

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN
DECISION-MAKING AT WESLEY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
IN KUMASI

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BY

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Dissertation submitted to the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration, Faculty of Education, University of Cape Coast in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Education Degree in Administration

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date.....

Name: Francis Kyei-Badu`

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature..... Date.....

Name: George K .T.Oduro

ABSTRACT

The study examined how students perceive their participation in decision-making processes in Wesley College of Education in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. In all, one hundred and ninety-two student leaders, fifty-five teachers and three college administrators were purposively sampled for the study. The main research instrument for the study was the questionnaire. Three sets of questionnaire were designed for respondents. The findings of the study suggest among others, that students thought they were not adequately involved in decisions in certain sensitive areas such as menu and disciplinary issues. It also emerged that students' participation in decision-making has helped to minimize violent behaviours and excessive misconduct in the college.

The study recommended greater students' participation in sensitive areas of decisions in the college administration. Avenues such as the use of suggestion boxes, collecting students' views through informal conversation and regular organization of durbars with students could be employed to enhance students' participation in the college's decision-making process.

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I am also very grateful to all the lecturers and staff of I.E. P. A., U.C.C., for their tremendous support to me during the pursuit of this programme.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my father Hon.Kyei-Badu of blessed memory.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Participation in decision-making at all levels of education in Ghana has become a permanent feature in the educational system. From the basic to the tertiary level, particularly at the Teacher Training Colleges and Universities, participation in decision-making has led to the practice of institutionalized form of democracy in our tertiary education system. It has also promoted interesting and healthy awareness of students on current issues in the educational front.

In Ghana, there are thirty eight public training colleges and three privately – established ones awarding Diploma in Basic Education. A greater number of these educational institutions are jointly managed by government and missions notably the Methodist, Presbyterian and Catholic Churches. In the new phase of the tertiary status of the teacher training colleges (now Colleges of Education), the call for some level of autonomy for students is being advocated. One key area of focus is “Students’ participation in the governance and decision-making processes in the colleges”. One of the major responsibilities shouldered by every administrator is decision-making.

Gorton (1980) states that decision-making processes are a complex exercise that need much time and effort. He further states that decision-making employs analytical thought processes and makes use of relevant sources of information and assistance. Decision-making therefore, involves selecting one course of action from among alternative courses of action to achieve specific objectives. In any educational institution such as Wesley College, Students constitute the direct clientele of the school system and the pivot around which every decision of the school revolves. This clientele therefore, constitutes the main human resource base that the school administration (authority) has to manage.

According to Ozigi (1997) the student is at the centre of the educational process and all activities and decisions in the school should primarily aim at developing his total personality to the fullest. Hanson (1996) says the relevant public that is affected by a decision must be involved in such decisions so that there might not be seen any traces of malfunctioning in the decision-making process.

Aseidu-Akrofi (1978) again sees the school as a democratic society where individuals as well as group views are respected. It may be suggested that schools like any industrial organization, work better and achieve their set objectives, provided the whole relevant public is involved in the decision-making process.

Students' participation in decision-making usually takes place through the organization of a governing body – The Students Representative Council (SRC).

In Wesley College, even though the 2007 education reforms classify colleges of education as tertiary institutions, decisions that concern students' welfare and support systems appear to be taken by the college authorities.

Gorton (1980) observes that students have all along not been involved in decision-making process at the school level in matters of discipline. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978,p.150) observed that students' participation in school administration today represents a period of great promise in our society with strong democratic aspirations. The adult section of society no longer views students as people with too feeble and immature minds whose various needs must be unilaterally planned, decided on and provided by the adult members. On the contrary, in modern times, students often question the wisdom behind some of the things their parents and other adults do for them.

In the early stages of formal education in Ghana, people held the view that students should only be seen and not heard. They were expected to simply do what they were told without question. In deed, even today, students must listen to and obey their teachers because as adults, teachers are assumed to be more experienced and more knowledgeable. This expectation, however, does not justify the claim any longer that students must only be seen and not heard. Big trees without smaller undergrowths have no future. As future leaders of society, students in their youthful days must be exposed to the intricacies of handling administrative problems and efforts at finding solutions. Students should not only

be made to behave like babies who simply cry for whatever they need in today's complex world where every essential resource is in short supply. Students should be made to understand that conflicts in human affairs have become the order of the day and that such conflicts can only be resolved through mature handling by the conflicting parties. These stark realities must be exposed to students in Wesley College.

Bezeau (1989, p.268) declared that students have rights to form government which are related to rights of free association and assembly. These rights include the right to form students' government, to vote for representative office just as pertains in the larger society. Related rights, according to Bezeau, include the freedom not to join organized students' body and the right to avoid supporting it by not paying the associated fees. The right to exercise this freedom, however, appears not to be well exercised in Wesley College of Education since paying of SRC dues for instance, is obligatory and students do not seem to have the right not to pay the stipulated fees. In Wesley College, SRC membership is compulsory as soon as a student gets admitted to the college and registers to pursue a programme of study.

The question is: how can a student enroll in an institution and not benefit from the privileges that derive from the efforts of the students' leadership? For example, it is unthinkable that a student can opt out in the use of summer huts, library etc constructed through SRC funds. Therefore, the principal must put in place a wide range of student personnel services such as effective classroom management, counseling services, health services, security, co-curricular

activities, recreation, student governance systems, social services, feeding, accommodation and more importantly, students' involvement in decision-making processes.

The successful organization and implementation of these services require maximum co-operation and active participation of both staff and students of the college in the making of decisions concerning the nature and direction of school services. It is clear that students of Wesley College are not implementers of decisions but decisions that are implemented affect them directly or indirectly. It is becoming increasingly true that heads that refuse students participation in school administration are christened "demagogue administrators". They are likely to encounter serious problems including agitations and rowdyism.

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) says the co-operative approach of sharing, delegating and getting students to participate in the day – to – day running of schools offers school heads the opportunity and even time to manage their human resources effectively. According to him, the majority of students in the second cycle schools even would like to participate in decision-making.

According to Teacher Education Division Manual for Distance Learners (2007) students' participation in decision-making in schools is very crucial in school administration and management. Thus, school authorities who fail to involve their students in decision-making process would incur the dissatisfaction of their students. Most of these students would sit on the fence and expectedly, gossip and raise false alarms and accusations. The Students Representative Council (S.R.C) of Wesley College is a representative body of students with

important officers such as the President, Secretary, Treasurer, as well as other officers depending on the schedules of the students.

The SRC is a means of promoting social life of the institution and giving students some training in leadership roles and democratic principles. It provides healthy self – respect among students. The SRC performs various roles through students' committees on Dining, Sports, Entertainment, Publications, Chaplaincy, Library and others.

From the SRC constitution, the specific functions of the SRC in Wesley College, among others include; to promote the well-being of students in the college, to ensure that students understand issues that fall within their purview and competence, to help college authorities to carry out efficient and effective administration, to act as intermediary by conveying students position and views on matters of their concern to school authorities and vice versa, to act as moral guard of the college through the enforcement of school rules and maintenance of school discipline in areas of regular school and class attendance, regularity and punctuality at all college programmes such as assemblies, religious programmes, entertainment, speech days, dining halls, preps and last but not least, to provide leadership in the college.

The SRC participates for example, in conducting morning assemblies and special duties when students have to assemble for entertainment, sports etc. Whereas members of staff take lead roles in conducting these assemblies, it is a good training ground to involve students. The mode of electing student leaders to serve on the SRC itself is one important measure of inculcating in students

democratic principles in the larger society. This practice inculcates some democratic culture in the students. It therefore, makes sense to imbibe this constitutional requirement in the running of educational institutions which are training future leaders to participate later in the affairs of the larger society. It is also a cardinal principle in any civilized society today that those who are affected by administrative decisions should be involved in its formulation. Every strategy in administration that is adopted in a school is a miniature copy of what happens in the larger society since the school is a small society within a larger society; a microcosm within a macrocosm.

Statement of the Problem

The topic the researcher chose to investigate was “Students’ perception of their involvement in the decision-making process at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi. According to Teacher Education Division Manual for Distance Learners (2007), students’ participation in decision-making in schools is very crucial in school management and administration. Thus, school authorities who fail to involve students in decision-making processes would incur the disaffection of their students. Most of these students may sit on the fence and expectedly, gossip and raise false alarms and accusations. This could create public disaffection for the school. The issue is more critical in Wesley College which is transiting from second cycle status to tertiary level. Students may want to explore the new status to their advantage. Even though, there are no reported history of students’ rowdyism in Wesley College for their non-involvement in decisions that

affect them, however, as students become more and more conscious of their rights from experiences from other students in other public tertiary institutions, it is possible that they may one day agitate for their active involvement in basic decisions that affect their welfare. It is, upon the basis of this that the researcher intended to assess the level of students' involvement in decisions-making at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi.

Purpose of the Study

The study was designed purposely to:

1. Investigate the level of students' perception of their participation in decision making in Wesley College of Education.
2. Establish the perceptions of students, teachers and college administrators' views concerning students' participation in decision-making structures in Wesley College of Education.
3. Find out specific decisions in the college that the students in the college would like to participate in
4. Find out some of the structures of decision-making in Wesley College of Education.

Research Questions

The focus of the study was to address the following research questions;

1. What is the level of students' participation in the decision-making process in Wesley College?

2. Which specific areas do students of Wesley College of Education want to participate in the decision-making process of the school administration?
3. In which areas of decisions are students of Wesley College not willing to participate?
4. What factors militate against students' participation in the decision-making processes of the college?
5. How can Wesley College improve upon decision-making in the college?

Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is as follows:

Firstly, the findings of the study which would be disseminated through a seminar at the college would help improve administrative practices at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi. Furthermore, the results will provide the necessary information for Principals of Colleges of Education and other tertiary educational institutions to improve upon their decision-making and consultation processes. The findings would be published and kept at the main library of the University of Cape Coast for easy access to the general public.

Additionally, an in-depth knowledge in the dynamics of student participation in school decision-making will invariably help both students and school authorities to critically determine the desired level of student participation in decision-making. This condition, will contribute to promoting congenial atmosphere for effective teaching and learning.

Moreover, the findings of the study would help provide useful and vital information for managers of tertiary educational institutions to make well informed and far-reaching decisions in their institutions. As the saying goes, "two heads are better than one and therefore, nobody has absolute monopoly of wisdom. This would enable most educational institutions overcome the myriad of challenges that usually characterize the administration of tertiary educational institutions in Ghana. Lastly, the results of the study would contribute to knowledge since vital information and revelations of the study could be replicated by other researchers who may be interested in further research into students' participation in decision – making processes in other educational institutions in Ghana.

Delimitation

The study was a descriptive survey restricted to Wesley College of Education in the Kumasi Metropolis in the Ashanti Region. Thus, the study focused on the level of students' perception of their participation in decision-making in Wesley College of Education in Kumasi, Ghana. Considering the area of coverage in terms of the subject matter and the size of the college, findings from the study will apply to students' participation in decision-making within Kumasi Metropolis. However, schools and colleges in other districts which have similar characteristics like Wesley College could adopt the findings to suit their educational needs and policies.

Limitations

In spite of the efforts, energy, enthusiasm and resources on the part of the researcher to conduct a thorough study, some limitations could be hardly avoided. They are as follows;

The study covered only Wesley College in Kumasi. However, it is likely that many other interesting findings could have been made if more Colleges of Education in the country had been included. Since the prefectorial system changes every year, it is possible that prefects of subsequent years may have different views from those who responded to the questionnaire of the factors which compelled the researcher to focus on only Wesley College. Lack of initial co-operation and skepticism from the college administration also hampered the study. Perhaps, they assumed that the study may lead to unnecessary exposure of the college's privacy.

Also, the possibility of some respondents just ticking the responses to closed ended items on the questionnaire without critical analysis and reflection might hamper the study. Lastly, most of the respondents were reluctant to collect and respond to the questionnaire due to what they called as questionnaire fatigue. This might affect the quality of the data provided.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have been given operational definitions to conform to how they have been used contextually in the study.

1. Decision-Making: It is a process by which a person or a group of people select method(s) to solve a problem out of a number of alternatives.

2. Participation: Taking part or sharing in an activity according to one's ability.
3. Institution: A place where teaching and learning takes place.
4. College of Education: An institution where teachers are trained.

Organization of the Study

Chapter one details such concerns as background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, limitations of the study, delimitation of the study and organization of the study. Chapter two reviews relevant literature on decision-making and its effects on organizations such as educational institutions. Chapter three deals with the Methodology for the study with such details as research design, population of the study, the sample and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures and methods of data analysis. Chapter four looks at the results and discussion with such details as the structure of decision-making at Wesley College, actual student participation in school decision-making in operational and managerial decisions and factors that discourage students from participating in school decision-making etc. Chapter five which is the last chapter examines the summary, conclusions and then makes recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter critically looks at a review of related literature. It reviews basic and relevant scholarly thought and theories on decision-making in educational administration. A review of related literature on this subject provides a conceptual framework for the study of student leaders' participation in decision-making process. It also helps to crystallize the problem that influence decision-making.

The review of related literature was carried out under the following headings:

Meaning of Decision-Making

1. Types of Decisions and Conditions for Decision-Making.
2. The Decision-Making Process
3. Mode of Students' Participation in Decision-Making
4. Rationale for Students' involvement in Decision-Making
5. Theoretical Perspectives on Decision-Making
6. Approaches to Decision-Making
7. Participatory Decision-Making
8. Factors That Enhance Students' Participation in Decision-Making

9. Benefits of Students' Participation in Decision-Making
10. Perception of Students' Participation in Decision-Making Process in Schools
11. Students' Participation in Decision-Making and The Building of Cordial Relationship That Promotes Teaching and Learning Process
12. Summary

Meaning of Decision-Making

Decision-making is one of the major responsibilities in Educational Administration. Decisions are made at all levels of the school in order to solve problems and effect the achievement of the goals and objectives of the school. As noted by the Commonwealth Secretariat (1993), if decisions are not taken, a crisis situation may arise. Decision-making and problem-solving go hand-in-hand and both are of fundamental importance in all aspects of school management and administration (p.51).

