p_formulation of rules and regulations	0.529	0.113	0.890	4.683	0.000
	s_formulation of rules and regulations	-0.262	0.112	-0.450	-2.346	0.022
	t_formulation of rules and regulations	0.221	0.157	0.313	1.410	0.164

The regression results presented in Tables 4.16–4.18 demonstrate a very strong overall model fit. The model summary indicates a correlation coefficient (R = .965) and a coefficient of determination (R^2 = .930), implying that 93% of the variation in student discipline is jointly explained by the combined forms of student council involvement captured in the model. The adjusted R^2 (.926) confirms the stability of this explanatory power after accounting for the number of predictors. This level of explanatory strength indicates that governance structures involving student councils are not peripheral factors, but central determinants of discipline outcomes in the sampled schools.

The ANOVA results further confirm the statistical significance of the model ($F = 194.072$, $p < .001$), demonstrating that the relationship between student council involvement in rule formulation and discipline is not due to chance. In practical terms, this suggests that variations in how schools involve student councils meaningfully correspond with measurable differences in discipline levels.

However, the coefficient estimates provide a more differentiated and theoretically important insight. While principal (B = .529, $p < .001$) and deputy principal-related measures (B = .137, $p > .05$) show a generally positive association with discipline, teacher responses also indicate a positive but statistically weaker relationship (B = .221, $p > .05$). In contrast, student council involvement itself records a statistically significant negative coefficient (B = -.262, p = .022), suggesting that in some contexts, increased involvement as experienced or perceived by students does not automatically translate into improved discipline.

This divergence is analytically important because it reveals that not all forms of participation generate positive behavioural outcomes. The negative coefficient may reflect instances where student involvement is perceived as procedural rather than substantive, leading to expectations of influence that are not fully met. Such conditions can produce disengagement or perceptions of tokenism, which may weaken rather than strengthen rule compliance.

From a theoretical standpoint, these findings refine Astin's Theory of Student Involvement by demonstrating that involvement is not inherently beneficial in all forms. Rather, its effectiveness depends on the quality, authenticity, and institutional depth of participation. Where involvement is meaningful and decision-oriented, it strengthens discipline through internalisation of rules. However, where participation is symbolic or weakly institutionalised, it may fail to generate ownership and can even undermine compliance.

Consequently, the null hypothesis (Ho_2) is rejected. The evidence confirms that student council involvement in the formulation of rules and regulations has a statistically significant influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County. Nevertheless, the relationship is not linear or uniformly positive; it is contingent on the extent to which student participation is embedded in genuine decision-making structures rather than limited to consultative or symbolic roles.

Theoretical synthesis and conceptual contribution

The findings extend Astin's Theory of Student Involvement by showing that the effect of participation on student discipline is shaped not only by the act of involvement itself, but more critically by the depth of decision-making authority and the perceived legitimacy of institutional structures within which that participation occurs. In Migori County, student councils function within a hybrid governance arrangement in which participation is formally recognised but only partially empowered in practice. As a result, involvement does not consistently translate into influence over key disciplinary and governance decisions.

Three interrelated theoretical insights emerge from this pattern. First, the participation–authority nexus suggests that student discipline improves most effectively when participation is accompanied by genuine decision-making power, rather than being confined to consultative roles. Second, selective institutionalization is evident in the way schools formally integrate student councils into governance structures while simultaneously restricting their access to strategic decision-making arenas, such as Board of Management meetings, thereby limiting their overall influence. Third, the involvement paradox highlights that symbolic or superficial participation, where students are included without meaningful authority, may fail to enhance compliance and in some instances can weaken it by generating perceptions of tokenism and unmet expectations.

Influence of student council involvement in communication channels on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County

Principals' responses on student council involvement in communication channels and discipline

Table 4.19 Principals' response on involvement of students' councils in the communication channel on discipline

S/N	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	As a principal, you support frequent student council meetings	9 (14.3%)	14 (22.2%)	15 (23.8%)	22 (34.9%)	3 (4.8%)	2.94	1.162
2	Frequent student council meetings positively influence discipline	2 (3.2%)	5 (7.9%)	6 (9.5%)	20 (31.7%)	30 (47.6%)	4.13	1.085
3	Suggestion boxes help students express feelings freely	9 (14.3%)	5 (7.9%)	14 (22.2%)	24 (38.1%)	11 (17.5%)	3.37	1.274
4	Notice boards facilitate quick communication from administration to students	10 (15.9%)	8 (12.7%)	16 (25.4%)	15 (23.8%)	14 (22.2%)	3.24	1.364
5	Communication is conducted through English and Kiswahili	3 (4.8%)	5 (7.9%)	10 (15.9%)	20 (31.7%)	25 (39.7%)	3.94	1.148
6	The school has assembly days to address students on school operations	2 (3.2%)	6 (9.5%)	10 (15.9%)	21 (33.3%)	24 (38.1%)	3.94	1.105

7	The school has designated days for dormitory and class assemblies	4 (6.3%)	8 (12.7%)	12 (19.0%)	16 (25.4%)	23 (36.5%)	3.73	1.260

Table 4.19 presents principals' perceptions of how student councils contribute to communication processes and how these processes relate to discipline in secondary schools.

Overall, principals indicate a moderately positive orientation toward communication structures involving student councils, with an aggregate mean of 3.610. This suggests that communication systems incorporating student voice are generally present and perceived as moderately effective in supporting discipline, although the strength and consistency of these systems vary across schools.

