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Student Council Election Process and Effectiveness of Student Councils in Public Secondary Schools in Siaya County, Kenya

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Abstract

The Ministry of Education in Kenya introduced the Student Council Policy in 2009 to enhance student participation in school governance and make student leadership more participatory. This was to help reduce the cases of student unrest in schools. However, even with student councils in place, schools still experience cases of student unrest among other indiscipline cases. Concerns have therefore been raised over the effectiveness of student councils in their role performance, which necessitates such research. This study sought to assess the influence of the student council leaders' election process on student councils' effectiveness with clear focus on establishing how student council elections were conducted in schools; the extent to which the election process influenced student council's effectiveness and suggest some of the measures that could be used to enhance the effectiveness of Student Councils (SCs) among public boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County, Kenya. The sample included 14 deputy principals, 178 student council leaders, and the County Director of Education (CDE). The study employed a correlational research design using the convergent parallel mixed methods approach with purposive sampling to select respondents. Interview schedules and questionnaires were used to collect data. The quantitative analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was presented thematically according to the objectives and presented via narration and word verbatim. The analysis established that most of the public secondary schools had blended student councils with some of the council members elected while majority of them were appointed by the school administration. The study also found out that there was a strong statistically significant positive relationship between the student council election process and effectiveness of student councils. The study recommended the need for schools to fully implement the SC policy as designed by the MoE; that students should be allowed to elect their leaders with minimal interference by the school administration; and the Ministry of Education should have elaborate guidelines on the management of student council elections in public secondary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: Student Council; Student Council election process; Student Council effectiveness

1. Introduction

The 12th Article of the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) stipulates the right of children to participate in making decisions ([United Nations, 2009](#)). According to [Blackbourn \(2015\)](#), a majority of countries around the world have made it mandatory for children to take part in developing structures that represent students' views at different levels and decision making too, in line with the Article 12 of UNCRC in order to entrench democracy and promote democratic values in governance of schools. [Mncube and Harber \(2015\)](#) describe the opportunities that come when the student leaders are organized and supervised properly as enhancing discipline, development of



student's morale and cooperation, prudent leadership, self-motivation, and intelligent followership.

[Brasof \(2015\)](#) also emphasizes that democracy in schools that are democratic happen as a result of wonderful trials by parents, teachers and head teachers, who come up with opportunities and arrangements that will bring about democracy. Hence, democratic space in schools should be opened by teachers through students' involvement in school management, which is done through the student councils. According to [Kamau \(2017\)](#), the Student Council (SC) or Student Governing Council (SGC) is a body that represents the students while at the same time ensuring that they partake in school affairs through working with the parents, teachers and school management for their own benefit.

[Oliech, et al \(2018\)](#) opine that the origin of the term 'student council' could be traced during the times of the early philosophers like Plato who advanced that the selection of those to be charge of things like living quarters, chapel, discussion and lecture rooms, property, lecture and library which belonged to the academy be done by both tutors and the learners. Student leaders were then elected on a secret ballot to serve for ten days by their fellow students. The Student Council (SC) system has been existent in many other schools and institutions of higher learning in many countries like Canada, Norway, Finland, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, and United States of America ([KSSSC, 2013](#)). It is a system in which students are democratically elected by their fellow students to represent them in school governance. In Britain, the first students' councils were established in the 1920's ([KSSSC, 2013](#)). In Ireland, the Education Act 1998 provides for the establishment of student councils while in Norway, all secondary schools are obligated by the law to institute students' councils in their schools. The student councils in India and USA have the following roles: offering academic support to students that find secondary education difficult, psychosocial personal support and peer mentorship ([Peterson and Chingos, 2015](#)). Student conflict resolution councils are also formed in Britain so as to allow other students to have dialogue on the issues such as eliminating student conflict which is related to bullying and conflicts between students and teachers ([Botti, 2010](#)). Student council leaders inspire and mentor other students besides encouraging them to obey the school rules and regulations ([Blackbourn, 2015](#)).