Musaazi (1984) understands this point when he says that an understanding of the decision-making process is a 'sine qua non' for all administrators because the school, like all formal organizations, is basically a decision-making structure. He states "the task of deciding what to do pervades the entire administrative organization" (p.75). Webster's dictionary defines decision making as "the act of determining in one's own mind upon an opinion or course of action".

Gregg (as cited in Atta, Agyeman-Boateng and Baafi Frimpong 1999) defines decision-making as the process of choosing from among alternative ways

of achieving an objective or providing a solution to a problem. It is important to distinguish between decision and decision-making. Decision is simply what one intends to do or a choice between alternatives. However, decision making is a process of making a choice between or among various alternatives considering the cost and benefits of these alternatives.

The Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) defines decision-making as “the process of identifying and selecting a course of action to be taken to solve a problem” (p.51) It goes further to explain that decision-making is a process through which human, material and financial resources of an organization are allocated or committed towards the achievement of intended goals and objectives. It goes on to say that decision-making can be defined as “the process through which information, ideas, objectives and knowledge are brought together for action” (p.51).

According to Dorte, Fayol & Barrel (2006), decision-making is an act of choice by which an executive selects one particular course of action from among possible alternatives for the attainment of a desired end or as a solution to a specific problem. Thus, decision-making involves conscious or unconscious attempt at making a choice out of competing alternatives? It implies selecting from alternative policies, procedures and programmes.

From the principle that managers operate within their responsibilities, it follows that any decision which can be made by a particular manager should be left to him. A foreman should make decisions on how best to get work done within the framework of his defined area of responsibility.

According to Knezevich (1984), decision-making is a choice rendering process that is common in all walks of life (p.48). According to him, one finger does not hold ash. It calls for the support of other fingers. Thus, decision-making is so central in the achievement of every organization's goals and that the phrase is synonymous to administration and management. To decide is simply to come to a resolution as a result of consultations.

Richman and Farmer (1975,p.184) defined decision-making as the selection of a course of action from available alternatives. Unless a decision has generated into action, it is not a decision. If it does not result into action, it may be described as a good intention. The administrator may be faced with several alternatives, but the best one must always be selected. All available alternatives can lead to the realization of an organizational goal. A critical reason, according to Richman and Farmer for choosing one plan over another however is that it leads to goal achievement more efficiently.

Gorton (1980) states that decision-making is a complex exercise that needs much time and effort. He further states that decision-making employs analytical thought processes and makes use of relevant sources of information and assistance. Decision-making therefore, involves selecting one course of action from among alternative courses of action to achieve specific objectives. In any educational institution such as Wesley College, students constitute the direct clientele of the school system and the pivot around which every decision of the school revolves. This clientele therefore, constitutes the main human resource base that the school administration has to manage.

According to Ozigi (1997), the student is at the centre of the educational process and all activities and decisions in the school should primarily aim at developing his total personality to the fullest. According to Hanson (1996), the relevant public that is affected by a decision must be involved in such decisions so that there might not be seen any trace of malfunctioning in the decision-making process.

Allison (1971) explains that decision-making is the process of developing a commitment to some course of action. Three things are noteworthy about decision-making.

1. Making a choice among several alternatives.
2. Involves more than simply the final choice among alternatives – how the decision was reached and
3. Commitment of resources such as time, money and personnel.

Whenever there is more than one way of doing things, a decision is needed. Any kind of choice, alternatives or options calls for a decision (Bittle 1985). There is always a need for a systematic approach to making decisions in order to solve an organization's problems. While there are a few exemptions to the rule, the best result is to be systematic or rational. Decision-making can be rational or irrational. It becomes rational if it involves systematic processes. It is irrational when it is based on the decision-maker's whims and caprices.

Types of Decisions and Conditions for Decision-Making

Graffiths (1988) noted a tripartite classification of decisions namely intermediary, appellate and creative. He noted that “intermediary decisions” were those types which did not originate with the school administrator but were delegated to him or her by a superior in the form of a request or a command. For example, a command from the school management committee to change the school uniform. The second type, he noted as “appellate decisions”. He indicated these types as those not to be delegated or relayed. For example, settling of disputes between subordinates or problems brought up to the educational administrator for redress by prefects.

The third type he identified as “creative decisions”. These decisions, according to Graffiths (1988) are used to improve some aspects of education such as curriculum programmes and admissions policies.

Dortey et al. (2006) identifies the following types of decisions;

1. Strategic Decisions - strategic decision can be defined as the behaviour of management in trying to achieve success for company goals in an environment of competition. It is based on the action or possible action of others. Strategies are solely calculated to implement plans and objectives so that an advantageous position is attained over opponents.
2. Tactical/Routine Decisions are routine and usually contain few alternatives and relate to the economic use of resources. Decisions are made by management and involve either finding out what the situation is,

or what it should be. These include decisions upon “basic” objectives and may affect productivity, organization or operation of the business.

3. Organizational decisions are those decisions made in the role of an official of the company and reflect company policy. These demand a high degree of initiative and experience. They are made by high level managers. Organizational decisions must reflect on the over all policies of the organizational decision. For example, the situation where the personnel manager suggests to management to provide the workers with safety measures because the nature of the work is dangerous.
4. Personal Decisions are made by the individual employee and do not affect the organization directly. For instance, if a worker decides to go on voluntary retirement.

Simon (1960) distinguished between two types of decisions namely programmed and unprogrammed decisions. According to him, programmed decisions are those which are well structured, repetitive and generally routine in nature and there are definite rules and procedures for handling them. Risks involved are not high and can therefore be more easily delegated. For example, the decision to punish a student who leaves the school without exeat or the decision to employ a new teacher. Unprogrammed decisions, he noted, are those that are out of the ordinary or are unique. They are new and non – repetitive with no established procedures for handling the problem. Simon (1960) noted that these decisions often entail high risk and greater expenditure of resources, for example, a decision to construct a new classroom block.

The Decision-Making Process

Drucker (1968) has outlined eight processes of decision-making. They are:

1. Identification and definition of the problem. Thus, to him, decision-making begins with an initial awareness of a situation demanding some actions. The manager has to find out what has gone wrong or what opportunity to seize. The definition of the problem tries to find out what really is at stake and consequently, the end – point desired. For managers to come out with the real issues involved in a problem there should be proper diagnosis of its root cause. For instance, when a company is persistently losing customers, it must find out the reasons for this trend.
2. Analysis of the problem and objective setting. After the problem is identified and defined, there is the need to give a critical analysis of the problem to determine the nature and dimension. This helps to adopt the most effective strategies and resources needed to solve the problem effectively.
3. Gathering information – Resolving a problem calls for prior information about it which must be adequate, valid and reliable. From the various information flow, the manager has the opportunity to pick which source and type of information will be most relevant to the situation under consideration. Such data can provide the necessary background to the issue as well as offer potential leads to the right solution.

4. Search for alternatives- After diagnosing the real causes and defining the required solution, the decision-maker searches for all the possible means of reaching the desired end point. This means imagining within the constraints of time and resources, the possible lines of action which have the potential for bringing the right solution. It is important to note that the quality of executive decisions depends very much on the number of good alternatives that can be searched for and from which the choice can finally be made. If one course of action is deemed the only way to solve a problem, that course may be probably wrong.

5. Evaluation of alternatives – This is an assessment process whereby critical advantages and disadvantages are made. A deliberate effort to identify all the possible consequences that affect a particular course of action enables the executive to assess the full cost involved including likely unexpected consequences. From this analysis, a process of weighting and balancing the manager is put in a position to determine which course will most effectively serve the desired goal.

Bittel (1985) has identified eight specific steps of decision-making as:

1. State the problem clearly and specifically. Avoid a vague statement like “we have a problem with school discipline”. Instead, narrow it down to, for example, why the third year students’ final results in science subjects have been dropping since!

2. Collect all information relevant to the problem. Concentrate on the particular institution instead of going far into the community. Collect data that will provide some insight into the processes, materials and equipment that may be required.
3. List as many possible causes of the problem as you can think of. The existence of a problem implies a gap between the expected and actual conditions. What happened to cause the gap?
4. Select the cause or causes that seem most likely. Do this through a process of elimination. What difference would it make if that factor was returned to its original state?
5. Compile as many solutions for removing the causes as you can. This is rarely one best way to solve a problem. Therefore, this is an appropriate stage for brainstorming.
6. Evaluate the pros and cons of each proposed solution. While many solutions are good, some are better than others. What does each solution mean? Is it cheaper? Faster? Surer? More participative? More in line with the institutions policy? To obtain valid answers to each of those questions, you must make judgments based on facts. Consult the information gathered. Also, consult anyone who may be able to offer specialized opinions about the criteria you have chosen.

7. Choose the solution you consider best. Choose the solution after you have weighed all the chances of success against the risk of failure. Make sure the strengths of your solution exceed its weaknesses.
8. Spell out a plan of action to carry out your solution i.e. implement the decision. Every decision requires action and a follow-up. Specify what will be done, how, when and by whom it will be done. How much money will be spent and the source of the money.

Amabile (1994) says decision-making follows the same process as problem-solving. He outlines four main stages as follow:

1. Identification and clarification of problem. This stage demands a clear perception of the area where the problem lies or resides.
2. Collection of possible information. Here, opinion or ideas that are pertinent to the problem must be sought for.
3. Formulation of feasible alternative solutions. The solution should be consistent with the value systems of the institution or the organization or the society as well as the goals and the means available. The available alternative must be evaluated one after the other.
4. Making the actual decision. This is the stage where the actual decision is made.

Amabile(1994) points out that the decision should be made in terms of its effectiveness in solving the problem identified and its implementation should be controlled and evaluated. According to him, decision-making is a highly rational process devoid of emotionalism.

Mode of Students' Participation in Decision – Making

Decision-making structure, according to Smylie (1996) could be defined as the method an organization adopts in arriving at decisions. Effective participation in decision-making pre-supposes the existence of decision-making structures. For students to be involved in decision-making process means that they individually experience the influence of their participation in decision-making within the school.

According to Bittel (1985), whenever there is more than one way of doing things, a decision is needed. Thus, any kind of choice, alternative or option calls for a decision. There is always a need for a systematic approach to making decisions in order to solve an organization's problems. While there are a few exemptions to the rule, the best result is to be systematic or rational. It becomes rational if it involves systematic processes.

Mankoe (2002) outlines three ways of involving students in the governance and decision-making of the school. The ways include;

1. Committee system-the committee system is an approach by which a school appoints a small group of people as standing committee to deal

more expeditiously with specific problems of the school administration. These committees include food, entertainment and discipline. Members of staff usually chair these committees to direct affairs so that they may carry the administration's views to members to enable them make appropriate decisions and assist the school in its policy-making.

2. Durbars – These are occasions for frank discussions among staff and students devoid of intimidation and victimization. They should not focus only on negative issues and ways of addressing them but on the positive aspects as well i.e. when the school is doing well.
3. Suggestion box – the suggestion box is created and placed at vantage points in the school. Students drop grievances, criticism and suggestions on issues that bother them into the box without actually indicating their names. Such “droppings” are usually anonymous. It is an effective means for those who feel inhibited for some reasons such as fear of victimization to talk openly but who have genuine desire to make their concerns known. The box may be opened once a week. Any suggestions may be addressed by the authorities concerned such as the board of governors, school council or members of staff.

Decision-making structure according to Smylie (1996) could also be defined as the method an organization adopts in arriving at decisions. Effective participation in decision-making pre-supposes the existence of decision-making structures. Students' participation in decision-making has also been found to be

important for the successful implementation of large scale educational innovations and initiatives.

Asare-Bediako (1990) identifies five types of structures that a group can adopt in the formulation of decisions. Firstly, he talks of “decision by authority” which refers to the case where someone in authority makes decision for a group. “Decision by minority” which is the second decision-making structure according to Asare Bediako (1990) also describes the situation where a single person or a small group of people take a decision for a large group. “Decision by majority” is the third type of decision-making structure described by Asare Bediako (1990) and this refers to the approach where the members of a group freely express their views on a given issue with the majority feelings taken as the decision. “Decision by Unanimity” another type of decision-making structure which he argues to be the ideal type occurs when every group member truly agrees on the decision to be taken.

Finally, Asare-Bediako (1990) refers to “consensus decision” structure as one in which there is a lot of discussions so that “group members who do not favour the majority alternative nevertheless understand it clearly and are prepared to support it.

Jennings (1975) questions the rational of heads of educational institutions responsibility for decisions arrived at collectively. He clearly disagrees with the idea that school administrators should be held accountable if they no longer have the final say in the affairs of the school. He argues that if decisions are arrived at

collectively, then the entire school including the SRC must be held responsible. Decision by majority which refers to the approach where the members of a group freely express their views on a given issue, with the majority's feelings taken as the decision has been strongly supported by Montague (as cited in Wiredu-Kusi, 1990) He observed that co-operation is the key to survival. He therefore, suggested that efforts towards school improvement should take place on co-operative basis involving all relevant publics in the decision to be taken.

“Decision by Unanimity” occurs where every group member truly agrees on the decision to be taken. In support of this type of decision-making structure, Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) sees the school as a democratic society where individuals as well as group views are respected. It may be suggested that schools like any industrial organization work better and achieve their set goals provided that the whole relevant public is involved in the decision-making process.

Wiredu-Kusi (1990) refers to democratic administration in school as the use of free discussion and decisions on the part of all concerned in determining the ends or purpose to be attained and the means or plans by which the ends are to be attained and acceptance of full responsibility for their action or desire. Consensus decision-making “structure allows a lot of discussions so that “group members, who do not favour the majority alternative, nevertheless understand it clearly and prepared to support it. For institutional harmony to be achieved leading to the attainment of institutional goals, heads of institutions including principals of colleges of education need to adopt the five decision-making structures, since they are inevitable in the educational system and practice and

have relevance for the purpose of this study in so far as they promote or prevent student participation in school-based decisions.