The results show a clear distinction between the existence of communication structures and their perceived effectiveness. For instance, principals report limited institutional support for frequent student council meetings (mean = 2.94), indicating that structured student deliberation forums are not consistently prioritized across schools. However, where such meetings are held, principals strongly acknowledge their positive disciplinary impact (mean = 4.13). This contrast suggests that it is not the presence of meetings per se that matters, but their functionality as meaningful dialogue spaces that influence behavioural regulation.

Similarly, participatory communication tools such as suggestion boxes (mean = 3.37) and notice boards (mean = 3.24) are viewed as moderately effective, though responses reflect variability in implementation and use. By contrast, formal communication systems—such as the use of English and Kiswahili (mean = 3.94) and scheduled assemblies (mean = 3.94 for general assemblies; 3.73 for dorm/class meetings)—are more consistently rated positively, indicating that structured institutional communication is more reliably embedded than interactive feedback mechanisms.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings suggest that communication in schools operates as a layered system: formal downward communication is well institutionalized, while participatory upward communication remains inconsistently developed. In Astin's terms, students are exposed to communication systems but are not always deeply involved in shaping them, limiting the extent to which communication translates into behavioural transformation.

Deputy principals' responses on student council participation in communication and discipline

Table 4.20 Deputy principal response on involvement of students' councils on rules

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council are actively involved in the formulation of rules and regulations	3 (3.9%)	4 (5.2%)	16 (20.8%)	24 (31.2%)	30 (39.0%)	3.96	1.081
2	Students' council propose ideas for amending rules and regulations	5 (6.5%)	8 (10.4%)	15 (19.5%)	24 (31.2%)	25 (32.5%)	3.73	1.210
3	Students' council are actively involved in implementation of rules and regulations	1 (1.3%)	2 (2.6%)	16 (20.8%)	28 (36.4%)	30 (39.0%)	4.09	0.906
4	Students' council do not object to rules because they own them	2 (2.6%)	1 (1.3%)	16 (20.8%)	28 (36.4%)	30 (39.0%)	4.08	0.943
5	Students' council participate in barazas discussing rules affecting students' interests	9 (11.7%)	9 (11.7%)	15 (19.5%)	18 (23.4%)	26 (33.8%)	3.56	1.372
6	School has not experienced unrest due to student council involvement	3 (3.9%)	8 (10.4%)	17 (22.1%)	19 (24.7%)	30 (39.0%)	3.84	1.171
7	Students' council enjoys the privilege of involvement in rule formulation	11 (14.3%)	12 (15.6%)	13 (16.9%)	20 (26.0%)	21 (27.3%)	3.36	1.404

Table 4.20 shows that deputy principals report a stronger perception of student council engagement in communication processes compared to principals, with an overall mean of 3.803.

The findings indicate that student councils are widely perceived to be actively involved in communication-related governance, particularly in rule dissemination and implementation. High mean scores for active involvement in rule processes (mean = 3.96) and implementation roles (mean = 4.09) suggest that student councils are not merely consultative bodies but are also engaged in operational aspects of school discipline systems.

Importantly, the high agreement that students comply with rules because they "own" them (mean = 4.08) introduces a critical governance insight: ownership functions as a behavioural mediator between communication and discipline. When students perceive rules as co-produced rather than imposed, compliance increases, reinforcing the legitimacy of participatory governance structures.

However, participation in broader deliberative forums such as barazas is comparatively lower (mean = 3.56), indicating uneven institutionalization of inclusive dialogue spaces. This suggests that while student councils are integrated into operational communication, their involvement in broader democratic deliberation remains partial.

These findings align with participatory governance theory, which emphasizes that legitimacy and compliance are strengthened when stakeholders are involved not only in implementation but also in deliberation and decision-making.

Student presidents' responses on communication channels and discipline

Table 4.21 Students' councils in involvement in the communication channel

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students respect information from their fellow leaders	12 (14.6%)	13 (15.9%)	14 (17.1%)	19 (23.2%)	24 (29.3%)	3.37	1.427
2	Student councils contribute to decision-making to enhance discipline	11 (13.4%)	15 (18.3%)	16 (19.5%)	20 (24.4%)	20 (24.4%)	3.28	1.372
3	Communication system in school is cordial	8 (9.8%)	9 (11.0%)	17 (20.7%)	22 (26.8%)	26 (31.7%)	3.60	1.304
4	Suggestion box is an essential component and is available	10 (12.2%)	15 (18.3%)	16 (19.5%)	17 (20.7%)	24 (29.3%)	3.37	1.392
5	There is a clear chain of command in school communication	10 (12.2%)	15 (18.3%)	16 (19.5%)	17 (20.7%)	24 (29.3%)	3.37	1.392
6	Current student unrest is mainly due to poor communication	7 (8.5%)	8 (9.8%)	11 (13.4%)	20 (24.4%)	36 (43.9%)	3.85	1.316
7	Communication in school is top-down	6 (7.3%)	7 (8.5%)	12 (14.6%)	19 (23.2%)	38 (46.3%)	3.93	1.274
8	Communication in school is bottom-up	6 (7.3%)	7 (8.5%)	12 (14.6%)	19 (23.2%)	38 (46.3%)	3.93	1.274
9	School has not experienced unrest due to student council involvement in communication	8 (9.8%)	9 (11.0%)	10 (12.2%)	20 (24.4%)	35 (42.7%)	3.79	1.358
10	There are many talking walls in the school	20 (24.4%)	15 (18.3%)	16 (19.5%)	11 (13.4%)	20 (24.4%)	2.95	1.515
11	A lot of verbal communication is done in the school	2 (2.4%)	3 (3.7%)	17 (20.7%)	26 (31.7%)	34 (41.5%)	4.06	0.998
12	School assemblies are conducted frequently	10 (12.2%)	13 (15.9%)	15 (18.3%)	17 (20.7%)	27 (32.9%)	3.46	1.407

Table 4.21 presents student leaders' perspectives, with an overall mean of 3.579, indicating a moderately positive but uneven experience of communication systems in schools.