In South Africa, there exists Student Representative Councils (SRCs) which are statutory structures that provide various services to students both at individual and group levels ([Duma, 2015](#)). The SRCs are expected to participate in institutional decision-making structures and manage and administer student representation at different levels. Such bodies also exist in Nigeria and other East African countries. In Uganda for instance, there exists separate students' councils for middle schools and high schools. They serve as avenues for students to share their concerns and ideas with the administration and faculty. Students' Council members are expected to maintain acceptable academic performance and be of exemplary character. The councils give students opportunities to serve others as well as make an impact on the life of the whole school. If the student council is properly supervised and organized in its involvement in the management of the school, then there will be harmony in the school community and students' behavior will also be modified ([Kamau, 2017](#)).



In Kenya, the students' council (SC) policy in institutions of basic education was introduced in 2009 as a replacement of the prefect system due to its inability to address the increased cases of student unrest in secondary schools then. According to [UNICEF \(2013\)](#), student councils are charged with the responsibility of providing input in the management of school programmes, and in the formulation and implementation of school policies. They are expected to effectively manage communication between students and the school administration; promote democratic principles in leadership and constructively engage all the students in decision making; promote diplomacy and responsibility as a way of enhancing morality among students; promote students' welfare; and engage the students in the creation of a conducive learning environment.

However, a study conducted by [Anjichi \(2016\)](#) reveals ineffectiveness on the part of student councils in role performance which is manifested in the rise in cases of student unrests, increased cases of drug abuse by students, and general disregard of the school rules by the students. The study associates the ineffectiveness of student councils with the weakness on the part of student leaders, teacher related challenges, institutionally created issues and others as a result of their relationship with other students.

The year 2018 witnessed numerous cases of unrest and arson in secondary schools in Kenya. According to the report compiled by the Departmental Committee on Education on Student Unrest (2018), a total of 107 schools were affected by various forms of student unrest in 2018. In 2017, there were 123 cases. In 2016, the number of schools affected was 483. In January 2021, more than 20 schools were closed down due to cases of student unrests and fire break-outs across the country.

Siaya County was the worst hit in Nyanza region; it had 12 cases of student unrests in the month of June and July 2018 with affected schools being closed down indefinitely. This could be a pointer towards ineffective communication between the student body and the school administration. According to the [Siaya CDE \(2021\)](#), cases of drug abuse among students were on the rise. In July 2019, six students in one of the boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County were arrested for planning to torch the institution; they were found with a jerrican of petrol and a match box in the dormitory (Nation, February 5th, 2021). All this was happening in schools with established student councils. This study sought to establish the extent to which the institutional factors and particularly the student council election process influenced the effectiveness of student councils especially in boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County.

The election process is an important factor influencing the functioning and effectiveness of student council leaders ([Keogh & Whyte, 2005](#)). [The Children's Research Centre in Ireland \(2005\)](#) conducted a study whose findings reveal that effective councils are the ones whose election is influenced by teachers since council members received support from both staff and students; this was unlike the councils solely appointed by the school management without the input of the students. Student council leaders seemed to be more committed and demonstrated more interest in the council when the election process was seen as being free and fair. The present study therefore seeks to establish how student council elections are conducted in secondary schools in Siaya County and determine the extent to which the nature of the election process influences the



effectiveness of student councils. Based on this background, this study sought to address the following research question:

To what extent does the student council election process influence the effectiveness of student councils in public secondary schools?

The study sought to test the following null Hypothesis:

Student councils' election process has no statistically significant influence on student councils' effectiveness among public secondary schools.