Shanahan (1987) investigated the extent to which school principals use participative management and also assessed their success. The study came out with the result that a high number of school principals used participative decision-making at least in some areas of responsibility such as establishing classroom disciplinary policies, determining appropriate teaching methods and confirmed the use of participative decision-making structure increased commitment and greater co-operation. He also found that principals would be receptive to learn how best to apply participative decision-making structure, on whom to apply and when it can best be used. School size was found to be the variable which seemed to influence the use of participative decision-making structure. For example, large school size was found to inhibit participation whereas small school size was found to promote it.

Rationale for Students' Involvement in Decision-Making

According to Gorton (1980), the rationale for involving students' in decision-making process is as follows:

1. It increases the number of different view-points and ideas which might be relevant to the decision being made.
2. It may improve school morale by showing the individuals involved that the administration values their opinions which may give them greater satisfaction.

3. It is consistent with democratic principles of society, which thus hold that those who are affected by decisions of public institutions such as the school should have some voice in how they are run.
4. It can aid acceptance and implementation of decision. The people who are involved are more likely to understand the decision and be more committed to its success.
5. It makes better utilization of the available expertise and problem-solving skills which exist within the school community.

If Gorton's views are plausible, then it can be strongly suggested that there is an appreciable advantage to be gained when the relevant clientele of the school is involved in the decision-making process especially when the decision concerns the relevant public.

According to Ozigi (1997), the student is at the centre of the educational process and all activities and decisions in the school should primarily aim at developing his total personality to the fullest. According to Hanson (1996), the relevant public that is affected by a decision must be involved in such decisions so that there might not be seen any trace of dysfunctioning in the decision making process.

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) sees the school as a democratic society where individuals as well as group views are respected. It may be suggested that schools, like any industrial organization, work better and achieve their set objectives, provided the whole relevant public is involved in the decision-making process.

Looking at the school management systems in the mid – twentieth century, Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) says “in the past, students’ participation in school administration had been a matter of upholding the notion that children must be seen but not heard (p.55). The head is seen as the boss, the key figure in the school decision-making and administration process. From the views expressed by Ozigi (1997), one of the major problems that school administrators grapple with is how to create a conducive ambience for retaining students in the school, guarantee their welfare and thereby promote smooth learning. Therefore, the school principal must put in place a wide range of student personnel services such as effective classroom management, counseling, health services, security, co-curricular activities, recreation, student governance programmes, social services, feeding, accommodation and more importantly students’ involvement in decision-making processes.

The successful organization and implementation of these services require maximum co-operation and active participation of both staff and students of the school in the making of decisions concerning the nature and direction of school services. It is clear that students are not implementers of decisions but decisions that are implemented affect them directly or indirectly. It is becoming increasingly true that heads that refuse students participation in school administration are christened “demagogue administrators”. They are likely to encounter serious problems such as various forms of agitations and rowdyism.

Bolman and Neal (1998) and Argyris (1964) note that involving the relevant public in the affairs of an organizational set up, be it bureaucratic, socio – political or open system in nature helps government to achieve the set objectives.

Sergionni (1995) supports this by saying that such involvement through laid down decision-making structures, builds a large commitment base, a commitment which leads to effective implementation of such decisions. Such involvement has been recognized by Gorton (1980), Elting and Jago (1988) as the best positive means of improving the quality of decision and as a result, generates support and understanding for seemingly controversial issues (Hanson,1996; and Nicholls, 1983).

Gorton (1980) observes that students have all along not been involved in matters like discipline. He further states that students have been denied involvement in decisions taken for the assessment of their teachers. He argues that students are the consumers of education. Students, accordingly, are in the best position to determine whether the teaching they receive is worthwhile or deficient.

Shanahan (1987) looked at the extent to which school principals used participatory management in the schools. The success of principals was also assessed. The outcome of the studies gave an indication that a high percentage of school principals used participatory decision-making, at least, in some areas of responsibility such as establishing classroom disciplinary policies, determining appropriate teaching method(s), maintaining discipline in the school and allowing students to exercise control over funds contributed by them for projects.

Hanson (1996) and Blasé and Blasé (1994) support Shanahan's findings by saying that majority of school principals and headmasters involved their subordinates including students in the decision-making process of their schools. The studies of Shanahan, Hanson and Blasé and Blasé, confirmed that the use of participatory decision-making mode, among other things, increased commitment and a higher level of co – operation. It was further revealed in Shanahan's study that school heads would be willing to consider to learn how best participatory decision-making mode could be applied, when and on whom it could be used. It was found that school size was a contributing factor to the use of participatory mode of decision-making. Whereas large school size was found to inhibit active involvement in decision-making processes, small school size promoted it. Shanahan (1987) and Campbell (1977) identified three characteristics of decision-making structures. They are collective, constructive and "one man" decision-making.

Gorton (1980) has outlined the rationale for involving the relevant publics in decision-making especially at the school level;

1. It increases the number of different views points and ideas which might be relevant to the decision being made.
2. It may boost school morale by showing the individuals involved that the administrator values their opinions which may give them greater feeling of satisfaction.

3. It can aid acceptance and implementation of a decision because the people involved are more likely to understand the decision and be more committed to its success.
4. It makes better utilization of the available expertise and problem-solving skills which exist within the school community.
5. It is consistent with democratic principles of modern society which hold the view that those who are affected by public institutions such as the school should have some voice in how they are run.

From the above revelations from Gorton (1980) it is clearly established that there is greater strength to be derived by educational institutions that involve their relevant publics in the decision-making processes of their institutions.

Argyris (1964) argues that if employees are not motivated by way of involving them in decisions, the following happens;

1. They withdraw through chronic absenteeism.
2. They stay on the job but withdraw psychologically, becoming indifferent, passive and pathetic.
3. They resist by restricting output, deception and sabotage.
4. They form groups to address the power imbalance.

Theoretical Perspectives on Decision-Making

Researchers, according to Harding (1987) have made efforts to understand decision-making and have brought out some theories. Basically, there have been two main approaches to the study of organizational decision-making namely the descriptive approach as exemplified by the Linblom's Theory of Muddling and prescriptive approach as exemplified by classical decision-making model. The prescriptive model attempts to present how executives or administrators ought to make decisions while the descriptive model presents how executives or administrators do in fact make decisions.

Linblom's Theory of Muddling Through

This is a descriptive and non-rational approach to decision-making. This model, according to Harding (1987) sees the decision-maker as an administrative "man" rather than a rational economic man who makes the most logical decision he can, limited by his inadequate information and his ability to utilize the information. Rather than the best or ideal decisions, managers and school administrators more realistically settle for a decision that will adequately serve their purpose or appear reasonable based on their past experiences and knowledge. In general terms, at best, they only follow a course of action that satisfies that is, they look for a "satisfactory decision" or a course of action that is satisfactory enough rather than maximize or reach the optimal decision.

The Classical Decision-Making Theory

Harding (1987) sees the classical Decision-making model as one which calls for a rational, deliberate and systematic approach in the decision-making process. This is based on the assumption that people are economically rational and attempt to maximize output in an orderly and sequential manner. Each step in this model is considered indispensable and one must proceed through the specific order. Different writers give different number of steps in this model but basically it involves five steps according to Harding (1987), which include:

1. Identification and definition of the problem.
2. Statement of the desired state of affairs
3. Generation of alternative course of action.
4. Formulation and selection of the preferred course of action and
5. Implementation.

Short and Greer (1997) indicate that school administrators see subordinates, including students as inexperienced and therefore lacking the requisite knowledge form making managerial and operational decisions that could propel the school in the direction for the achievement of set objectives. Afful-Broni (2004) observes that the Board of Governors in American schools was once strongly opposed to the idea of subordinate involvement in educational decisions at even the local level. It was believed that such subordinate participation contravened the Board's constitutional rights. This situation led to the development of different perceptions and attitudes among the general public towards subordinate or student participation in the affairs of the school. Parents

considered that the teacher, for example, was hired to teach whilst the student on the other hand, was in school to learn and not to meddle themselves in administrative matters. With such a projection, administrators of educational institutions saw decision-making as their sole prerogative delegated to them by the Board of Governors. Whereas teachers were restricted to certain technical decisions, students were totally denied the opportunity of participation.

Asiedu Akrofi (1978) agrees with Afful-Broni by saying that many heads of educational institutions abuse powers entrusted into their care by the state and as a result intimidate the very students they are supposed to work with. He indicates that such attitude of intimidation and abuses of power do not argue well for the collaborative efforts needed for the smooth running of schools. He states further that in Africa where the child does not question the actions of adults coupled with the Christian belief that children must respect and obey adults, all go to show why some heads look down upon students and treat their requests for participation in decision-making with contempt.

Duodu (2001) in an article pointed out that technical knowledge is the basis for decision-making in purely bureaucratic organizations. Gorton (1980) also found that involving people in decision-making required that the administrator be certain that the individuals or group whom he is involving are given sufficient training for participation in decision-making (p.248). It was indicated in Gorton's study that heads of schools think that students lack the requisite knowledge for an effective involvement in decision-making at the school level. Students on their part, feel that they have adequate information upon which

to make a decision. Therefore, there is a significant difference in the perceptions of the groups.

Chapman (1988) conducted a study in Australia to find out the factors that were associated with subordinate participation in school decision-making with the emphasis on teachers. The analysis of the data revealed that subordinates involvement was associated with factors such as gender, age, seniority and experience. This was confirmed by Mandani (1983) that male students and student leaders were more desirous to be involved in operational decisions than female students and those not in leadership positions. It was thus suggested that each of the factors had some influence on the desire or otherwise of teachers and other subordinates including students to get involved in school decision-making. However, it was not easy to determine the extent of influence.

Chapman (1988) and Mandani (1983) differed in their methodologies. Nevertheless, their findings generally agree that;

1. Subordinates differed in their desire to be involved in school-based decision-making.
2. Many factors affect subordinates desire for participation in school decision-making
3. It is seen from the foregoing that there is an apparent consensus in the conclusion drawn by the literature reviewed. The consensus is that there is uniformity in students' or subordinates' desire to be involved in decision-making process. This is explained by the fact that there is variation in students' perceptions of their participation in school decision-making.

Finally, the desire of subordinates including students to participate in the school decision-making depends on the leadership style of the head of the school.

Rebore (1982) and Dixit (1977) note that involving the relevant publics in the management of organizations is a very broad concept. It can be found in many forms depending on the society where the concept is found. According to Dixit, workers have been found to be represented on consultative committees, working councils, Board of Directors and Union Government activities. Rebore (1982) calls this “Collective Bargaining”. In America for example the concept is called “co-management”. In Britain, it is referred to as Industrial Democracy”. In Yugoslavia, it is known as “Self – Government” (Dixit, 1977).

Effective participation in decision-making involves creating opportunities for children and young people to increase their influence over what happens to them and around them. Students can participate in school decision-making at different levels involving different groups of students and facilitated by a wide range of processes, formal and informal. It means involving children and young people not only by asking for their opinions and advice but also with school support as leaders, advisors and decision-makers.

In bureaucracy, decision-making was reserved for those at the top of the hierarchy. In schools, this meant that teachers and students have little voice in decisions that affect them (Hoy and Miskel 1991). In a situation where the head of the institution has very little confidence in the staff and students’ decision-making, the principal would rarely invite views and suggestions from them (Asiedu-Akrofi 1978).

However, Knezevich (1984) reported that since school administrator's were hard-pressed with activities of students in the secondary schools and colleges as seen in the appearance of underground newspapers' and student walkouts to protest undesirable school food services, dress codes and others involvement in decision-making by students began to emerge. Rice (1984) believed that putting decision-making power as close to the point of delivery as possible made implementation of those decisions not only possible but successful.

Similarly, Jenkins (1988) postulated that to empower others is to give stakeholders share in the movement and direction of the enterprise. Students who were able to initiate and carry out new ideas by involvement in decision-making should in turn, take more responsibility for their learning experience (Short & Greer, 1997).

Carley (1980) suggested two instrumental reasoning's; better student learning and better group decisions. Students' participation leads to more effective decision-making and learning; better decisions are made when participants share in making those decisions and learning is more effective when students are active participants. Students' participation is seen as a teaching – learning strategy, a way of achieving educational goals.

Taylor (1987) posits that there is a strong case for participation of students on the grounds of education in citizen and the values of a democratic society. Educators have a role in teaching about democratic community being a model for and part of that community. Student participation will make these notions clearly

developing in youth and capacities to participate actively within the school, political and cultural life of the community.

Secondly, a democratic community is about an active commitment to developing democracy. Children, especially, it is argued, lack a sense of responsibility, the decision-making skills and requisite knowledge to be informed participants. This argument is explicitly put forward by Woods T. (1993). Smith (1995) argues that educators should especially seek to prepare students for democracy in such a way as to provide them with critical skills which enable them to identify and challenge sources of domination and oppression.

Whitehead and Whitehead (1991) further explained that there is a duty to participate and that it is a matter of getting people to appreciate, through education that they have both moral rights and more pertinently here, moral duties in an area where it may not have occurred to them and that they did or where they are reluctant to acknowledge them. Various definitions have been given for decision-making. One of such definitions was given by Coombs (1970), which states that decision-making is a process of choosing from among alternatives, ways of achieving an objective by providing a solution to a problem. They are organizational responses to problems.

Boston (1991) on his part observed that the central function of administration is directing and controlling the decision-making process. It is the central aspect in the sense that all other functions of administration can best be interpreted in terms of the decision-making process.

Brech (1963) sees decision-making as being at the centre of every administration. He supports this notion by saying that decision-making is the heart of the organization and the very centre of the process of administration. Some writers have observed that decision-making is a complex process. Adams (1999) for example pointed out this complex nature of decision-making by stating that:

If we expand the concept of decision-making to include, on one hand, the process by which we implement or make the decision “work”, and if we further recognize that this is a continuing, dynamic process rather than an occasional event, then decision-making means something quite different and becomes the basis of all managerial action (p. 659).