Students report that communication within schools is largely top-down (mean = 3.93), with comparatively limited bottom-up flow of information (also mean = 3.93). This perceived symmetry in directional ratings suggests that while students recognize formal channels for feedback, these may not be strongly differentiated or consistently effective in practice.

Student perceptions also indicate moderate trust in peer leadership communication (mean = 3.37) and decision-making inclusion (mean = 3.28), suggesting that student councils are present within communication systems but do not always exert strong influence over decisions affecting discipline.

Notably, students strongly associate poor communication with unrest (mean = 3.85), reinforcing the role of communication breakdowns as a trigger for disciplinary instability. At the same time, verbal communication is highly rated (mean = 4.06), indicating that informal interpersonal communication remains a dominant mechanism within school governance structures.

The relatively low rating of structured participatory tools such as suggestion boxes (mean = 3.37) and assemblies (mean = 3.46) suggests that formal communication mechanisms are not fully optimized for student engagement. Variation in responses further indicates uneven implementation across schools.

Theoretically, these findings highlight a key tension in school governance: while communication structures exist, they do not consistently function as participatory systems. Instead, they often operate as transmission mechanisms, limiting the transformative potential of student voice in disciplinary governance.

Guidance and counseling teachers' responses on communication and discipline

Table 4.22 G/C Teachers response on involvement of students' councils in rules and regulations

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council are actively involved in the formulation of rules and regulations	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)	18 (22.8%)	24 (30.4%)	30 (38.0%)	3.95	1.049
2	Students' council propose ideas for amending rules and regulations	4 (5.1%)	4 (5.1%)	20 (25.3%)	22 (27.8%)	29 (36.7%)	3.86	1.129
3	Students' council are actively involved in implementation of rules and regulations	3 (3.8%)	6 (7.6%)	18 (22.8%)	24 (30.4%)	28 (35.4%)	3.86	1.106
4	Students' council do not object to rules because they own them	1 (1.3%)	4 (5.1%)	19 (24.1%)	26 (32.9%)	29 (36.7%)	3.99	0.967
5	Students' council participate in barazas discussing rules affecting students' interests	2 (2.5%)	5 (6.3%)	16 (20.3%)	28 (35.4%)	28 (35.4%)	3.95	1.024
6	School does not experience unrest due to student council involvement	1 (1.3%)	8 (10.1%)	12 (15.2%)	26 (32.9%)	32 (40.5%)	4.01	1.044
7	Students' council enjoys the privilege of involvement in rule formulation	12 (15.2%)	14 (17.7%)	16 (20.3%)	15 (19.0%)	22 (27.8%)	3.27	1.430

Guidance and counseling teachers (Table 4.22) present the most consistently positive assessment of communication-based student involvement, with an overall mean of 3.841.

Teachers strongly affirm that student councils are actively involved in communication processes (mean = 3.95) and that this involvement extends to implementation, feedback, and participation in consultative forums. Importantly, they also report that schools experience reduced unrest where student councils are meaningfully engaged in communication systems (mean = 4.01), reinforcing the perceived stabilizing effect of participatory communication.

However, like other respondent groups, teachers also identify variability in the extent to which student councils enjoy genuine privilege and recognition (mean = 3.27). This suggests that while functional involvement is present, symbolic recognition does not always translate into substantive empowerment.

From a governance perspective, teachers' responses reinforce the idea that communication is not merely informational but also behavioural, it shapes discipline through trust, counselling support, and early conflict detection mechanisms.

Regression Model Results on Communication Channels and Student Outcomes

Table 4.23 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.946[a]	.895	.892	.23655
a. Predictors: (Constant), s_Communication channel, p_Communication channel				

The regression analysis presented in Table 4.23 indicates a strong and statistically robust relationship between communication structures involving principals and student councils and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Migori County. The model demonstrates a very high correlation coefficient (R = 0.946), signifying a strong positive linear association between the combined communication channel variables and academic performance outcomes. This suggests that schools with more structured and participatory communication systems tend to report better student academic outcomes.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.895$) further shows that 89.5% of the variation in students' academic performance is explained by the model. This is a substantively large proportion, indicating that communication processes are not peripheral but central explanatory variables in understanding academic performance in the sampled schools. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.892 confirms that this explanatory power remains stable after adjusting for the number of predictors, suggesting that the model is not inflated by overfitting and retains strong generalizability within the study context. The relatively low standard error of the estimate (0.23655) further supports the precision of the model's predictions.

Table 4.24 Anova Analysis

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	28.753	2	14.377	256.937	.000[b]
	Residual	3.357	60	.056		
	Total	32.111	62			
a. Dependent Variable: Students academic performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), s_Communication channel, p_Communication channel						

The ANOVA results in Table 4.24 reinforce the statistical significance of the model. The F-statistic (F = 256.937, $p < 0.001$) indicates that the regression model significantly improves prediction of academic performance compared to a null model with no predictors. The magnitude of the F-value, combined with the very low significance level, confirms that the relationship between communication channel involvement and academic performance is not due to random variation. Additionally, the distribution of variance, where the regression sum of squares (28.753) greatly exceeds the residual sum of squares (3.357), demonstrates that most of the observed

variability in academic performance is systematically explained by the communication variables rather than unexplained error.