Conceptual Framework

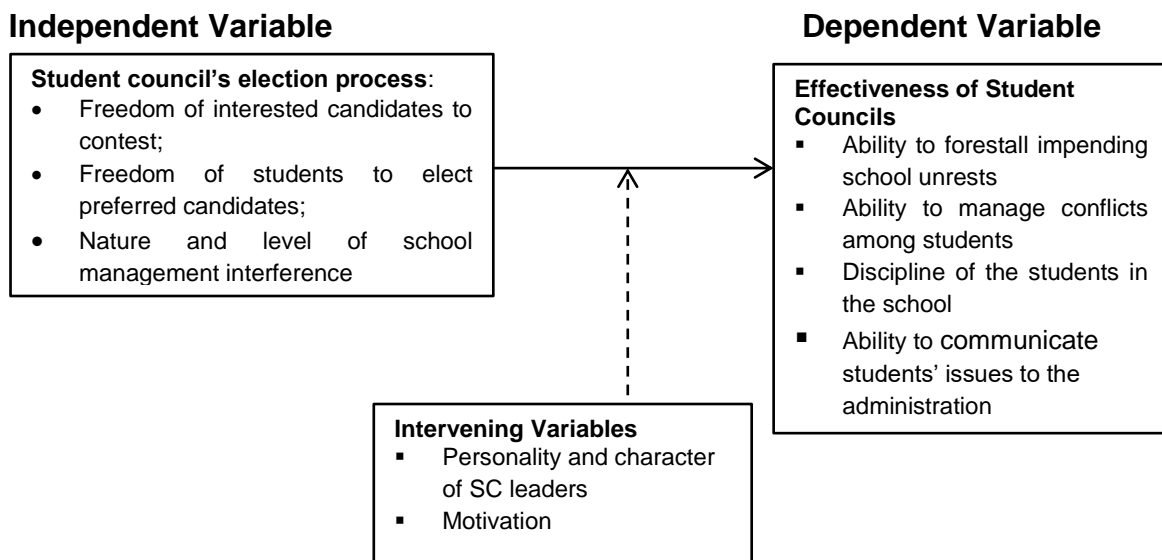


Figure 1 showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variable

The figure above shows the relationship between the student council election process and the effectiveness of student leaders. Student council election process has an influence on the effectiveness of student councils in secondary schools. Effectiveness of the student councils can also be influenced by the personality and character of SC leaders, and motivation of the council leaders but the researcher only focused on the influence of the SC election process on SC's effectiveness. Student council leaders are supposed to be elected by their fellow students through a democratic process as per the student council policy. There should also be freedom for willing students to contest for positions they qualify for. Democratically elected students will easily be accepted and supported by the rest of the students since they are their own choice unlike the appointed ones or those elected but in incredible elections that might face a lot of resistance from the students as they will be seen as the spies of the administration.

2. Methodology

This study employed the mixed method research approach; specifically the convergent parallel. According to [Creswell \(2014\)](#), the convergent parallel research design entails the researcher merging both quantitative and qualitative data collected in order to have a comprehensive analysis of the problem under study. The researcher adopted this design on the basis that one set of data could not be sufficient to analyze the subject under

study and therefore it was necessary to collect both quantitative and qualitative data so that one set of the data compliments the other set facilitating effective analysis and understanding of the subject under study (Creswell, 2012). The convergent parallel design was considered appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. It entailed the merging the two sets of data concurrently in order to exhaustively analyze the influence of institutional determinants on the effectiveness of SCs (Creswell, 2014).

The study generated quantitative data from the ordinary students and SC leaders using questionnaires and qualitative data from the Deputy Principals and the CDE through the interviews conducted. The two sets of data obtained were then integrated during the interpretation phase to identify points of convergence and departure in argument. The qualitative data was basically used to explain and support the quantitative results obtained. This design therefore, according to Creswell (2014), made it possible for the researcher to have a detailed analysis of the extent to which the identified institutional determinants influenced effectiveness of student councils in their role performance. In the same vein, the design provided room for validation of data obtained from different sources in the study including data from reviewed literature hence enabling the researcher to gain a clear and wider understanding of the study findings (Creswell, 2012).

A total of 14 Deputy Principals (who are the designated in-charge of student councils affairs in secondary schools), 178 student council members in public boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County Kenya as well as the County Director of Education constituted the respondents of the study. Questionnaires were used to gather information from the student council leaders. The items in the questionnaire for SC leaders which were on a 4-point Likert scale focused on the nature of the SC election process in public boys boarding secondary schools.