This shows that decision-making is very essential for the success of any administration. Other people have categorized decision-making into various groups. Notable amongst them is that of Holdsworth (1995) who distinguished between personal and organizational decisions. In his view, personal decisions are personal to the decision maker. He determines the means and the ends for his own purpose. Organizational decisions relate to organizational goals and they are usually, if not always, delegated. Decision-making in organization is thus the responsibility of organizational members who within the hierarchy are vested with some responsibility.

Approaches to Decision-Making

The Teacher Education Division Manual for Distant Learners (2007) proposes the following approaches to the decision-making processes in the school governance process;

1. Announcing – Decisions taken by school authorities on problems without the involvement of students should be swiftly brought to their notice. This will ensure co-operation between school authorities and students.
2. Consulting – This is where a tentative decision is taken by the school administration and presented to the students to know their reactions. This reaction will help modify the decision for the better.
3. Soliciting or tapping – Here, before a decision is taken, everybody's view is taken into consideration. Though, the school head is not bound to choose from the suggestions, they will help shape the final decision.
4. Delegation – This is where decisions are taken on your behalf by a member or members of your staff at your instance. It will send signal to the student body that the members of staff are united.
5. Joint Decision-making – as the name implies, you and your staff and students could come together as equals and take decisions for the school.

Mankoe (2002) outlines three approaches of involving students in the governance and management of the school.

1. The committee system – The committee system is an approach by which a school appoints a small group of people as standing committees to deal more expeditiously with specific problems of the school administration.

These committees include food, entertainment and discipline. Members of staff usually chair these committees to direct affairs so that they may carry the administration's view to members to enable them make appropriate decisions and to assist the school in its policy making.

2. Durbars – These are occasions for frank discussions among staff and students devoid of intimidation and victimization. They should not focus only on negative issues and ways of addressing them but on the positive aspects as well i.e. when the school is doing well.
3. Suggestion box – The suggestion box is created and placed at vantage points in the school. Students drop grievances, criticisms and suggestions on issues that bother them into the box without actually indicating their names. Such “droppings” are usually anonymous. It is an effective means for those who feel inhibited for some reasons such as fear of victimization etc to talk openly but who have genuine desire to make their concerns known. The box may be opened once a week. Any suggestions made should be addressed by the authorities concerned such as the Board of Governors, Parents and Teachers Association, School Council or members of staff among others.

Dortey et al. (2006) outlines the following approaches to decision-making;

1. Rational Comprehensive Theory – This theory is said to be rational because the decision-maker looks at all alternatives and gathers all information about a particular problem before coming into conclusion. It

attempts looking at problems at wider perspective especially when they are new. The consequences of each alternative are critically investigated and compared with other alternatives. The decision maker will therefore choose the alternative that maximizes or satisfies the attainment of his goals, values and objectives.

2. Active Decision-Making – By active, we mean the system on its own can predict or anticipate the sources of demands or claims and can therefore on its own act or effect policies that will match with demands or claims. Thus, the problem would not come before decisions are taken. The policy-maker would look at the system and make a decision which will be needed by the system. It is full of predictions and anticipations. It is a very strong research-based decision-making.
3. Reactive Decision-Making – This approach to decision – making assumes that once corporate plans have been made, decisions follow as a natural consequence of the operation of the business. The organization structure, the systems employed and personnel, interact, one with the other, both within the business and in dealing with external bodies. In effect, decision-making is regarded as part of the continuous process of carrying out the company objectives. A decision is made; as a result there are occurrences which will call for further decisions to continue to pursue the policy being adopted. A decision is not made for all time, but is a link in a chain which will have to be strengthened by further links when circumstances or events call for action.

4. Incremental Theory/Incrementalism – This theory of decision-making does not consider all the alternatives of a particular problem. It compares those alternatives that are slightly different from the existing ones or situation. It assumes that what actually happens is not different from the past. Past experiences are considered. It makes the problem more manageable by building upon the former. It is adding or subtracting as the case might be.
5. Mixed Scanning/Integrated Approach – This permits the decision-maker to utilize both the rational comprehensive and the incremental theories in different situations. In some instances, incrementalism would be applied and in others too, rational comprehensive approach would be employed. Mixed scanning is that a kind of ‘compromise’ approach is reached. It makes the decision-maker to defend his circumstances and choose whichever is convenient. This needs mathematical and scientific abilities of the decision-maker.

Participatory Decision-Making

Participation in decision-making is an important tool for the facilitation of both organizational goal attainment and personal need satisfaction and motivation.

Owens (1987) defines participation as the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation that encourages the individual to contribute to group goals and to share responsibility for them. Participation is a communal ‘ownership of decisions’ which is motivating to the participant. It releases one’s energy, creativity and initiative.

Bass (1985) conducted an early study on the effects of participation in decision-making. He found out from his study that even when the needed working conditions were available, workers were resistant to changes and therefore, they could not increase production. In their effort to find ways of overcoming the resistance which simultaneously increase productivity and reduce turnover, carefully matched three groups of employees and their behaviours were studied.

In the first group, the workers were given only short, routine announcements concerning the need for change and the changes to be made. There was no opportunity to participate in the decision. In the second group, the employees were notified of a proposed change, the necessity of the change was explained and specifics elaborated. This group of workers had some of their group members represented in designing those changes. The third group represented employees who were treated much the same as those in group two, expecting that there was total representation (with everyone involved in planning the new jobs).

One month after implementing the experimental procedures, the differences noticed were that those in the “no-participation group” had no improvement in production. Again, absenteeism, employee turnover, and the number of grievances increased. In the two other groups where there was some participation, production rose to impressively high levels and employee turnover, absenteeism and grievances were quite minimal. The results show the positive effect participation has in production in any organization.

Hoy and Miskel (1991) supported the importance of participation in decision-making in business as well as in educational organizations. The

following were the generalizations made from the research on teacher participation.

1. The opportunity to share in the formulation of policies is an important factor in the morale of teachers and in their enthusiasm for the school organization.
2. That participation in decision-making is positively related to the individual teacher's satisfaction with the profession of teaching.
3. That teachers prefer principals who involve them in decision-making.
4. Teachers neither expect nor want to be involved in decision-making, in fact; too much involvement can be detrimental as too little.
5. They further went on to say that participation in decision-making has consequences that vary from situation to situation.
6. The roles and functions of both teachers and administrators in decision-making need to be varied according to the nature of the problem.
7. Both internal and external factors affect the degree of participation in decision-making by teachers.

Factors that Enhance Students' Participation in Decision-Making

Decision-making is a very essential tool in any organization if the set goals are to be met, particularly when subordinates are involved in taking such decisions. In Adams' (1999) study, he noticed that many countries have found it necessary to include the youth in decision-making processes. Examples of such countries, according to him, are Sweden and Denmark, where the law requires

that schools promote and respect democratic principles. They are required to establish school councils and committees. Young people are represented on school boards and are involved in curriculum planning. Netherlands is another example he gave. In Dutch Schools, participation Councils are set up to make proposals on the running of the schools. Secondary pupils are entitled to establish school councils and the Minister of Education consults with a national body that includes pupils' representatives.

In another development, the European commission, according to Adams (1999) had drawn up a Youth Policy based on a very wide-ranging consultation exercise with young people. The commissioner responsible for education and culture stressed that she was going to involve the youth especially on policies that concern them most.

Furthermore, Adams (1999) identified from his study that in Botswana, the government department responsible for youth policy included in its objectives, a strong commitment to participation. Its aim was to involve young people in programmes, assist them in attaining the competencies to participate in national development and society as a whole and to promote leadership, practical skills and opportunities for participation.

Duke (1980) in his study identified open communication with subordinates as an important factor that enhances decision-making. In a study conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1994) principals consistently identified five primary strategies for implementing shared governance in schools. These included

building trusts, developing open communication, sharing information, building consensus and enhancing inevitable conflict in productive ways.

Halpin and Croft (1983) reported that administrators could facilitate students involvement in University decision-making processes by providing the necessary training, appropriately scheduling University Committee meetings, increasing student representation on certain University Committees and using multiple approaches to obtain students input. It was their concern that faculty members and administrators who hold negative attitudes towards students' involvement might be enlightened about the students' role in University governance so that they would show greater respect for student members on University Committees.

Halpin and Croft again contended that students who wanted to be involved in University governance must be knowledgeable about the procedures involved in the decision-making of their universities. Students must as well know their limitations. They suggested that students' organizations should employ various means to encourage capable students to become involved in the governance of their University. Incentives, according to them, appear to be required for students to participate in the process because their financial and other limitations may deter them from doing so.

Benefits of Students Participation in Decision-Making

Keith and Girling (1991p.129) enumerate the following ten benefits of participation in problem solving:

1. Problem awareness: helps to focus attention on existence of a problem where avenues of communication are not open, problems may not be brought into the open for solution and may fester.
2. Problem Diagnosis: Brings in other views to ensure that the problem is correctly diagnosed. Expands the data-gathering network. Helps to obtain a range of practical observations on the nature of the problem.
3. Problem definition: Helps to gain acceptance and buy into problem solving by those who have a stake. Participation and Consultation at this stage helps speed implementation of the solution.
4. Generate alternatives: Recognize and incorporates professional knowledge of teachers in school-level decision making and principals in school-district decisions.
5. Test alternatives.
6. Select among alternatives: Helps to ensure that there is commitment to selected alternative. Also, helps to minimize sabotage of selected decision.
7. Develop an Action Plan: Gains the commitment of those who must implement and undertake tasks.
8. Communicate the plan: Helps to facilitate the understanding of how the decision may impact on those outside of the unit and to reduce inadvertent sabotage.

9. Implement the Action Plan: Helps to ensure a co-ordinated team effort provided there was adequate participation in prior steps.
10. Monitor, evaluate and revise: Helps to ensure adequate feedback on successes as well as hitches by those directly affected.

Mankoe (2002) outlines the following advantages associated with students' participation in decision-making in school;

1. A link is made between school authorities and the student body. This link establishes trust between school authorities and students making the school a community run by committees of staff and students. Students are thus able to control affairs in the absence of the staff. They perform certain delegated roles thus creating “we feeling” and a sense of belongingness. The administrative roles of staff often take a bigger chunk of their instructional time. Some staff may be on sick leave or travel in which case students are available to take charge. The delegated roles therefore lessen the administrative burden on staff which gives them ample time to deal with academic work more seriously.
2. Students are able to understand and appreciate school problems. The students' representative council for example, meets to discuss problems objectively and make informed decisions. Qualitative decisions are made which students do not consider as being arbitrarily imposed on them. The adolescent's suspicion of the adult is removed.
3. A sense of responsibility is instilled in students and ensures that they willingly obey school rules and regulations. “He who desires to rule must

first learn to obey". Students' discipline becomes self-imposed. Immorality among students is reduced when students obey rules they have had a hand in making.

4. A healthy relationship is created between the school authorities and students thus creating a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning. There is high tolerance as staff and students are prepared to listen to each other's views.
5. Participation satisfies the need for recognition and attention. Such contentment helps students to create democratic attitudes and learn to be self-directing and law abiding students, respect a leader who tolerates participation in decision-making and regards their views as carrying weight.
6. Students regard school property which they have had a hand in creating as their own and will not destroy them. As they share in the successes of the school, they equally share in its failures.
7. Student leaders are able to provide suggestions towards solving problems related to resources such as procurement of food, water, furniture, textbooks, stationery etc. School authorities may not have all the answers to these problems.
8. Student leaders' involvement in school administration eliminates dictatorial tendencies of school authorities and instills in students the practice of democracy.

9. Involving students and staff in school administration particularly in the use of scarce resources such as electricity, water, money etc promotes probity, accountability and transparency.

Perception of Students' Participation in Decision-Making Process in Schools/Colleges

In a bureaucracy, decision-making was reserved for those at the top of the hierarchy. In schools, this meant that teachers and students have little voice in decisions that affected them (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Similarly, in a research carried out in U.S.A. among 26 schools, about empowerment of students in decision-making, majority of the teachers involved in the research rejected the idea of including students in decision-making structure of the school. According to the researchers, the reasons given by the teachers were that adults did not wish to share their decision authority with the younger generation. The research revealed that empowering students was a refutation of traditional and teacher's roles and that in schools, teachers were to teach and students were to learn. It further stated that learners were not expected to participate in determining what they (learners) should learn.

In the same vein, Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) stated that in a situation where the head of the institution has little confidence in the staff and students' decision-making, the head would really invite views and suggestions from them. According to him, whenever such situations arose, the staff and students would get disappointed because they could not be sure of what to participate.

However, Knezevich (1984) reported that since school administrators were hard-pressed with activities of students in the colleges of education as seen in the appearance of “underground newspapers” and student walkouts to protest undesirable school food services, dress and others, involvement in decision-making by students began to emerge. Participation, according to Owens (1987), is the mental and emotional involvement of a person in a group situation that encourages the individual to contribute to goals and to share responsibly for them. It refers to the notion of “ownership” of buying into decisions.

Keith and Girling (1991) state that participating management refers to the regular and significant employee involvement in organizational decisions that affect the entire organization as well as their individual standards and making sure their organization is on target in terms of responding to the needs of the clients it serves. Participation focuses on the specific ways in which staff can be involved in the management process with the objective of improving the organization’s effectiveness. Participating management rests on the principle of shared authority by which managers delegate power as well as responsibility to their employees. Participation means that a person can influence that is, have something to say about a decision that is beyond his formal authority (the degree of discretion in his job).

Participation also means a supervisor’s or manager’s sharing with work groups of work-related information and of responsibilities, decisions or both. Participation may be used to determine the way a job should be performed, how a

group should divide up the work and what the goals might be (Bittel, 1985), i.e., to share in common with others.