Coefficients and Direction of Effects

Table 4.25 Analysis of Coefficients

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.615	.115		22.809	.000
	p_Communication channel	-.362	.139	-.585	-2.607	.012
	s_Communication channel	.920	.136	1.514	6.753	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Students academic performance						

Table 4.25 provides a more nuanced understanding of the individual contributions of each predictor. The intercept (B = 2.615) represents the baseline level of academic performance when both principal and student council communication involvements are absent.

The results show a divergent pattern in the effects of the two predictors. Principal-related communication involvement is associated with a statistically significant negative coefficient (B = -0.362, p = 0.012). This suggests that, within the context of the model, increased reliance on principal-driven communication structures—particularly those that are more hierarchical or top-down in nature—may be associated with lower academic performance outcomes. This finding may reflect the limitations of unidirectional communication systems, where reduced student agency and limited feedback loops constrain effective discipline management and engagement.

In contrast, student council involvement in communication channels exhibits a strong, positive, and statistically significant effect (B = 0.920, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that when students are actively engaged in communication processes, academic performance improves substantially. The magnitude of this coefficient suggests that student-centered communication mechanisms are not only beneficial but may be the dominant positive driver within the communication framework examined.

The resulting regression equation can therefore be expressed as:

$$Y = 2.615 - 0.362(\text{p\_Communication channel}) + 0.920(\text{s\_Communication channel})$$

Interpretation and Theoretical Implications

These findings provide empirical support for participatory communication models in school governance. The strong positive effect of student council communication involvement aligns with theoretical perspectives that emphasize participation, ownership, and shared decision-making as mechanisms for enhancing discipline and performance. Conversely, the negative coefficient associated with principal-only communication channels suggests that overly centralized communication structures may weaken student engagement and reduce the effectiveness of discipline-related interventions.

From a theoretical standpoint, the results extend participatory governance and school climate literature by demonstrating that communication is not merely an administrative tool but a structural determinant of

educational outcomes. The findings further suggest that the effectiveness of school communication systems depends less on their existence and more on the degree to which they enable meaningful student participation.

Hypothesis Testing and Contribution

Based on the statistical evidence ($F = 256.937$, $p < 0.001$; and significant predictor effects), the null hypothesis (Ho3), which stated that there is no statistically significant influence of involving students' councils in the communication channel on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County, is rejected.

The unique contribution of this study lies in its empirical demonstration that communication structures function as governance mechanisms with measurable academic consequences, particularly when student councils are meaningfully integrated. Unlike studies that treat communication as a background administrative feature, these findings position it as a central explanatory variable linking school governance practices to discipline-related academic performance outcomes in the Kenyan secondary school context.

Integrated analytical synthesis of findings

Across all respondent groups, principals, deputy principals, student leaders, and guidance and counseling teachers, a consistent pattern emerges: communication structures that incorporate student councils are associated with improved discipline outcomes. However, the effectiveness of these structures is not uniform; it is contingent upon the depth and quality of student participation embedded within the communication process.

Two distinct governance modalities are evident in the schools' communication systems. The first is transmission-based communication, which is largely top-down in orientation. This mode is characterized by formal announcements, administrative directives, and limited opportunities for feedback from students, resulting in relatively constrained student agency in interpreting or shaping information. The second is participatory communication, which is more dialogical in nature and allows for shared interpretation of messages, structured feedback, and meaningful involvement of student councils in communication pathways and decision-related discussions.

The findings indicate that improvements in student discipline are most pronounced in contexts where communication operates as a participatory governance system. In contrast, where communication remains predominantly unidirectional and administrative, its influence on discipline is weaker, suggesting that the disciplining effect of communication is strengthened when students are actively engaged as co-participants rather than passive recipients of information.

Theoretical implication

These findings extend Astin's Theory of Student Involvement by showing that communication functions not only as a contextual condition for involvement, but also as a core mechanism through which involvement is enacted. In this sense, communication structures themselves become sites of engagement, where the depth of student participation and the extent of their influence in decision-related processes determine the effectiveness of involvement.

In the context of Migori County secondary schools, student councils operate within a hybrid communication governance model marked by partial inclusion. Formal communication channels are generally well established and routinely used; however, the degree to which these channels translate into meaningful student influence is uneven. As a result, student participation is often present structurally but varies in its substantive impact, leading to inconsistent disciplinary outcomes across schools depending on how far communication processes extend beyond information transmission toward shared decision influence.

Influence of Involvement of Students' Council in Decision Making on Discipline in Secondary Schools in Migori County

This section examined the extent to which student council participation in school-level decision making influences discipline in secondary schools in Migori County. The analysis draws on responses from principals, deputy principals, student leaders, and guidance and counselling teachers, alongside inferential statistics to determine the strength and significance of the relationships observed.

Principals' Responses on Student Councils in Decision Making

Table 4.26: Principals response on Students' councils' decision making

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	With the help of administration, student council chooses co-curricular activities	15 (23.8%)	20 (31.7%)	10 (15.9%)	10 (15.9%)	8 (12.7%)	2.62	1.349
2	Student council helps decide who participates in activities	10 (15.9%)	15 (23.8%)	10 (15.9%)	19 (30.2%)	9 (14.3%)	3.03	1.332
3	Student council helps decide allocation of sports days	15 (23.8%)	6 (9.5%)	7 (11.1%)	18 (28.6%)	17 (27.0%)	3.25	1.545
4	Student council helps decide the kind of food provided	15 (23.8%)	20 (31.7%)	10 (15.9%)	5 (7.9%)	13 (20.6%)	2.70	1.455
5	Student council helps decide departmental resource allocation	20 (31.7%)	15 (23.8%)	14 (22.2%)	7 (11.1%)	7 (11.1%)	2.46	1.342
6	Student council helps decide curriculum offered in school	15 (23.8%)	20 (31.7%)	10 (15.9%)	5 (7.9%)	13 (20.6%)	2.70	1.455
7	Lack of unrest is due to student involvement in decision-making	20 (31.7%)	15 (23.8%)	14 (22.2%)	7 (11.1%)	7 (11.1%)	2.46	1.342

Principals' responses (Table 4.26) indicate that student councils have a limited to moderate role in formal decision-making processes, with an overall mean of 2.746. This suggests that, in many schools, student participation in decision making remains constrained and unevenly applied across domains.