In-depth interviews for the Deputy Principals and the County Director of Education were conducted to obtain detailed information regarding the student council election process in the schools with focus on their suggestions on how to improve their effectiveness in the sampled schools. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive and inferential statistics while qualitative data was analyzed thematically according to the objectives and presented via narration and word verbatim.

3. Results and Discussions

Available literature has indicated that if the establishment of the Student Council is perceived to have been clearly guided by democratic principles in its formulation, there is always a high chance of it being acceptable and hence working well. On the contrary, if it is established in ways that would be perceived as unfair, undemocratic or unreasonable, they elicit negative reactions and the whole student council becomes ineffective. This study was to examine the influence of the election process on the effectiveness of the student councils in public boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County.

3.1 Student Council Election Process

Respondents involved in this study had varied views regarding the procedure used to get student council members in public boys' boarding secondary schools as displayed in



table 1.

Table 1: Statements on student council election process

The Election Process	SD	D	A	SA
Elections are conducted to elect student council members	30.2	41.4	18.3	10.1
There are advertisements for students to contest for different positions in the student council	20.7	33.7	30.8	12.4
There is a specific time designated for the election of SC members	21.9	46.7	23.1	5.9
Students are allowed to vie for any leadership position in the SC as guided by the SC policy	42.0	23.1	24.3	7.7
All students vying for various positions have equal conditions of being elected	26.6	33.1	27.2	9.5
All students are given electoral cards to vote for student leaders of their choice	33.1	35.5	13.6	14.2
SC elections are usually free and fair	36.7	43.2	13.6	14.2
Students are usually represented in the school electoral commission that manages SC elections	29.0	39.6	17.2	8.3

Analysis of particular components related to the election process was done and presented in table 1 above. From the results, while the election process is expected to be democratic, the student respondents indicated a number of undemocratic practices. For instance, 71.6% of the sampled respondents indicated that Student Council members were normally appointed by the school administration with a further 68.6% disagreeing with the statement that there was a specific time designated for the election of SC members. Consequently, when SC members were asked to indicate whether students were allowed to vie for any leadership position in the SC as guided by the SC policy, 110 (65.1%) of them disagreed with the statement while 79.9% disagreed that the election process is always free and fair as 68.6% disagreed that students are given a chance to elect candidates of their choice.

In a study conducted by [Kinyua \(2015\)](#), eight (8%) of the respondents said that the students' council was elected by students without principals' input whereas the majority (88%) reported that the student council was elected by students with principal's input; these results concur with the findings of this study that the school administration influenced the process of the student councils' elections. Similarly, (59.8%) of the SC members reported that not all students vying for various positions were given equal conditions of being elected revealing favoritism in the SC election process. This implies that in most of the schools, there was a lot of influence from the school administration during the formation of the SCs. This is in tandem with the responses to earlier statements regarding appointment of SC leaders by the school administration and failure to conduct SC elections by most of the schools. All these are clear illustrations of the fact that the democratic spirit enshrined in the guidelines for the student government suffer even in the hands of the school administration which, ideally, should be the custodians of such guidelines.

The views expressed by the deputy principals during interviews regarding the SC election process supported the descriptive findings displayed in table 1. From the



interviews with the deputy principals, only two aspects of the SC election process were being adhered to by most of the schools; these included advertising SC positions and allowing students interested in Student leadership to vie for any position in the council but still there was vetting that they had to go through first.

The deputy principals opined that it was necessary for the school administration to coordinate the SC election process including vetting the candidates and sometimes manipulating the results of elections for the school to get good leaders. In fact, most of the schools had blended student councils with few members elected and majority appointed by the school administration. According to the Deputy Principals, the student council policy disadvantaged the schools especially because candidates were allowed to campaign and were given titles that made them forget they were students. There was a lot of bribing hence students ended up not electing the right leaders. These findings are contrary to the findings by [Kagendo \(2018\)](#) that most secondary schools in Kenya conducted elections and there were very few schools where the school principals appointed prefects to participate in board of management meetings. However, there are quite a number of schools that did not conduct elections at all; neither did they advertise for the council positions.