It is a technique towards achieving success in developing harmony and attaining common goals of an organization. It is also a simple way to inspire people and its simplicity lies in the phrase “to share in common with others”. An administrator must share knowledge and information with others in order to gain their co-operation; share his own experience so that employees will benefit from it; share the decision-making process so that employees can do some things the way they would like to; and together share credit for achievement.

Students’ Participation in Decision-Making and the Building of Cordial

Relationship that Promotes the Teaching Learning Process

Participation in the management of an organization generally motivates workers. This helps them to give off their best because they align their individual goals with that of the organization. It helps management to retain their employees.

Herzberg (1987) believes that extrinsic motivators are not enduring. He advocates for job enrichment programmes such as genuine participation of staff or subordinates in the decision-making process. It was pointed out by Lutterodt (1989) that employee participation in decision-making is among the range of key success – factors for productive improvement.

Short and Greer (1997) indicated in a study that workers found in all organizations would like to be involved in making the decisions that made an impact on the quality of their working lives as well as those decisions essential to the success of the organizations. Lutterodt (1989) indicates in a study that

participation in management is one of the widely recognized motivational techniques. The effects of the technique, according to him, are increased employee satisfaction, enthusiasm, commitment and confidence in the organization. In a similar study, Patchen (1970) argued that increased participation in decision-making was associated with greater job satisfaction, work achievement and personal integration in the organization.

Short and Greer (1997) noted that a pseudo-democratic leadership will bring out many disadvantages ranging from apathy to open hostility. Dorsey (1957) confirms this by stating that lack of involvement in the decision-making process leads to unconcerned attitudes and lack of effective responsibility. In line with the foregoing, Keef (1975) noted that when teachers or subordinates are involved in those decisions that affect them. They are more likely to be more satisfied with their situation and their school head. In a study conducted by Crane (1976), participative decision-making has been defined as a management approach which allows and encourages subordinates to participate in decisions that will affect them. Lowin (as cited in Dunstan, 1981) found in his study that participative management is an organizational operation by which decisions are reached by including those persons who are to execute those decisions. The two studies cited above agree that putting decision-making power as close to the point of delivery as possible makes implementation of those decisions not only possible but successful. Students' demonstrations have adverse effects on the nation and despite the number of attempts at addressing such acts, they continue to be one of the most frequent occurrences on various campuses of our tertiary institutions.

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) explored the many causes to such a phenomenon. The one cause among the many which is relevant to this study is the “lack of social relationships”. He argued that heads of institutions must strive to involve students in the decision-making process in order to build trust. According to him, the building of trust will ultimately remove suspicions and thus promote the building of cordial relationships between students and teachers as well as students and administration. This, in effect, will enhance the teaching-learning process.

Cantelon (1980) supports the above notion by stating that students protest against the postponement of pleasures and the wide spread search for new kinds of direct experience in life. When students are relegated to the background and thus are not treated as “workers” with vested interests in the learning experiences in which they participate in school, the only alternative is to kick against the established norm. Such situations as kicking against the established norm do not in any way promote a congenial atmosphere for the teaching and learning process.

Lightfoot(1986)stated that students must be empowered; where empowerment is defined as the opportunities a student has for autonomy, choice, responsibility and participation in decision- making (pp 71 – 72).Forojalla (1993) states that “to empower others is to give a stakeholder share in the movement and direction of the enterprise (p 81).

Summary

From the review of related literature, it stands out clearly that various scholars have varied views on students’ participation in decision-making in schools. According to some writers, involving the relevant public in the affairs

and governance of an organization helps to promote peace and achieve set goals. According to Gorton (1980), the basic rationale for involving students in decision-making is to increase the number of viewpoints and ideas which might be relevant to the decision being made. According to Gorton, it helps to improve subordinates' morale and satisfaction by involving them in relevant decisions that concern them. However, administrators or college authorities must be circumspect to the extent to which students are allowed to participate. Furthermore, Richman and Farmer (1975) support the view that involving subordinates in the decision-making process allows for the selection of alternatives which is in the best interest of the organization.

Finally, heads of schools that encourage participatory administration in their schools were more likely to be successful as heads than those who used "the one man show" model of administration.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the various procedures that were followed to obtain the research data. The discussion thus, involved the research design, population, sample size and sampling procedures, pre-testing of instruments, description of research instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis procedures

Research Design

The study investigated students' perception of their participation in decision- making at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi. It investigated the structure of decision – making in the college, actual students' participation in the college's decision – making processes and students' perceptions of their participation in the college's decision-making process. The design employed for the study was the descriptive survey. Gay (1987) said a descriptive research involves collecting data in order to facilitate the testing of hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the status of a subject.

Descriptive survey involves clearly defined problem and definite objectives. It requires expert and imaginative planning, careful analysis and interpretation of data, logical and skillful reporting of findings. The descriptive research method was chosen because the researcher described and interpreted

what he identified. Again, this design was chosen because the researcher was studying the behaviors of students in school decision-making and therefore, the descriptive research was considered for its appropriateness in the study of behavior sciences.

Thus, the researcher felt that with the peculiar nature of the population under study (i.e. administrators, teachers, and students) the research design chosen was relevant for the researcher to achieve the purpose of this specific investigation and to draw meaningful conclusion from it.

Population

In research, population refers to the group about which the researcher is interested in gaining information and drawing conclusions.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) defined population as the entire aggregation of cases that meet a designated set of criteria. Thus, the population comprises the entire aggregation of elements in which the researcher is interested.

Target Population

The target population is the aggregate of cases about which the researcher would like to make generalizations. In other words, the target population is the target group of people who exhibit characteristics that stimulate research work.

For this study, the target population was described as all the students, teachers and administrators (which comprised the principal and the two vice principals (administration and academic affairs) of Wesley College of Education.

The statistical breakdown of the target population is as follows;

1. The Principal
2. The Vice Principal (Administration)
3. The Vice Principal (Academic)
4. Teachers 67 made up of;

Male 44 (65.67%)

Female 23 (34.33%)

Students: (2009/10 academic year)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
1	210	130	340
2	220	130	350
3	220	130	<u>350</u>
Total			<u>1,040</u>

This population was the target for reliable data collection to answer the research questions raised and to help the researcher critically assess students' perceptions about their participation in decision making at the college.

The Accessible Population

Since it was not possible to deal with the whole of the target group due to constraints like time, easy access to population and late admissions and arrival of the first years, the accessible population for the study was made up of the second and third year students, the teachers and the college frontline administrators.

According to Ary et al. (1985), accessible population is the group from which the researcher takes the sample for the study (p.139). In other words, the accessible population is the aggregate of cases that conform to a designated criterion that are accessible to the researcher as a pool of subjects for the study.

The first year students were not included in the study due to the following reasons;

1. They had not been exposed to decision – making practices at the college and
2. They gained admission when the study had commenced.

Sample

A sample is a smaller unit or a subset bearing the same characteristics of the population of interest. In simple terms, a sample refers to the representatives of the larger population who share similar characteristics. It is thus, the proportion of the larger population that the researcher wants to study and make conclusions about the population. The sample for the study comprised the college administrators made up of the principal, the two vice principals for administration and academic, sixty-seven (67) teaching staff comprising 44 males representing 65.67% and 23 females representing 34.33%.

The last category of the sample included all the members of the students' representative council who numbered one hundred and ninety-two (192). This is mainly due to the fact that the SRC members were directly or indirectly involved

in decision – making processes in the college. The sample size was therefore two hundred and sixty-two (162).

Sampling Techniques

Sampling refers to the process of selecting a portion of the population to represent the entire population (Asamoah-Gyimah, 2002).

The main respondents for the study were categorized into three groups namely; the school administration, teachers and members of the students' representative council from each class. The researcher decided to use purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents since all of them were vital for inclusion in the study. For instance, all the three frontline administrators in the college namely; the principal and the two vice principals were required to provide vital information for the study. Additionally, the 67 tutors were all required to make varied inputs into decision-making practices in the college hence their inclusion.

Lastly, even though, the target population was the entire student body, the researcher saw the need to use only prefects from the classroom level who were members of the Students Representative Council. This was because all the prefects were variedly involved in decision – making practices in the college.

Research Instruments

Research instruments are devices researchers use to collect data for a study. A questionnaire which consisted of open and closed-ended questions was

developed and used. Three sets of questionnaires were developed for the respondents namely: the college administration (principal, vice principal administration and academic), the teachers and the students. The first part of the questionnaire asked respondents to provide personal data such as rank, year in the college, gender, position in the college, number of years in the college, programme of study. The remaining part had three main sections.

Section “A” which was made up of six items sought to identify the structure of decision-making in the college. For example, respondents were required to indicate whether the SRC in the college meets frequently, whether students serve on the College’s Disciplinary Committee and whether students’ opinions on bringing about changes are often welcome by the college administration.

Section “B” which consisted of five items explored the actual level of students’ participation in the college’s decision-making processes. Respondents were required to indicate whether students choose their own class prefects, the college involves them in the planning of their menu, purchasing of items sold to them and planning new projects for the college.

Section “C” had eight items which sought to establish students’ perceptions of their participation in college decision-making. Respondents were expected to indicate whether they believed that students’ participation in college decision- making enhanced their commitment to the programmes of the college, quality of decisions, delayed activities in the college or promoted cordial relationship between staff and students. Furthermore, students were asked to

select two from a list of decisional situations they would like to participate in most. In addition, they were asked to pick from two factors which greatly prevented them from participating fully in the decision-making process of the college. The last part of the questionnaire was made up of an open-ended question which sought information from students, teachers and administration about their general comments on decision-making in the college.

Responses to items in section “A” and “C” followed the four – likert scale in a descending order. In sections “A” and “C” the responses were as follows:

- 4 –Strongly agree
- 3 - Agree
- 2 - Disagree
- 1 – Strongly disagree

The responses to items in section B were as follows:

- To a great extent
- To some extent
- To a little extent
- Not at all
- Don't know

Samples of the questionnaires are attached to this study as Appendices A, B, and C.

Pilot Testing of Instrument

The researcher randomly selected 20 respondents made up of tutors and prefects of Offinso College of Education for a pilot study. The purpose was to assess the validity of the instruments and to make them more specific and effective in eliciting the needed responses. Wesley College of Education and Offinso College of Education have similar environments and their staff have similar qualifications and work experiences. The students on the other hand, have common characteristics and therefore the pilot testing helped the researcher to identify possible problems likely to be encountered in the study. The feedback obtained from the pre-testing revealed some short comings in the draft questionnaire which were promptly corrected.

Administration of Questionnaire

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Director of the Institute for Education Planning and Administration (IEPA) before embarking on the collection of data. The introductory letter enabled the researcher get the needed assistance and co-operation from the authorities of Wesley College of Education.

Preliminary contact with the Vice Principal (academic) enabled the researcher to obtain the total staff and students' lists in the college. The researcher first targeted the teachers even though the college was on recess. He personally visited all the tutors who stayed on the college campus.

Since the researcher happened to be a tutor in the college, he easily located the tutors without any difficulty. He explained his mission and went through the questionnaire items with them. After these individual meetings, the teachers gave him some few days ranging between three to five days to respond to the questionnaire. On the appointed days, all the questionnaires were collected back by the researcher.

The second strategy the researcher used was the general staff meeting. This strategy enabled the researcher reach a greater number of the tutors who domiciled outside the campus. The questionnaires were distributed and left for a couple of days. After the third day, the entire questionnaire had all been collected by the researcher through his personal shelves in the staff common room and other personal contacts with the tutors.

The researcher lastly adopted a “mop up” exercise to reach out the rest of the tutors who had travelled outside the country, hospitalized, bereaved etc. In all, the number of tutors in the college was 67 and the researcher was able to distribute and retrieve 55 copies of the questionnaire representing a return rate of 82.0%. The remaining tutors were said to be pursuing various distance education programmes.

The second group of respondents was the SRC. The researcher arranged with the SRC members in the third year during their off-campus orientation programme. After taking them through the items in the questionnaire, they were distributed and retrieved the following day due to their relaxed schedules.

The rest of the SRC membership in the second year was also contacted when college re-opened. The researcher gathered them at the assembly hall and explained the items thoroughly in the questionnaire to them. After the meeting, the questionnaires were distributed to them and retrieved after two days since they were still on campus. Lastly, the researcher personally sent three copies meant for the administration (appendix c) to the college principal and his two vice principals who also quickly responded and returned them to the researcher.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was done using the computer programme, Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The variables were edited and coded and with the aid of the SPSS, tables with simple percentages and frequency counts were obtained to support the analysis. These provided quick visual impressions on values thus enhancing the discussion and interpretation of the responses to all items of the instruments.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main focus of the study was to find out students' perception of their participation in decision-making in Wesley College of Education in the Ashanti Region. The study analyzed the structure of decision-making in the college, actual students' participation in decision-making and students' perception of their participation in decision-making in the college. It assessed the perception of students, teachers and college administrators' views and opinions on students' participation in the college decision-making process, the extent of students' participation and the areas of decisions in which students desire to participate. It also sought to find out the factors which usually prevent students from participating in decision-making practices in the college.

The research also aimed at finding out whether such participation promote congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning or has some negative effect on the College. Thus, this chapter dealt with the analysis, interpretation and discussions of the views and opinions of students, teachers and administrators of the college on subject matter.

Demographic Data

The background information of all the respondents in Wesley College of Education who participated in the study was scrutinized.

The teachers and administrators' were asked the number of years they had spent in the college. The responses are provided in Table 1

Table 1

Number of Years Spent in the College by Respondents

Students			Working years of Teachers			Working years of Administrators		
Year	Freq	%	Freq.	Years	%	Freq.	Year	%
Two	126	65.6	25	6	45.5	1	6	33.3
Three	66	34.4	17	6 – 10	30.9	2	3	66.7
			8	11 – 15	144.5			
			1	16 – 20	1.8			
			4	20	7.3			
Total	192	100.0	55		100.0	3		100.0

Table 1 is a representation of the number of years spent in the college by respondents. The table indicates that out of the 192 student leaders, 126 (65.6%) were in second year and 66 student leaders (34.4%) were in third year.