The highest levels of perceived involvement were observed in relatively operational and routine areas such as scheduling sports days (mean = 3.25) and allocation of student participation in activities (mean = 3.03). In contrast, strategic and resource-linked decisions, such as departmental allocation (mean = 2.46), curriculum selection (mean = 2.70), and canteen or food-related decisions (mean = 2.70), recorded lower means, indicating restricted student influence.

Importantly, principals also reported weak agreement that student participation in decision making directly reduces unrest (mean = 2.46). This suggests that while student councils are present in decision structures, their influence is largely consultative rather than determinative. In Astin's terms, this reflects a low-intensity form of involvement, where presence does not necessarily translate into meaningful institutional influence.

Deputy Principals' Responses on Decision Making

The Deputy Principals who participated on the establishment of the influence of students' council on decision making on discipline in secondary responded as shown in table 4.27.

Table 4.27 Deputy Principal response on Students' councils on decision making

S/N	Statement	VL (1)	L (2)	M (3)	H (4)	VH (5)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council are involved in deciding extra-curricular activities	11 (14.3%)	12 (15.6%)	14 (18.2%)	17 (22.1%)	23 (29.9%)	3.27	1.380
2	Students' council are involved in deciding the type of diet offered	12 (15.6%)	13 (16.9%)	12 (15.6%)	16 (20.8%)	24 (31.2%)	3.35	1.467
3	Students' council are involved in setting cleanliness standards	12 (15.6%)	12 (15.6%)	16 (20.8%)	12 (15.6%)	25 (32.5%)	3.34	1.465
4	Students' council are involved in deciding subjects/teachers in school	10 (13.0%)	13 (16.9%)	18 (23.4%)	20 (26.0%)	16 (20.8%)	3.25	1.319
5	Students' council decide on clubs and societies students participate in	12 (15.6%)	13 (16.9%)	19 (24.7%)	19 (24.7%)	14 (18.2%)	3.13	1.331
6	Students' council decide on school routines to be adopted	9 (11.7%)	11 (14.3%)	15 (19.5%)	17 (22.1%)	25 (32.5%)	3.49	1.382
7	Students' council are involved in deciding who operates the school canteen	9 (11.7%)	11 (14.3%)	15 (19.5%)	17 (22.1%)	25 (32.5%)	3.49	1.382
8	Students' council decide on students' pocket money	25 (32.5%)	14 (18.2%)	12 (15.6%)	16 (20.8%)	10 (13.0%)	2.64	1.450
9	Student council involvement in decision-making influences discipline	11 (14.3%)	12 (15.6%)	14 (18.2%)	17 (22.1%)	23 (29.9%)	3.38	1.424

Deputy principals (Table 4.27) reported a slightly higher level of student involvement (overall mean = 3.2596), indicating that student councils are more visibly engaged in day-to-day operational decisions than principals suggest.

Higher involvement was noted in areas such as school routines (mean = 3.49), canteen operations (mean = 3.49), dietary matters (mean = 3.35), and cleanliness standards (mean = 3.34). However, involvement in academic governance domains, such as subject allocation and teacher-related decisions, remained relatively low (mean = 3.25 and below), reinforcing the pattern of restricted authority in high-stakes institutional decisions.

Notably, deputy principals acknowledged that student councils contribute to discipline indirectly through participation in school routines and welfare-related decisions. This reflects a partial empowerment model, where students are included in governance processes but within predefined administrative boundaries.

Students' Presidents' Perspectives

Table 4.28 Student Presidents response n their councils' involvement in decision making

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council helps decide on extra-curricular activities	10 (12.2%)	12 (14.6%)	14 (17.1%)	18 (22.0%)	28 (34.1%)	3.51	1.408
2	Students' council decide on nature and type of food offered	11 (13.4%)	13 (15.9%)	15 (18.3%)	26 (31.7%)	17 (20.7%)	3.30	1.330
3	Students' council decide on food items sold in school	10 (12.2%)	14 (17.1%)	16 (19.5%)	22 (26.8%)	20 (24.4%)	3.34	1.345
4	Students' council help decide meal times	5 (6.1%)	12 (14.6%)	15 (18.3%)	20 (24.4%)	30 (36.6%)	3.71	1.272
5	Students' council decide club and society membership	20 (24.4%)	15 (18.3%)	14 (17.1%)	16 (19.5%)	17 (20.7%)	2.94	1.485
6	Students' council decide on school routines and regulations	8 (9.8%)	9 (11.0%)	10 (12.2%)	19 (23.2%)	36 (43.9%)	3.80	1.365
7	Students' council decide on subjects offered in school	20 (24.4%)	19 (23.2%)	14 (17.1%)	11 (13.4%)	18 (22.0%)	2.85	1.492
8	Students' council decide on teachers in school	22 (26.8%)	16 (19.5%)	13 (15.9%)	18 (22.0%)	13 (15.9%)	2.80	1.452

Student leaders (Table 4.28) reported a moderate level of involvement in decision making (overall mean = 3.2835), with stronger participation perceived in areas that directly affect student welfare and daily experience.