One of the deputy principals said:

“Initially we were conducting elections faithfully as per the SC policy where we allowed students to elect the council leaders. However, we realized that they were only electing students who were popular but did not do much in terms of promoting discipline in the school. This was the time when even cases of drug abuse started increasing as some of the SC leaders were drug peddlers. Those elected are too friendly to the students hence end up hiding criminals especially for the sake of the next elections” (Deputy Principal, Siaya County).

While certain voices from the School Deputy Principals would deny that the deficiencies in the student councils are inherent in the process of choosing student leaders as stipulated in the policy, the interview held with the County Director of Education (CDE) appears consistent with the views of the students in so far as occasional departures from the policy are concerned as can be discerned from the following excerpt:

“SCs should be formed through an election process where students elect their own leaders. It’s policy that students exercise their democratic right by voting in leaders who will lead them. Most schools conduct elections; however, we still have schools especially the small schools that appoint student leaders which is a contravention to the Basic Education Act (2013) which orders schools to institute student councils through an election process. We have schools that handpick leaders for certain positions like the library or clubs and societies because the teachers need students with specific qualifications and fear that when they allow students to elect then they may not choose suitable leaders but just populists (CDE, Siaya County).

Interviews with deputy principals of the sampled schools would appear to be very clear on what the policy states regarding the process of choosing these leaders. However, in their interpretation and subsequent understanding, one notices that there is an aspect of the decision of whether certain leaders to be appointed or elected and that this decision



lies in the hands of the electoral committee as seen in the following excerpt:

“The procedure for getting SC leaders is elaborate. First the class teacher has to write a recommendation for the candidate, then the respective department and finally the academic department which will confirm the credibility of the grades/performance. Finally the electoral committee determines whether the position applied for will be elective or appointive” (Deputy Principal, Siaya County).

From these sentiments, it is clear that in some way, and ways that are rather not clear, the school administration could easily curtail the freedom of choice of leaders for certain dockets by the students through their declaration of such a docket being elective or appointive. This is likely to be perceived, by the students, as an act of infringement on their right and freedom to choose their own leaders hence the general atmosphere of students having reservations of the entire process of choosing their leaders as one that is free and fair.

Despite the depiction of the process of choosing student leaders as done in the school as free and fair and a purely students' affair, some sentiments from other deputy principals tended to indict this process as one that has, in some way, compromised the quality of the chosen leaders, particularly on the issue of allegiance. For instance, one deputy principal had his view as follows:

“Those elected are too friendly to the students hence end up hiding criminals especially for the sake of the next elections” (Deputy Principal, Siaya County).

In fact, when asked whether the school administration influence the process of the student council elections in any way or if the school administration ever has their preferred candidates, one deputy principal confirmed that indeed, they do have some preferred candidates whom they encourage to apply for certain positions, as captured in the following excerpt:

Yes; we have preferred candidates whom we encourage to apply. But for those preferred by their fellow students, we look at discipline history, academic performance, character and shortlist andwhat are the students saying about them –if they are popular we then investigate why they are so. But they must show interest by applying (Deputy Principal, Siaya County).

The above response shows that the candidates for various positions were not given equal conditions to compete and be elected by the ordinary students. Similarly, from the interview with the CDE, the interference by the school administration in the SC election appeared a normal practice. In fact, the whole process is steered by the school administration including manipulating of the election results and making decisions on who the students should elect as mostly the teachers had their preferred candidates. In the few schools that conducted the elections, students were part of the electoral commission but still could not stop the manipulation of results by the teachers.

Only two deputy principals reported that there was use of electoral cards during voting. In one of the schools however, students were simply asked to raise their hands in favor of a particular candidate during assembly and that was it; one would not expect transparency is such a scenario especially because in that school, the teachers were the ones counting the 'votes' and because the teachers had already informed the students



whom to vote for. According to CDE, the student unrests witnessed in some of the schools in Siaya County were partly caused by teachers imposing leaders on students as this caused a lot of animosity between the students and the leaders. These findings agree with findings of a study by [Mutuma et al. \(2021\)](#) who argued that when students are not involved in electing their leaders, they end up perceiving the appointed leaders as being imposed on them and this leads to disobedience and resistance among the students.