It further showed that out of the sampled teachers of 55, 25 of them (45.5%) had spent varied years ranging between two to six years, 17 (30.9%) had spent between six to ten years; 8(14.5%) had spent between eleven to fifteen years, 1 (1.8%) had spent between sixteen to twenty years and 4 (7.3%) had spent over twenty years. The table showed further that out of the 3 college administrators, 1 representing 33.3% had spent six years in the position whilst 2 representing 66.7% had spent three years in the position.

The picture being portrayed from table 1 indicates that all the respondents had considerable knowledge of decision-making practices in the college regarding students' level of involvement. Two years was the least number of years served.

Table 2 presents data on the programme of study of the student respondents.

Table 2

Students Programmes of Study

Programme	Frequency	%
General	49	25.5
Science	65	33.9
French	78	40.6
Total	192	100.0

Table 2 is a representation of the programme of studies by the students in the college. The table indicates that out of the total sampled students of 192, forty-nine (25.5%) offered general programme, sixty-five students (33.9%) offered science programme whilst seventy-eight students (40.6%) offered French

programme. The picture being painted here shows that there were more French students than the other programmes in students' leadership positions followed by science and general respectively. This is because more French and Science students are admitted in Wesley College of Education than general Programme. Wesley College of Education is among the few institutions specializing in Science and French programmes in the country.

Table 3 presents data on students' status in the college

Table 3
Status of Students in the College

Students			Teachers		
Status	Freq.	%	Status	Freq.	%
Prefect	126	65.6	Senior House Minster/Mistress	2	3.6
SRC Member	28	14.6	Form Master/Mistress	19	34.5
Both Prefect and SRC Member	38	19.8	House Master/Mistress	12	21.8
			Head of Department	8	14.5
			Others	1	25.5
	192	100.0		55	100.0

Table 3 shows that a lot of student leaders held various administrative positions in the college such as College Secretary, Men’s Secretary, Women’s Secretary, Dining Hall Prefects, Sports Prefects, Sanitary Prefects and Class Prefects. Out of the 192 student leaders, 126 (65.6%) were prefects, 28 (14.6%) were SRC members and 38 (19.8%) were both prefects and SRC members. The table further shows that out of the 55 sampled teachers, 2(3.6%) were Senior House Masters/Mistresses, 19 (34.5%) were Form Masters/Mistresses, 12 (21.8%) were House Masters/Mistresses, 8 (14.5%) were Heads of Departments whilst 14 (25.5%) held various positions such as Denominational Heads, Dining Hall Masters, Language Co-ordinators. The college administrators included the principal, vice principal for administration and academic.

The data from the table indicate that all the respondents (students, teachers and administrators) had been involved in decision-making practices at various levels in the college.

Table 4 presents gender of respondents in the college

Table 4
Gender of Respondents

Students			Teachers			Administrators		
Sex	Frequency	%	Sex	Frequenc	%	Sex	Frequency	%
Male	134	69.79	Male	35	63.6	Male	2	66.7
Female	58	30.21	Female	20	36.4	Female	1	33.3
Total	192	100.0		55	100.0		3	100.0

Table 4 is a representation of the gender of the respondents in the study namely student leaders, and college administrators. The table indicates that out of the 192 student leaders, 134 (69.79%) were males and 58 (30.21%) were females. It further shows that out of 55 sampled teachers, 35 (63.6%) were males and 20 (36.4%) were females. Lastly, out of the 3 college administrators, 2 representing (66.7%) were males whilst 1 representing 33.3% was a female. The picture portrays the fact that more male students, teachers and administrators occupied leadership positions in the college than females.

Structure of Decision – Making in the College

Table 5

Present the Structure of Decision –Making in the College

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Frequent meetings by SRC	32	16.7	99	51.6	45	23.4	16	8.3	192	100
Students’ involvement in the college’s disciplinary committee	41	21.4	107	55.7	42	21.9	2	1.0	192	100
Students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters	35	18.2	97	50.5	35	18.2	25	13.0	192	100
The college administration often considers the views of students before arriving at decisions affecting them	8	4.2	23	12.0	55	28.6	106	55.2	192	100
Students’ opinions on bringing about changes are often welcome by the Administration	7	3.6	34	17.7	67	34.9	84	3.8	192	100
Total	134	412								

Table 5 presents data on the existing structure of decision-making in the college. The table shows that 131 (68.3%) out of the 192 students respondents agreed that the SRC in the college met frequently whereas 61 (31.7%) disagreed. One hundred and forty-eight (77.1%) of the respondents upheld the notion that students were involved in the college's disciplinary committee as against 44 (22.9%) who disagreed.

With regards to whether students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters, one-hundred and thirty two of the respondents indicating (68.7%) indicated that the option is available in the college whereas sixty (31.2%) respondents disagreed. Therefore, the college authorities need to conscientise the students during orientation programme on the existence of this policy.

From table 5, one hundred and sixty-one (83.8%) disagreed with the statement that the college administration takes the views of students into consideration when taking decisions. Only 21 (16.2%) respondents agreed with the statement. The college administration therefore, needs to involve students in major decisions that affect them.

Table 6 presents data on structure of decision-making in the college by teachers.

Table 6 Structure of Decision-Making in the College

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	Agree						Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Frequent meetings by SRC	6	10.9	42	76.4	7	12.7	0	0.0	55	100
Students' involvement in the college's disciplinary committee	13	23.6	34	61.8	4	7.3	4	7.3	55	100
Students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters	5	23.6	20	36.4	16	29.1	14	25.5	55	100
Students are permitted by college administration to express their opinion	5	9.1	34	61.8	12	21.8	4	7.3	55	100
The college administration often considers the views of students before arriving at decisions affecting them	2	9.1	32	58.2	16	29.1	5	9.1	55	100
Students' opinions on bringing about changes are often welcome by the Administration	5	3.6	30	54.5	16	29.1	4	7.3	55	100
Total	36		162		71		31			

Table 6 presents the perspective of teachers on the existence of decision-making structures in the college. It reveals that forty-eight (87.3%) out of the fifty-five teacher respondents agreed that the college SRC existed and met frequently whereas seven (12.7%) disagreed. This assertion therefore corroborates that of the students' response of the existence of an SRC in the college. Forty-seven (85.4%) of the respondents also confirmed that students were involved in disciplinary decisions as against eight (14.6%) of respondents who disagreed.

On whether students have the option to appeal in disciplinary decisions, twenty-five (45.5%) agreed with the statement whereas thirty (54.5%) disagreed. This is in sharp contrast with the students' assertion that students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters. This means that some of the teachers lack basic information in the college.

Table 7 presents data on structure of decision-making in the college by administrators.

Table 7**Structure of Decision-Making in the College**

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	Agree		Disagree				Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Frequent meetings by SRC	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	00.0	0	0.00	3	100
Students' involvement in the college's disciplinary committee.	3	100.0	0	00.0	4	00.0	0	00.0	3	100
Students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters.	2	66.7	1	33.3	16	00.0	0	00.0	3	100
Students are permitted by college administration to express their opinion.	3	100.0	0	00.0	12	00.0	0	00.0	3	100
The college administration considers the views of students before arriving at decisions affecting them.	2	66.7	1	33.3	16	00.0	0	00.0	3	100

Table 7 also presents the views and opinions of college administrators on the decision-making structures in the college. The table reveals that all the three line administrators representing (100%) agreed that the SRC in the college is fully functional and also meets regularly. This therefore, supports the assertion by both students and teachers that the SRC exists in the college. Again, all the three college administrators representing (100%) strongly agree that students are involved in disciplinary decisions.

With regards to whether students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters, all the three (100%) agreed that the option could be exercised by students. There was total agreement by respondents to the statement that students are permitted by the college administration to express their opinions and also, before decisions are taken, the college administration takes the views of students on board among others.

Questionnaire for Students, Teachers and Administrators

Table 8 presents data on actual students' participation in the college decision-making process by student respondents.

Table 8

Actual Students' Participation in the College Decision-Making Process

Items	To a great extent		To some extent		To a little extent		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Choosing class captains/prefects	168	87.5	14	7.3	6	3.1	3	1.6	1	0.1	192
Planning for new projects for the college e.g. college farm	9	4.7	28	14.6	50	26.0	96	50.0	9	4.7	192	100
Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities e.g. sports, social functions etc	37	19.4	71	37.2	41	21.5	34	17.8	8	4.2	191	100

Table 8 depicts the information on some of the specific areas student leaders participate in the decision-making in the college. The table shows that 188 (97.9%) out of 192 respondents overwhelmingly indicated that students choose their own leaders. However, 105 (54.7%) indicated that students were not involved in the planning of new projects for the college whereas 87(45.3%) indicated they were not consulted. This may be due to lack of adequate information by a section of the student leadership.

On the statement that students are assigned duties concerning co-curricular activities such as sports and social functions, 149 (78.1%) indicated that they were involved in such decision-making processes whilst 43 (21.9%) disagreed with the assertion and others showed total ignorance about it. Analyses of some of the specific areas as given by respondents indicate that majority of the student leaders were actively involved in decision-making processes in the college.

Table 9 presents data on actual students' participation in the college by teacher respondents.

Table 9**Actual Students' Participation in the College's Decision-Making Process**

Items	To a great extent		To some extent		To a little extent		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Choosing class captains/prefects	47	85.5	7	12.7	1	1.8	0	0.00	0	0.0	55	100
Planning for new projects for the college e.g. college farm	4	7.3	21	38.2	15	27.3	10	18.2	5	9.1	55	100
Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities e.g. sports, social functions etc.	19	34.5	18	32.7	11	20.0	6	10.9	1	1.8	55	100

Table 9 provides data on some of the specific areas of student leaders' participation in the decision-making practices in the college. The table shows that 55 (100%) of the respondents accepted that students in the college elected their own leaders. These views from the teachers totally agreed with the students view point on the issue. However, 40 (72.8%) contradicted the assertion of the students that they were not involved in the planning of new projects for the college. However, 15 out of the respondents representing (27.2%) supported the students.

On the issue of assigning duties and other co-curricular activities to students, 48 (87.2%) of respondents agreed with the assertion of students' involvement whilst 7 (12.8%) disagreed.

Table 10 presents data on students actual participation in decision-making as given by administrators.

Table 10
Actual Students' Participation in the College's Decision-Making Process

Items	To a great extent		To some extent		To a little extent		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Choosing class captains/prefects	3	100.0	0	00.0	0	0.00	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100
Planning for new projects for the college e.g. Continuation of the college farm	3	100.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100
Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities e.g. sports, social functions etc	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100

Table 10 depicts the information on some of the specific areas of student leaders' participation in the decision-making practices in the college as provided by administrators. The table shows that the three administrators representing (100%) to a great extent agreed with the other respondents that students elected their own

leaders. The administrators also agreed to a great extent that student leaders are involved in the planning of new projects for the college. On the issue of assigning co-curricular activities and other duties to student leaders, respondents also agreed that student leaders are involved in decision-making practices involving co-curricular activities.

Table 11 presents data on managerial decisions in the college as given by student respondents.

Table 11
Managerial Decisions

Items	To a great extent		To some extent		To a little extent		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Students involvement in the planning of college menu	26	13.5	50	26.0	39	20.3	68	35.4	9	4.7	192	100
Purchasing items that are sold to students	12	6.3	11	5.8	13	6.8	144	75.4	11	5.8	192	100

Table 11 presents data on specific managerial decisions in the college and the extent of students' involvement in them. The table shows that 115 (59.8%) out of

the 192 respondents consented to their involvement in the planning of the college menu whilst 77 (40.2%) disagreed.

The table also shows that 36(18.9%) indicated that the involvement of students in purchasing items for students whereas overwhelming 156 (81.1%) disagreed that students were involved in decisions on purchasing items that were sold to students. This implied that college authorities operated closed door policies when it came to purchasing items for students.

Table 12 presents managerial decisions in the college as given by teachers.

Table 12

Managerial Decisions

Items	To a great extent		To some extent		To a little extent		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Students involvement in the planning of college menu	14	25.5	23	41.8	14	25.5	3	5.5	1	1.8	55	100
Purchasing items that are sold to students	0	00.0	17	30.9	9	16.4	25	4.7	4	7.3	55	100

Table 12 also presents information on specific managerial decisions in the college and the extent of students' involvement in them as given by respondents. The

table shows that 51(92.8%) out of 55 respondents agreed that student leaders are involved in the planning of the college menu. However, 4 (7.2%) of respondents disagreed.

The table also shows that 26 (47.3%) confirmed that students are involved in every decision concerning purchasing items for students whilst 29(52.7%) refuted the assertion. This majority view by teachers is in agreement with students' assertion that the college does not involve student leaders in purchasing items for them.

Table 13 presents managerial decisions given by college administrators.

Table 13

Managerial Decisions

Items	To a great extent		To some extent		To a little extent		Not at all		Don't know		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Students involvement in the planning of college menu	3	100.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100
Purchasing items that are sold to students	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	00.0	1	33.3	0	00.0	3	100

Table 13 also presents data on specific managerial decisions in the college involving student leaders as given by college administrators. The table shows that

all the 3 college administrators representing (100%) agreed to a great extent that student leaders were adequately consulted in all managerial decisions in the college involving planning of college menu for students. This assertion is in total agreement with the other respondents. The table also shows that out of the 3 respondents, 2 (66.7%) agreed to some extent that students were involved in decisions involving purchasing items for students whilst 1 (33.3%) disagreed with that assertion.

Questionnaire for Students' Perception of their Participation in Decision-Making in the College

Table 14 presents data on students' perception of their participation in college decision-making by students.

Students' perception of their participation in decision-making at Wesley College of Education.