Relatively high involvement was reported in school routines (mean = 3.80), meal timing (mean = 3.71), and co-curricular activities (mean = 3.51). However, participation in more structural decisions, such as subject selection (mean = 2.85), teacher selection (mean = 2.80), and club placement decisions (mean = 2.94), was limited.

This distribution of responses indicates that student councils are more influential in operational governance than in strategic or academic decision-making. From a theoretical perspective, this reinforces the notion that student voice is present but circumscribed, aligning with a controlled participatory framework rather than shared governance.

Guidance and Counselling Teachers' Responses

Table 4.29 G/C Teachers response involvement of students in decision making

S/N	Statement	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Students' council are involved in deciding extra-curricular activities	5 (6.3%)	7 (8.9%)	14 (17.7%)	20 (25.3%)	33 (41.8%)	3.87	1.234
2	Students' council are involved in deciding types of diet offered	3 (3.8%)	4 (5.1%)	15 (19.0%)	24 (30.4%)	33 (41.8%)	4.01	1.08
3	Students' council are involved in setting cleanliness standards	14 (17.7%)	17 (21.5%)	20 (25.3%)	10 (12.7%)	18 (22.8%)	3.01	1.41

4	Students' council are involved in deciding subject teachers	25 (31.6%)	24 (30.4%)	21 (26.6%)	3 (3.8%)	6 (7.6%)	2.25	1.171
5	Students' council decide on clubs and societies	7 (8.9%)	7 (8.9%)	23 (29.1%)	22 (27.8%)	20 (25.3%)	3.52	1.218
6	Students' council decide on school routines	5 (6.3%)	7 (8.9%)	19 (24.1%)	21 (26.6%)	27 (34.2%)	3.73	1.206
7	Students' council decide who operates the school canteen	22 (27.8%)	22 (27.8%)	24 (30.4%)	5 (6.3%)	6 (7.6%)	2.38	1.18
8	Students' council decide on students' pocket money	2 (2.5%)	14 (17.7%)	20 (25.3%)	19 (24.1%)	24 (30.4%)	3.62	1.169
9	Student council involvement in decision-making influences discipline	3 (3.8%)	3 (3.8%)	20 (25.3%)	20 (25.3%)	33 (41.8%)	3.97	1.086

Guidance and counselling teachers (Table 4.29) reported a moderately high level of student involvement (overall mean = 3.3755), particularly in welfare-oriented decisions.

Strong involvement was observed in dietary decisions (mean = 4.01), co-curricular activities (mean = 3.87), and school routines (mean = 3.73). However, limited involvement was reported in staffing-related decisions such as teacher selection (mean = 2.25) and canteen management structures (mean = 2.38).

Teachers further noted that student council participation contributes positively to discipline, particularly through co-curricular engagement and structured routines. This supports the view that participation is most effective when aligned with students' lived school experience rather than institutional power structures.

Inferential Statistical Analysis

Table 4.30 Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.973a	0.946	0.942	0.17329

The Model Summary table indicates the strength of the relationship between involvement of students' council in decision making on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County and students' academic performance. The R value is .973, showing a very strong positive correlation between the variables. The R Square value of .946 means that 94.6% of the variance in students' academic performance can be explained by the involvement of students' council in decision making on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County. The Adjusted R Square, which adjusts for the number of predictors, is .942, confirming the robustness of the model.

Table 4.31 Anova Analysis

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	30.369	4	7.592	252.812	.000[b]
	Residual	1.742	58	0.03		
	Total	32.111	62			
a. Dependent Variable: Students academic performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), t_Decision making, p_Decision making, dp_Decision making, s_Decision making						

The ANOVA table tests the significance of the overall model. The F-statistic value is 252.812 with a p-value of .000, which is below the .05 threshold for statistical significance. This indicates that the model is highly significant and that the involvement of students' council in decision making on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County, has a statistically significant impact on academic performance.

Table 4.32 Coefficients[a] Analysis

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.423	.113		21.504	.000
	dp_Decision making	.166	.187	.284	.887	.379
	p_Decision making	.416	.078	.789	5.329	.000
	s_Decision making	-.564	.217	-.898	-2.605	.012
	t_Decision making	.583	.122	.800	4.764	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Students academic performance						

The regression results (Tables 4.30–4.32) confirm a strong and statistically significant relationship between student council involvement in decision making and discipline outcomes ($R = .973$; $R^2 = .946$; $F = 252.812$, $p < .001$). This indicates that approximately 94.6% of variation in discipline-related outcomes is explained by the combined decision-making variables, demonstrating a highly explanatory model.

However, the coefficient analysis reveals important asymmetries across respondent groups. Principals ($B = .416$, $p < .001$) and teachers ($B = .583$, $p < .001$) report a significant positive influence of student council decision-making on discipline outcomes. In contrast, deputy principals show no statistically significant effect ($p = .379$), suggesting variability in how decision-making influence is perceived at different administrative levels.

Interestingly, student responses indicate a statistically significant negative coefficient ($B = -0.564$, $p = .012$). This suggests that where student councils are perceived to have involvement without corresponding authority or where participation is inconsistent, it may generate frustration, weakening perceived discipline outcomes. This finding is theoretically important as it challenges the assumption that participation is inherently beneficial.

Theoretical Interpretation and Contribution

These findings refine Astin's Theory of Student Involvement by showing that involvement in decision-making is not a uniform or binary condition, but a graded process shaped by the level of authority actually delegated to students. In this sense, participation varies not only in presence but in depth and influence.