All these are clear illustrations of the reality that electoral processes are closely associated with effectiveness in the working of the students' councils and that a deficiency in democratic processes compromises on the effectiveness of the working of the Student Councils. Such deficiencies have been seen in the areas of choice of student leaders in terms of method of choosing them, influence of school administration in the choice of student leaders and even the nature of the process of choosing the leaders in terms of fairness and the associated freedom.

In one of the schools that had experienced a students' strike, all the blame was assigned the student council policy. The student council had information about the plan to burn down the school but could not report. As reported by the deputy principal, when one of the student leaders was questioned, he said:*"how could I report yet these students elected us?"*

From the interviews with the deputy principals, there is no uniformity in the constitution and composition of student councils in schools; each school adopted its own procedure in coming up with a student council. Some of the schools seemed to have a very clear procedure. However, there were schools that could not outline clearly the procedure they used to constitute the council in place; they simply appointed some and had students elect others.

This is a weakness that was created by the MoE which withdrew the earlier circular about the use of student councils and advised schools to customize the perfect system. However, there are no clear guidelines on the percentage that should be elected and appointed among the council leaders. Consequently, the MoE has not provided the procedures and good structures for elections, and management of elections. According to the deputy principals, unless this is addressed, the students and teachers will continue being at logger heads and cases of student unrest will still be experienced in schools.

While certain voices from the school deputy principals would deny that these deficiencies are inherent in the process of choosing student leaders as stipulated in the policy, the interview held with the County Director of Education (CDE) was consistent with the views of the students in so far as occasional departures from the policy are concerned. In an interview with the CDE, it came out clearly that most schools conduct SC elections; however, they were not free and fair. According to him, SCs should be formed through an election process where students elect their own leaders. It's policy that students exercise their democratic right by voting in leaders who will lead them. He said:

"Most schools conduct elections; however, we still have schools especially the small schools that appoint student leaders which is a contravention to the Basic Education Act 2013 which orders schools to institute student councils through an



election process. We have schools going with a roadside declaration that the SC policy was abolished; that's not true, the SC policy is still in place and schools should conduct elections. Obviously, we have schools that handpick leaders for certain positions like the library or clubs and societies because the teachers need students with specific qualifications and fear that when they allow students to elect then they may not choose suitable leaders but just populists. Our office has the right to disband the SC in place if we find out that elections were not conducted," (CDE, Siaya County).

According to the CDE, the student unrests witnessed in schools in Siaya County were partly caused by teachers imposing leaders on students as this caused a lot of animosity between the students and the leaders. This is what he said:

"Nowadays, the school administration has a lot of say regarding who becomes a student leader. I cannot say they appoint but they influence the selection process right from the nomination process. The learners are still young and therefore should be guided; it is guided democracy. The students are free to elect but the administration has to vet to get the right leaders including interfering with the election results. This is in order because discipline of the schools is key but we do not encourage schools not to conduct elections; where they don't we disband the council in place. The candidates should meet certain criteria in terms of discipline history, performance record, popularity etc. In fact, students in four schools rioted over this kind of interference by teachers last year. They claimed they had been denied the right to elect their own leaders," (CDE, Siaya County).

The views of the deputy principals and the CDE are in agreement with results of a survey on the councils of pupils conducted in Scotland in 2010. According to the survey, fairness in the selection/election process of each school is significant in predicting the seen effectiveness of the SCs. If the councils were selected in a way that was seen as unfair, undemocratic or unreasonable, they would bring out negative reactions from students since they assist to make important school life changes ([HASAS, 2010](#)). Some of the student riots and strikes resulted from imposition of leaders on students and denying them the right to elect their own leaders.

3.2 Student Councils Election Process and Effectiveness of Student Councils

To establish the relationship between SC election process and effectiveness of student councils, the following hypothesis was set:

Student councils' election process has no statistically significant influence on student councils' effectiveness among public secondary schools

Regression analysis was carried out to establish this influence by first conducting an analysis of the fitness of the model as indicated in results presented in table 2.