Table 14
Students' Participation in College Decision-Making

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Should give them the opportunity to contribute to decision-making in order to enhance quality of decisions	162	84.4	24	12.5	6	3.1	0	0.0	192
Enhances students' commitment to the programmes of the college	115	59.9	68	35.4	5	2.6	4	2.1	192	100.0
Delays activities in the college	20	10.4	39	20.3	82	42.7	51	26.6	192	100.0
Promotes cordial relationship between staff and students	111	57.8	70	36.5	9	4.7	2	1.0	192	100.0
Enhance students' feeling of belongingness	108	56.3	62	32.3	15	7.8	7	3.6	192	100.0

Table 14 presents students' perceptions of their participation in the college decision-making at Wesley College of Education. The table shows that 186 (96.9%) out of the 192 respondents believed that students participation in the college's decision-making would give them the opportunity to contribute to decision-making to enhance quality of decisions in the college. However, 6 (3.1%) disagreed to this perception. When subordinates like students are allowed to influence decisions in college administration, it tends to enhance their commitment to the programmes of the college. This perception is shown in the table as 183 (95.3%) out of the respondents tend to indicate. However, 9 (4.7%) disagreed with this perception. The table also indicates that 181 (94.3%) of the respondents believe that students' involvement in decision-making promotes cordial staff-student relations. Responding to the statement whether students participation in decision-making slows down administrative process, 133 (69.3%) disagreed with the issue whilst 59 (30.7%) agreed with this assertion. The view of the majority is that the involvement of students in the decision-making process would in no way slow down the administrative process. The role students' play rather complements the efforts of the college authorities in formulating quality decisions in the college.

Table 15 presents students' perception of their participation in college decision-making by teachers.

Table 15**Students' Perceptions of Their Participation in Decision-Making at Wesley College of Education.**

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	Agree						Disagree			
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Should give them the opportunity to contribute to decision-making in order to enhance quality of decisions	25	45.5	27	49.1	1	1.8	2	3.6	55	100.0
Enhances students' commitment to the programmes of the college	26	47.3	25	45.5	1	1.8	3	5.5	55	100.0
Delays activities in the college	7	12.7	5	9.1	32	58.2	11	20.0	55	100.0
Promotes cordial relationship between staff and students	21	38.2	31	56.4	1	1.8	2	3.6	55	100.0
Enhance students' feeling of belongingness	25	45.5	28	50.9	1	1.8	1	1.8	55	100.0

Table 15 presents students' perceptions of their involvement in the college decision-making processes at Wesley college of Education and responses of respondents (teacher). The table shows that 52 (94.6%) out of the 55 respondents believed that students involvement in decision-making would enhance quality of

decisions whereas 3(5.4%) disagreed. Additionally, the table shows that 51(92.8%) out of the respondents believe that students involvement in the decision making process in the college would enhance their commitment to the programmes of the college. The table also shows that 52 (94.6%) believed that students involvement in the decision-making practices of the college would promote cordial relationship between them and the college authorities. However, the respondents disagreed that students' involvement in decision-making would slow down the administrative process. The table shows that 43 (78.2%) of the respondents disagree with this assertion.

Table 16 presents data on students' perception of their participation in decision-making given by college administrators

Table 16

Students' Perceptions of Their Participation in Decision-Making at Wesley College of Education.

Items	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Should give them the opportunity to contribute to decision-making in order to enhance quality of decisions	3	100	0	00.0	0	00.0	0	00.0	3

Table 16 continue

Enhances students' commitment to the programmes of the college	2	66.7	1	33.3	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100.0
Delays activities in the college	0	00.0	1	00.0	3	100	0	00.0	3	100.0
Promotes cordial relationship between staff and students	1	33.3	2	66.7	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100.0
Enhance students' feeling of belongingness	0	00.0	3	100	0	00.0	0	00.0	3	100.0

Table 16 presents administrators' views on students' perceptions of their involvement in the college's decision-making processes at Wesley College of Education. The table shows that all the 3 college administrators representing (100%) strongly believed that students' involvement in decision-making would enhance the quality of decisions in the college. Furthermore, the respondents believed with the teachers and students that students' involvement in decision-making would enhance their commitment to the programmes of the college and also promote cordial relationship between students and college authorities.

However, the respondents disagreed with the assertion that students' participation in the college's decision-making would slow down the administrative process. On the contrary, it would rather complement the administrative roles of the college authorities. Decisional situations that students would like to participate in most at Wesley College of Education in Kumasi.

Table 17 Presents two decisional situations students would like to participate as given by students, teachers and administrators.

Table 17

Items	Students		Teachers		Administration	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Purchasing food items	59	15.7	24	21.8	0	0.0
Planning College menu	123	32.7	40	36.4	2	33.3
Continuation of the table						
Purchasing College items	51	13.6	13	11.8	1	16.7
Disciplining students	49	13.0	18	16.4	2	33.3
Planning new projects in the college	94	25.0	15	13.6	1	16.7

Table 17 shows two decisional situations of specific areas students would like to participate. It presents the views and opinions of the three categories of respondents. The table shows that 123 students (32.7%) indicated that they would like to participate in planning the college menu. This is followed by 94 (25.0%) who indicated their desire to participate in planning new projects, 59 (15.7%), 51 (13.6%) and 49 (13.0%) for purchasing food items, purchasing college items and taking part in disciplinary matters respectively.

The table also presents the views of teachers where 40 (36.4%) indicated that students would like to participate in the planning of college menu. However, the least decisional situation students would like to participate in is purchasing

college items. The table shows that 13 (11.8%) of the teachers indicated purchasing college items. This perhaps means that college purchases involve some cumbersome procedures and students may not be interested in them.

The last category of respondents (college administrators) presented their views when it comes to students prioritized areas of college decisions they would like to participate. The table shows that 2 (33.3%), another 2 (33.3%), one each representing (16.7%) of them indicated planning of menu, disciplining students, purchasing college items and planning new projects would be prioritized respectively.

Table 18 presents data on factors that prevent students from participating fully in decision-making process at Wesley College of Education.

Table 18

The following analyses two factors which usually prevent students of Wesley College of Education from fully participating in decision-making process as indicated by respondents (students, teachers, administrators)

Table 18

Items	Students		Teachers		Administration	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Fear of being victimized	80	29.3	24	42.9	3	100
Authoritative nature of College administration	93	34.1	11	19.6	0	0.0
Lack of students representation on College Committees	17	6.2	2	3.6	0	0.0
Non-function of SRC	28	10.3	2	3.6	0	0.0
Fear of missing instructional hours	46	16.8	17	30.4	3	100
Others	9	3.3	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 18 presents a combination of student leaders, teachers and college administrator's responses on two factors that inhibit students from participating in decision-making process in the administration of the colleges. Analyses of the data from the table showed that 80 (29.3%), from student leaders, 24 (42.9%) from teachers and 3 (100%) from college administrators respectively agreed that fear of being victimized by college authorities inhibit them from participating in decision-making process in the colleges.

Whereas 46 (16.8%) of the student leaders complained that missing instructional hours inhibit them from active decision-making process as many as, 17(30.4%) from teachers and all the 3(100%) administrators mentioned the same issue.

Lastly, whereas 93 (34.1%) of student leaders and 11 (19.6%) of the teachers mentioned the authoritative nature of college administration as inhibiting factors, none of the college administrators (0.0%) mentioned it as an issue.

Table 19

Presents data on general comments made by Respondents on Decision-making practices in the College

(students, teachers and Administrators).

Students			Teachers			Administration		
Category	No	%	Category	No	%	Category	No	%
Bills should be given to students before vacation	32	16.7	Involvement of students in allowance deductions	15	27.3	Inclusion of students representation on college's governing council	1	33.3
Students must be respected and recognised	30	15.6	Payment of fees must be justifiable	5	9.1	Students new status must be recognised	1	33.3
Involvement in allowance deductions	100	52.1	Students should not be suppressed	10	18.2	No comment	1	33.3
Items on students bill should be justifiable	10	5.2	Increased responsibilities of students	10	18.2	Total	3	100.0
No comment	20	10.4	No comment	15	27.3			
Total	192	100.0	Total	55	100.0			

Table 19 analyses the general comments by respondents on decision-making practices in the college.

From the table, out of the 192 student respondents, 100(52.1%) indicated that students should be involved in all decisions regarding the deductions of their monthly allowances. This was corroborated by the teachers. Out of 55 respondents, 15(27.3%) indicated students involvement in the deductions of their monthly allowances. None of the administrators commented on students' allowances.

From the table, 1(33.3%) out of the three administrators mentioned the inclusion of students representation on the college's governing council, the highest decision-making body in the college.

From the table, 15.6%, 18.2% and 33.3% of students, teachers and administrator respondents respectively said that the new status of students must be recognized and respected.

From the table, 10.4%, 27.3% and 33.3% of student, teacher and administrator respondents respectively did not respond to the open-ended questions

Summary of Analyses

In analyzing the data, the researcher looked at the structure of decision-making processes in the college. The results revealed that there was indeed an SRC in the college that serves as the mouthpiece of the students in the college. It was also revealed that the SRC frequently meets as part of the decision-making

processes in the college. The study also identified the mode of electing the student leaders which was done by the students themselves. The results also showed that students were involved in the college's disciplinary committee and that students had the option to appeal in disciplinary matters which was rarely done. However, the students indicated that they were not allowed to express their views and opinions on the welfare whereas the college administrators indicated that students' views were always considered. This portrayed a dichotomy of perception between the college and the student leaders.

The analysis in Section B discussed respondents' views on actual students' participation in operational and managerial decisions. The results revealed that whilst college authorities delegated various responsibilities on co-curricular activities such as sports, social functions to students, the students are also consulted during the planning on menu. However; the results indicated that the college authorities do not consult students when purchasing items to be sold to them. While student leaders indicated that the college administration did not consult them when planning new projects for the college, the college authorities and teachers on the other hand indicated that students were consulted on such issues.

The Section C of the analysis looked at respondents' perception of students' participation in the college's decision-making process. The principle of participatory decision-making as advocated by Short and Greer (1977) stipulates that participatory decision-making involves psychological as well as physical representation in relevant decision-making scenarios.

The results indicated that students' participation in decision-making gave them the opportunity to contribute to decision-making which enhances their commitment to the college's programmes, their sense of belongingness which ultimately promotes the cordial relationship between staff and students.

The results further indicated that students' participation in decision-making did not slow down the administrative process as was sometimes perceived by some administrators.

The next section of the respondents' results sought to find out the specific decisional situations students would like to participate in most. The results indicated that all the respondents were unanimous that students are always eager to participate in the planning of college menu. However, whilst majority of students mentioned their preference for new projects; teachers indicated food items whilst college administration settled on discipline.

The last part of the closed-ended questionnaire sought to find out the specific factors which prevented students from participating fully in decision-making process in the college. The results indicated that whilst majority of the student leaders indicated the authoritative nature of the college administration, the teachers and college administrators specifically mentioned the students' fear of victimization as the major cause. The college authorities believed that student leaders feared that their hard line stance on specific decisions of college administration might result in their victimization whereas most students singled out the 'one man show' nature of the college administration as the cause of their reluctance to participate in the college's decision-making processes. Lastly, whilst

the college authorities and teachers indicated that student leaders feared that missing instructions was their second causative factor, student leaders on the other hand indicated their fear of being victimized as their second preventive factor they would not want to involve themselves in the college's decision-making practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The study thoroughly investigated student's perception about their participation in decision-making and general school governance at Wesley college of Education in Kumasi in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. The research became necessary as a result of different opinions shared by stakeholders in education more especially during the period of tertiarisation of the colleges of Education in Ghana. Whereas some thought that it would be necessary to involve students in decision-making, others had a contrary opinion on the issue.

The researcher became interested in the subject when the 2002 education reforms report raised the status of the then training colleges into tertiary institutions. Whilst most of the students started to press for their greater involvement in decision making as pertained in the Public Universities, some administrators thought that such students' involvement must be guided.

The population for the study comprised all the student of Wesley College of Education teachers and the college administrators consisting of a principal and the two vice principals. The college had a total student population of 1,040 in the 2009/2010 academic year. The researcher sampled 250 respondents. They

comprised 192 students made up of 134 males representing 69.79% and 58 females representing 30.21%, 55 college teachers comprising 35 males (63.6%) and 20 females (36.4%) and the three frontline college administrators made up of 2 males (66.7%) and 1 female (33.3%).

The instrument used for the data collection was questionnaire. A set of questionnaire was designed for each category of sampled respondents namely students, teachers and the college administrators. The questionnaire consisted of open and closed-ended questions. It had three sections which examined the structure of decision-making in the college, actual students' participation in the college's decision making process and students perceptions of their participation in college decision making. The questionnaire also examined decisional areas students desired to participate most and factors which greatly prevented them from fully participating in the decision-making process of the college.

In all, there were 23 items in the questionnaire for all the respondents namely students, teachers and college administrators. The researcher administered the questionnaire personally. Thus, copies of the questionnaire were delivered to respondents by hand. For the students, copies of the questionnaire were given to them and each item explained thoroughly. They were collected as they completed them. The teachers and the administrators were given between three to six days to complete depending on their schedules of work. The 250 copies of the questionnaire were all completed and returned indicating 100% return rate.

The study was a descriptive survey. The variables were edited and coded and with the aid of SPSS. Tables with simple percentile and frequency counts

were obtained to support the analysis. These helped to provide quick visual impression on the values which enhanced the discussion and interpretation of the responses to all items of the instruments.

Findings of the Study

The results of the study are discussed in line with the research questions of the study and to correspond with the main items in the research instruments. The study revealed that the main mode of students' participation in decision-making in Wesley College of Education was through the students Representative Council. The council was the main mouthpiece of students in the college which is elected by the student body. It was revealed that the council met regularly with the college administration to deliberate on issues affecting students. However, the views and sentiments of students were not often accommodated by the college authorities. This answers the research question one which sought to find out the level of students participation in the decision-making in the Wesley College. The study also revealed that students were involved in some of the managerial decisions of the college. These included planning the college, menu, purchasing items for the college among others. They were however, not included in the planning of new projects in the college. The school authorities thought that those responsibilities fell within their mandate and expertise which explicitly is captured in the procurement act 663.