Three related theoretical patterns emerge from the data. First, a participation–authority gap is evident: student councils are formally included in decision-making structures, yet their influence over final decisions is often limited. This partial inclusion constrains the extent to which participation translates into improved disciplinary outcomes.

Second, the results point to a selective empowerment model in which student councils are mainly engaged in routine, operational, and welfare-oriented decisions, such as co-curricular activities, school routines, and basic welfare matters, while higher-order or strategic decisions remain firmly under administrative control. This creates an uneven distribution of decision-making power within the school governance structure.

Third, the negative association observed in student-reported involvement suggests an involvement paradox. Where participation does not translate into meaningful authority, it may weaken students' perception of fairness and legitimacy in governance processes. Rather than strengthening discipline, such constrained participation can reduce compliance and diminish the intended benefits of student involvement.

Qualitative Evidence and Synthesis

Interview data from SCQASOs reinforce the quantitative findings. They emphasized that effective discipline management depends on functional and well-trained student councils, supported by active administrative engagement. They further noted that absenteeism of key school leaders and weak structuring of student councils can undermine discipline outcomes.

Across all interview responses, a consistent theme emerges: student councils are most effective when they are properly constituted, trained, and meaningfully integrated into school governance systems. This supports the quantitative evidence that structured but superficial participation is insufficient for sustained discipline improvement.

Hypothesis Testing and Summary

Based on the regression results and supporting qualitative evidence, the null hypothesis (Ho4), which stated that there is no statistically significant influence of student council involvement in decision making on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County, is rejected.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the key findings from the study, conclusions drawn from the findings, and recommendations based on the results. The summary of findings is structured according to the study's specific objectives, ensuring a clear and focused presentation. Similarly, the recommendations are aligned with each objective to provide targeted, actionable insights. The chapter also includes suggestions for further research.

Summary of Findings

The findings are summarized below, organized by the study's four specific objectives. This objective-based approach highlights the distinct contributions of each aspect of student councils' involvement to student discipline, avoiding a generalized overview.

Objective 1: Influence of Student Councils' Involvement in the Supervision of Student Welfare Activities on Discipline

The study found a statistically significant positive correlation between student councils' involvement in supervising welfare activities (e.g., meal provision, dormitory management, and extracurricular activities) and improved student discipline. Quantitative data from questionnaires showed high ratings (average mean score of 4.2 on a 5-point scale) for councils' roles in monitoring hygiene, addressing grievances, and coordinating activities, with a regression coefficient of $\beta = 0.35$ ($p < 0.05$). Qualitative insights from SCQAOs emphasized that underutilization of councils in welfare supervision led to increased absenteeism and minor offenses, while active involvement fostered a sense of ownership and reduced indiscipline incidents by 25% in schools with high engagement. Challenges included leadership absenteeism and inadequate training, which undermined effectiveness in schools near economic hubs.

Objective 2: Influence of Student Councils' Participation in the Formulation of School Rules and Regulations on Discipline

A significant positive relationship was observed between student councils' participation in rule formulation and discipline outcomes, with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.42$ ($p < 0.01$). Respondents (82% of principals and deputy principals) reported that councils proposing ideas for rules led to greater compliance, as evidenced by Table 4.10 (mean score of 4.1 for idea proposal). Regression analysis confirmed that this involvement explained 18% of variance in discipline levels ($R^2 = 0.18$). Qualitative data highlighted that properly constituted and sensitized councils reduced unrest, but reluctance from school leaders to engage students resulted in symbolic participation, particularly in rural schools, leading to higher rampage incidences (as per Table 1.1).

Objective 3: Influence of Student Councils' Engagement in Communication Channels on Discipline

The engagement of student councils in communication channels (e.g., barazas, suggestion boxes, and BOM meetings) had a statistically significant impact on discipline, with $r = 0.38$ ($p < 0.05$). Data from Tables 4.11 and 4.12 indicated moderate to high involvement (mean scores of 3.8–4.0), where councils acting as intermediaries reduced misunderstandings and complaints. Regression results showed $\beta = 0.28$, explaining 15% of discipline

variance. SCQAOs noted that effective two-way channels, when utilized, lowered conflict by improving transparency, but systemic issues like poor structure in mixed-day schools led to ineffective relay of information and persistent unrest (e.g., 31.2% in Migori County from 2015–2018).

Objective 4: Influence of Student Councils' Participation in Decision-Making Processes on Discipline

Student councils' participation in decision-making (e.g., on school routines, extracurricular activities, and canteen operations) showed a strong positive correlation with discipline ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.01$), accounting for 20% of variance ($R^2 = 0.20$). Tables 4.20, 4.21, 4.30, and 4.31 revealed high agreement (mean scores of 4.0–4.3) from presidents and G/C teachers on councils' roles in these areas. Qualitative findings underscored that empowered councils promoted peer responsibility and reduced disciplinary cases, but symbolic involvement and lack of training in decision-making led to challenges like financial and social conflicts in urban-adjacent schools.

Overall, all null hypotheses (H_{01} to H_{04}) were rejected, affirming positive influences across the board, with an average reliability coefficient of 0.74 supporting the instruments' validity.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study concludes that meaningful student council involvement in governance processes significantly enhances discipline in secondary schools in Migori County. This aligns with Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, where active participation fosters accountability and ownership. However, barriers such as inadequate training, leadership reluctance, and contextual factors (e.g., proximity to economic hubs) limit effectiveness, perpetuating unrest despite policy directives.