Table 2: Model Summary for SC Election Process and Effectiveness of Student Councils

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.684 ^a	.468	.	467 .40852

a. Predictors: (Constant), SC Election Process

The regression model $Y = b_0 + b_3X_3 + e$, was established to be fit in predicting the relationship between the SC election process and effectiveness of SCs based on the attained values of R and R square. The R-value, $R = 0.684 > 0.5$ implied that the relationship was strong and positive according to Creswell (2014) and Orodho (2012) while the value of R square of 0.468 implied that 46.80% of the variance in effectiveness of student councils was explained by how the SC election process was conducted.

The last step of the test of hypothesis testing involved an analysis of the regression coefficients in order to determine the extent to which the effectiveness of SCs was predicted by the SC election process and the significance of the association between SC effectiveness and the SC election process as presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients for SC Election Process and Effectiveness of SCs

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.841	.085		9.925	.000
	SC Election Process	.716	.033	.684	21.454	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Effectiveness

From the results indicated in table 3 a one unit change in the SC election process could change the effectiveness of SCs by 0.716 at a p-value of 0.00. The model can thus be expressed as $Y = 0.841 + 0.716X_3$, where,

$Y =$ Effectiveness of SCs

$X_3 =$ SC election process

The null hypothesis (H_{03} : *Student councils' election process has no statistically significant influence on student councils' effectiveness among public boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County, Kenya*) was rejected based on the results from the analysis given that the p-value (0.00) was less than 0.05 implying that the relationship between SC election process and effectiveness of SCs was indeed statistically significant.

This led to the adoption of the alternative hypothesis SC election had a statistically significant influence on effectiveness of SCs in secondary schools in public boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County, Kenya. A study by [Sofo \(2016\)](#) also identified a high correlation between the election process and the performance of the



student leaders.

These findings are also consistent with the descriptive findings and the responses of the deputy principals and the CDE during interviews regarding the SC election process in secondary schools. Additionally, [Mutuma et al. \(2021\)](#) also recognized democracy in the SC election process as an enhancer of effectiveness of SCs in schools which eventually improves the discipline of the school.

[Gilljam et al \(2010\)](#) in their experiment on whether the form of decision-making used in school environments affects pupils' views on the legitimacy of the decisions made, and of the decision-making procedure agree with the findings of this study. Their study found out that that the form of decision-making used matters for pupils' acceptance of the decision-making procedure, but not necessarily for their willingness to accept the outcome of decisions. Pupil referenda in particular were effective in creating procedural legitimacy just the way the student barazas in the selected schools would be used to discuss all the student issues including those related to the student council election process. In the same vein, [Kinyua \(2015\)](#), in his study on factors influencing the effectiveness of student councils in Kirinyaga County identified the election process as a factor that affects student councils' effectiveness but not the only determinant of the performance of the SC effectiveness.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to assess the extent to which the student council election process influences the effectiveness of student councils in public boys' boarding secondary schools in Siaya County and recommend suitable measures to enhance their effectiveness for the better operations of the secondary schools. From the findings, the study concluded that most of the boys boarding high schools did not conduct student council elections; in most cases, the school administration determined who would be a student leader. This is against the Ministry of Education's policy). In the schools where SC elections were conducted, the election process was not free and fair as there was a lot of interference from the school administration. The study also established that there was a strong positive correlation between student council election process and effectiveness of student councils. Consequently, the study recommended the following strategies as suitable remedy to enhance the effectiveness of student councils within the public secondary schools in Siaya County: schools to fully implement the SC policy as designed by the MoE; that students should be allowed to elect their leaders; SC leaders be mentored through seminars, trainings, benchmarking, workshops, conferences especially in leadership and communication; supporting the SCs fully because what they do is quite significant; and MoE to devise mechanisms of monitoring and managing the SC election processes in schools including getting fully involved instead of leaving it entirely to the schools - to ensure elections are conducted.



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