In reference to the research question two which sought to find out the areas of decisions students of Wesley College wanted to participate in most.

The study found the areas to include the following in that order:

	%
Planning college menu	32.7
Planning new projects in the college	25.0
Purchasing food items	15.7
Purchasing college items	13.6
Disciplining students	13.0

Respondents considered student participation in decision-making beneficial in the sense that it would offer them more opportunities to contribute to the college's decision-making process enhanced students commitment to the programmes of the college promotes cordial relationship between students and staff and lastly, enhanced students' feelings of belongingness in the college. However, respondents disagreed with the statement that students' participation in decision-making would derail activities in the college.

On the research question four which sought to find out the factors which militate against students' participation in the college decision-making process respondents namely students, teachers and administrators had divergent views on it. Whilst students mentioned the authoritative nature of college administration and the non-functioning of the SRC as factors which prevented them, they seemed to agree with teachers and administrators that fear of victimization and missing of instructional hours were the main factors which prevented them from participating in decision-making in the college.

Lastly, the study revealed that there were more male student leader (69.79%), more male teachers (63.6%) and more male administrators (66.7%) than female student leaders (30.21%) female teachers (36.4%) and female administrator (33.3%). This revelation meant that the affirmative action which seeks to advocate equal opportunities, power and responsibilities for both males and females may take a little while to be accomplished.

Conclusions

The findings of the study support the fact that students participation in decision-making does not only make them feel part of the college set-up; it also enhances their commitment to the programmes of the college. This ultimately promotes cordial relationship between staff and the entire student body.

The second conclusion gathered from the findings is that even though, decision-making structures such as the SRC exist in the college, it is not functioning properly. This is because too much commitment of students to the cause of SRC programmes deprives them of the adequate instructional contact hours. This affects their assessment in the college.

The autonomy given to the students to elect their own leaders is a positive feature in the college. This will instill in the students a sense of democratic credentials which has become a norm under the country's democratic dispensation.

Furthermore, the involvement of students in decision-making in Wesley college of Education is in the right direction. When students are given opportunities to participate in the college's decision-making, it increases their commitment base and let them become more responsible in the schools. It also paves the way for them to make their grievances known to college authorities without resulting in demonstrations and other forms of unacceptable behaviours.

On the whole, the findings from the study give clear indication that participation in college decision-making leads to greater commitments to administrative and qualitative decisions which will be acceptable to all stakeholders.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made for future practice:

1. It was found from the findings that meals and discipline were among important priorities of students in the college. The college authorities should therefore take adequate steps to discuss the general welfare of students before formulating policies on them.
2. Since the existing structures such as the SRC for involving students in decision-making process were not adequate, innovative means such as the introduction of suggestion boxes, regular fora and other informal engagements by the college authorities with student leadership should be encouraged. Suggestion boxes for instance, should be placed at vantage

points on the college campus for submission of pertinent suggestions to college authorities. This may help the college authorities to know what are on students' minds at any point in time. It will also help student leadership to freely express their views and opinions on pressing issues in the college.

3. The bedrock of success of any college administration hinges on the prevailing peace in the college. The need to involve students and teachers in the pursuit of peace in the college should be vigorously pursued. This will eliminate mistrust, suspicion, backbiting among others that have plagued other educational institutions without these practices.
4. Another staggering revelation from the study indicated that students were not consulted when it came to deductions of the monthly meagre allowance. This is a potential source of conflict in the college. To avert any possible clash between the college authorities and the student leadership, all monthly deductions from students' allowances should be thoroughly explained. This should be followed by proper financial management which should be made known to the students. Additionally, all monetary deductions should conform to the G.E.S. standards.
5. The authorities of Wesley College of Education should endeavour to confer with students on decisions such as purchasing school uniforms, college cloth, house dues, house jersey, exercise books etc. Such consultation will provide students the opportunity to freely express their

sentiments on reasonable and affordable pricing without compromising on quality of such products.

6. The Colleges of Education as exist in the educational arrangement are now tertiary institutions. Students of these Colleges now pursue Diploma in Basic Education programmes like any tertiary institution. Therefore, College authorities and teachers should give them the needed recognition and respect like their counterparts in other tertiary institutions. Such compulsory measures like being forced to plait their hair in a specific style must be discouraged.
7. Lastly, students' bills should be prepared on time and given to them before they vacate. This will eschew the undue pressure on them when school re-opens. Related to the above, students must be given itemized bills to clear all doubt of financial malfeasance in the college.

Recommendations for Future Research

The results and findings of the study only related to Wesley College of Education in Kumasi. If the study could be replicated in all the colleges of Education in Ashanti Region, it would promote wider discussions on the findings meaningfully. There is also the need for other researchers to establish the degree of relationship between college authorities and their teachers in the decision-making process of the Colleges of Education in Ashanti Region.

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SECTION A

THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE COLLEGE

Please, place a tick [√] in the box corresponding to the item that best describes your response.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	For Office Use
4.	The S.R.C. in my college meets frequently					
5.	Students often serve on the College's Disciplinary Committee					
6.	Students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters					
7.	Students are often permitted by the College administration to express their opinions on issues					
8.	The college administration often takes the views of students into consideration before arriving at final decisions affecting the them					
9.	Students' opinions on effecting or bringing about changes are often welcome by the administration.					

SECTION B

ACTUAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATION IN THE COLLEGE’S

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Please, place a tick [√] in the box corresponding to the item that best describes your answer.

To what extent are students made to participate in the college’s decision-making process in the following areas?

		To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	To A Little Extent	Not At All	Don't Know	For Office Use
10.	Choosing class captains/prefects						
11.	Planning new projects for the college e.g., college farm						
12.	Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities e.g., sports, social functions etc.						

MANAGERIAL DECISION

Students have been getting involved in the following decision-making situations.

		To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	To A Little Extent	Not At All	Don't Know	For Office Use
13.	Planning the school menu						
14.	Purchasing items that are sold to students E.g., house jerseys, exercise books						

SECTION C

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION

IN COLLEGE DECISION-MAKING

Please, place a tick [√] in the appropriate box that corresponds to the item that best describes your response.

Students' participation in college decision-making

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	For Office Use
15.	Should give students the opportunity to contribute to decision-making in order to enhance quality of decisions					
16.	Enhances students' commitment to the programmes of the college					
17.	Delays activities in the college					
18.	Promotes cordial relationship between staff and students					
19.	Enhances students' feelings of belongingness					

20. Given the opportunity to be involved in the college decision-making process, which two decisional situations will students like to participate in most?

Please, tick [√] the appropriate options

- a) Purchasing food items for the college []
- b) Planning the college menu []
- c) Purchasing items (e.g. house jerseys, exercise books e) that are sold to students []
- d) Disciplining students []
- e) Planning new projects for college []

21. Which of the following factors do you think greatly prevent students from participating fully in the decision-making process of your college.

- f) Fear of being victimized []
- g) Authoritative nature of the college administration []
- h) Lack of students' representation on committees []
- i) Non-functioning of the S.R.C. []
- j) Fear of missing instructional contact hours []
- k) Any other please specify

.....

22a. has any student in your college ever been punished for expressing his/her views in the college? Yes [] No []

23. Please use the space provided below for any other comments that you wish to make.

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APPENDIX B

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT THEIR PARTICIPATION IN
DECISION-MAKING AT WESLEY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN
KUMASI**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This study is being carried out in your College by a Master of Educational Administration student of the University of Cape Coast.

Please, respond to all the statements in this questionnaire. You are assured of confidentiality. You are therefore, not to write your name.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Please, respond to each of the items in this section by ticking [] the response that is appropriate for you.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []

2. Position(s) held in the college:

Senior Housemaster/mistress []

Housemaster/Housemistress []

Head of Department []

Form Master/mistress []

Others specify.....

3. Number of years spent in the college

Less than 5 years []

6 – 10 years []

11 – 15 years []

16 – 20 years []

More than 20 years []

SECTION A

THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE COLLEGE

Please, place a tick [√] in the box corresponding to the item that best describes your response.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	For Office Use
4.	The S.R.C. in my college meets frequently					
5.	Students often serve on the College's Disciplinary Committee					
6.	Students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters					
7.	Students are often permitted by the College administration to express their opinions on issues					
8.	The College administration often takes the views of the students into consideration before arriving at final decisions affecting the them					
9.	Students' opinions on effecting or bringing about changes are often welcome by the administration.					

SECTION B

ACTUAL STUDENTS PARTICIPATION IN THE COLLEGE’S

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Please, place a tick [√] in the box corresponding to the item that best describes your answer.

To what extent are students made to participate in the college’s decision-making process in the following areas?

		To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	To A Little Extent	Not At All	Don’t Know	For Office Use
10.	Choosing class captains/prefects						
11.	Planning new projects for the college e.g., college farm						
12.	Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activity e.g., sports, social functions etc.						

MANAGERIAL DECISION

Students have been getting involved in the following decision-making situations.

		To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	To A Little Extent	Not At All	Don't Know	For Office Use
13.	Planning the school menu						
14.	Purchasing items that are sold to students E.g., house jerseys, exercise books etc.						

SECTION C

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION
IN COLLEGE DECISION-MAKING**

Please, place a tick in the appropriate box that corresponds to the item that best describes your response.

Students' participation in college decision-making

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	For Office Use
16.	Should give students the opportunity to contribute to decision-making in order to enhance quality of decisions					
17.	Enhances students' commitment to the programmes of the college					
18.	Delays activities in the college					
19.	Promotes cordial relationship between staff and students					
20.	Enhances students' feelings of belongingness					

21. Given the opportunity to be involved in the college decision-making process, which two decisional situations will students like to participate in most?

Please, tick the appropriate options

- a) Purchasing food items for the college
- b) Planning the college menu
- c) Purchasing items (e.g. house jerseys, exercise books) that are sold to students
- d) Disciplining students
- e) Planning new projects for college

22. Which of the following factors do you think greatly prevent students from participating fully in the decision-making process of your college.

- f) Fear of being victimized
- g) Authoritative nature of the college administration
- h) Lack of students' representation on committees
- i) Non-functioning of the S.R.C.
- j) Fear of missing instructional contact hours

Any other please specify

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23. Please use the space provided below for any other comments that you wish to make.

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APPENDIX C

**STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ABOUT THEIR PARTICIPATION IN
DECISION-MAKING AT WESLEY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION IN
KUMASI**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATION

This study is being carried out in your College by a Master of Educational Administration student of the University of Cape Coast. Please, respond to all the statements in this questionnaire. It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure the confidentiality of respondents' responses. You are therefore, not to write your name.

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Please, respond to each of the items in this section by providing the response that is appropriate for you.

1. Gender:

.....

2. Rank in

G.E.S.....

3. a) Number of years as Principal/Vice Principal of Wesley College of Education

.....

b) Total number of years as Administrator of Educational Institution(s)

.....

SECTION A

THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE COLLEGE

Please, place a tick [√] in the box corresponding to the item that best describes your response.

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	For Office Use
4.	The S.R.C. in my college meets frequently					
5.	Students often serve on the College's Disciplinary Committee					
6.	Students have the option to appeal in disciplinary matters					
7.	Students are often permitted by the College administration to express their opinions on issues					
8.	The College administration often takes the views of the students into consideration before arriving at final decisions affecting them					
9.	Students' opinions on effecting or bringing about changes are often welcome by the administration.					

SECTION B

**ACTUAL STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN THE COLLEGE'S
DECISION-MAKING PROCESS**

Please, place a tick [√] in the box corresponding to the item that best describes your answer.

To what extent are students made to participate in the college's decision-making process in the following areas?

		To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	To A Little Extent	Not At All	Don't Know	For Office Use
10.	Choosing class captains/prefects						
11.	Planning new projects for the college e.g., college farm						
12.	Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activity e.g., sports, social functions etc.						

MANAGERIAL DECISION

Students have been getting involved in the following decision-making situations.

		To A Great Extent	To Some Extent	To A Little Extent	Not At All	Don't Know	For Office Use
13.	Planning the school menu						
14.	Purchasing items that are sold to students E.g., house jerseys, exercise books etc.						

SECTION C

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN COLLEGE DECISION-MAKING

Please, place a tick [√] in the appropriate box that corresponds to the item that best describes your response.

Students' participation in college decision-making

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	For Office Use
15.	Should give students the opportunity to contribute to decision-making in order to enhance quality of decisions					
16.	Enhances students' commitment to the programmes of the College					
17.	Delays activities in the College					
18.	Promotes cordial relationship between staff and students					
19.	Enhances students' feelings of belongingness					

20. Given the opportunity to be involved in the College decision-making process, which two decisional situations will students like to participate in most?

Please, tick [√] the appropriate options

- a) Purchasing food items for the college []
- b) Planning the college menu []
- c) Purchasing items (e.g. house jerseys, exercise books) that are sold to students []
- d) Disciplining students []
- e) Planning new projects for College []

21. Which of the following factors do you think greatly prevent students from participating fully in the decision-making process of your College.

- f) Fear of being victimized []
- g) Authoritative nature of the College administration []
- h) Lack of students' representation on committees []
- i) Non-functioning of the S.R.C. []
- j) Fear of missing instructional contact hours []

k) Any other please specify

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22a. has any student in your College ever been punished for expressing his/her views in the College? Yes [] No []

23. Please use the space provided below for any other comments that you wish to make.

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APPENDIX D



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

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Our Ref: EP/144.8/Vol.2/1

July 6, 2010

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LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

The bearer of this letter, **Francis Kyei-Badu** is a graduate student of the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration of the University of Cape Coast. He requires some information from your outfit for the purpose of writing a Dissertation as a requirement of M. Ed degree programme.

We should be grateful if you would kindly allow him to collect the information from your outfit. Kindly give the necessary assistance that he requires to collect the information.

While anticipating your co-operation, we thank you for any help that you may be able to give.

Mr. Robert Appiah
Principal Admin. Asst.
For Director