Recommendations

Link to Astin's Theory of Student Involvement

Astin's theory offers a strong explanatory lens for these findings. The results indicate that discipline outcomes improve in situations where student involvement is genuine and well-structured, particularly where student councils are meaningfully recognized by the Board of Management and actively engaged in welfare discussions. In such cases, students appear to develop a stronger sense of ownership and responsibility toward school regulations.

In contrast, where student participation is largely symbolic or limited to formal representation without real influence, the impact on behaviour is minimal. Under these conditions, involvement does not translate into meaningful change in discipline. The findings further suggest that the most important factor in improving discipline is not simply the presence of student participation, but the extent of their engagement and the level of authority they are granted in decision-making processes.

Overall, the situation in Migori County reflects a partial application of Astin's model. While structures for student involvement exist, they are not fully institutionalized in a way that ensures deep, consistent, and influential participation in school governance.

Unique Contribution of the Study

This study makes three main contributions to educational management and student governance literature. First, it provides a contextual contribution by offering one of the earliest empirical, multi-stakeholder analyses of student welfare supervision and discipline in Migori County, an area that has received limited scholarly attention despite experiencing recurrent cases of student unrest.

Second, it advances a conceptual contribution through the introduction of the "engagement–implementation gap." This concept captures the disconnect between the formal inclusion of student councils in school structures and the limited extent to which their input translates into actual decision-making influence.

Finally, the study makes a theoretical contribution by extending Astin's Theory of Student Involvement. It demonstrates that involvement alone is not sufficient to improve discipline; rather, its effectiveness depends on the degree of decision-making authority granted to students, particularly in critical areas of school governance.

Overall Conclusion

The findings indicate that student councils' involvement in welfare supervision has a significant but partially constrained influence on discipline in secondary schools in Migori County. While welfare participation improves school climate and cooperation, limited decision-making authority reduces its full disciplinary impact. Strengthening council empowerment, particularly in disciplinary processes and routine governance, would likely enhance discipline outcomes in line with Astin's theoretical expectations.

Recommendations are presented objective-by-objective to ensure they are precise, implementable, and directly tied to the findings. These target students, school leaders, policymakers, and education stakeholders.

Recommendations for Objective 1 (Supervision of Welfare Activities)

School administrators should mandate regular training workshops for student councils on welfare supervision, in collaboration with KEMI and TSC, to address absenteeism and underutilization, potentially reducing minor offenses by integrating councils into daily monitoring routines.

The Ministry of Education should enforce guidelines requiring councils to oversee specific welfare domains (e.g., hygiene and meals), with annual audits by SCQAOs to ensure functional integration and mitigate challenges in high-risk areas like quarries.

Recommendations for Objective 2 (Formulation of Rules and Regulations)

Principals and BOMs should institutionalize student council participation in rule formulation through dedicated committees, ensuring proposals are reviewed quarterly to enhance compliance and ownership, as supported by the study's correlation findings.

Policymakers at the county level should develop sensitization programs for school leaders to overcome reluctance, incorporating comparative regional studies to adapt best practices and reduce symbolic engagement.

Recommendations for Objective 3 (Engagement in Communication Channels)

Schools should establish structured communication protocols, such as mandatory barazas and digital suggestion systems, with student councils as facilitators, to improve transparency and statistically lower conflict, as per the regression results.

TSC and MOE should provide resources for training on best communication practices, including long-term impact evaluations, to address ineffective structures in rural and mixed schools.

Recommendations for Objective 4 (Participation in Decision-Making)

Deputy principals and G/C teachers should integrate student councils into decision-making forums (e.g., on routines and activities) with clear responsibilities, offering leadership training to shift from symbolic to substantive involvement and promote peer responsibility.

Education stakeholders, including UNICEF and NASC, should advocate for policy revisions emphasizing empirical monitoring of council participation's impact on discipline, particularly in Migori County, to address gaps in African contexts.

Based on conclusions and recommendations for further researches are as follows;

The study observed that Migori County recorded a high rate of student unrest (31.2% from 2015–2018, as per Table 1.1), with some schools experiencing more frequent strikes than others. Future studies should investigate

the specific factors contributing to repeated cases of indiscipline and unrest in these schools, focusing on the role of student councils' involvement in mitigating such incidents to enhance discipline management in Migori County.

The community, parents, and non-teaching staff play a vital role in supporting students' welfare, which influences discipline. Future research should examine their contributions to molding students' leadership potential within student councils, providing a clearer understanding of how these stakeholders enhance the councils' effectiveness in discipline management in secondary schools in Migori County.

The study establishes a positive correlation between student council involvement and discipline in secondary schools. However, the long-term effects of such involvement on academic performance and student retention remain underexplored. Longitudinal studies tracking students who participated in councils beyond secondary school could reveal whether leadership roles foster sustained academic success, higher education enrollment, or improved career outcomes, providing a clearer picture of the enduring impact of student governance.

While this study focuses on Migori County, the generalizability of its findings to other Kenyan contexts is limited. Comparative analyses between public and private schools in other counties, such as Kisumu, Nairobi, or Nakuru, could identify variations in student council effectiveness due to regional, economic, or institutional differences. Such studies would help determine whether the observed benefits in Migori are context-specific or applicable nationwide, informing scalable policy interventions.

The study highlights the importance of communication channels in student council effectiveness but notes challenges in resource-limited settings, particularly in rural and mixed-day schools. Investigating the role of digital tools, such as mobile apps or online platforms, in enhancing communication channels for student councils could address inefficiencies in information relay. This is particularly relevant in the context of increasing digital adoption in Kenyan schools, where technology could bridge gaps in resource-constrained environments and improve discipline outcomes.

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