

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING AT FIJAI
SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

THEODORA APPIAH

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

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

Candidate's signature..... Date.....

Name: Theodora Appiah

Supervisor's Declaration

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

Supervisor's signature..... Date.....

Name: Mr. S. K. Atakpa.

ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to find out how student participation in decision making affects school administration. An attempt was made to identify areas that students could effectively contribute to the smooth running of school administration. The target population was all the teachers and students of Fijai Secondary School. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select 292 students and 32 teachers.

Questionnaire was the main instrument used for the research study. The instruments were developed, discussed and streamlined with the assistance of my supervisor. The results indicate that both students and teachers agree that the students have been involved in some areas of School Administration such as maintaining class discipline, keeping order in the dining hall and keeping order and cleanliness in the dormitory. The students are however not involved in areas like vetting of prefects, planning of the school menu and not being represented on disciplinary committee.

On the basis of the findings of the study the following recommendations were made for future research.

- a. It is suggested that students' opinions should be considered in arriving at decisions that affect them.
- b. The following avenues should be visited by the headmaster in order to facilitate effective participation of students in school administration.
 - 1) Informal consultations.
 - 2) Introduction of suggestion boxes.
 - 3) Symposia.

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DEDICATION

The thesis is dedicated to my dear husband Mr. J. Y. Appiah and my children, Enoch, Ivan, Justin and Stanley.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the study and research questions.

Background to the Study

Students in any educational organization are regarded as the pivot around which everything else in the school revolves. According to Ozigi (1977), the student is at the centre of the educational process and all activities in the school should aim at developing his total personality to the fullest. This can be achieved if good curriculum and instructional programs are developed and implemented.

Decision-making therefore is very important in all human endeavors. Teachers, doctors, administrators, government, pupils, husbands, wives and others have to take decisions on one thing or the other. In most cases, there are several alternatives from among which a particular alternative is selected for implementation or execution.

According to an Akan adage, "Two heads are better than one." In taking decisions therefore, administrators have to depend to a large extent on the collaborative efforts of their staff and students to achieve set goals and objectives. Adesina S. (1990) sees the school as a social organism. To him, the school does not exist in isolation from the rest of society. As an establishment of society, it

has direct relationship with the rest of society. The ideas and values that are operative in the school are derived from those of the society and the functions that the schools perform are functions related to the society. In this vein, all stakeholders of education that is students, parents, teachers, administrators and the government are to be involved in the relevant decisions of the school.

History has revealed that the system of administration found in the schools that were first set up was predominantly autocratic. In such schools the head who was the key figure had unlimited powers. His powers were limited only by the laws of the state, board of governors and administrative regulations. The head as the administrative officer therefore assumed control over staff and students. The teachers had no choice but to submit to the rigid regimentation which was sometimes very close to military control.

With the rapid development of the school system and the increased professionalism in the teaching field in the early part of the 19th century, teachers became aware that the subordinate roles they had been playing in the educational enterprise was not compatible with the emerging ideas of professionalism. Teachers therefore became very vocal and were eager to be included in the decision making process of the school and they strongly challenged the authority of the school administration. Mankoe, (2000). In spite of the desire of teachers to be involved in decision making processes, Richardson (1979) confirms that some heads of educational institutions still hold the view that administrators should administer, teachers should teach, and students should learn. For administrators to be successful, they must be prepared to share their administrative prerogative of

decision making with their staff and students. The school head has to delegate duties to the staff and students and supervise them to perform them well. The need for student participation in school decision making process has been recognized decades ago.

According to Mankoe (2000) student participation in school administration may be seen as a constitutional right. Section 4 of Article 58 of the 1992 constitution of Ghana, for example stipulates that the President of Ghana should be assisted by others who act in his name. This implies that the other citizens should of necessity participate in the running of the affairs of the country. It is therefore necessary to inculcate this constitutional requirement in the running of a school which is supposed to be training the youth to participate later in the affairs of the larger community.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child (UNCROC) provides an international human rights context for promoting the participation of children and young people in decision making. In view of this, many information fora are held on yearly basis where children assume the positions of heads of states from their respective countries to address their assembly. Article 12 protects the rights of children to express their views freely on all matters affecting them. The views of the child should also be given due weight in accordance with age and maturity of the child.

Article 13 protects the rights of the children to freedom of expression, including freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or

through any other media of the child's choice. Ghana as a member of the UN should be able to adopt the UNCROC. This means that Ghana should agree to uphold the values and principles contained in UNCROC and should ensure that children under the age of 18 have their rights as defined by UNCROC recognized and protected.

Students form an important part in the administration of a school. Heads of institutions have the duty of taking numerous decisions which are pertinent to school life and directly affect students. There is the need therefore to allow students to participate in decision-making. If participation is denied, the individual's personality is mutilated, its growth impaired, and its potential for building a community thwarted. In other words, participation is not simply a fringe benefit that authorities may grant as a concession, but a human being's birthright that no authority can deny .Drucker, P.F.(1990).

According to Owens. R.G.(1970), the intellectual activity people are involved in is something that they will use in life. He believed that every individual has the capacity to think, the capacity for abstract thinking, the capacity to make decisions, choose alternatives and the capacity to plan. An authentic participation leads to emancipation because the individual can find answers to problems in life on his or her own.

Participation in decisions about one's life and future is a fundamental human need. Several educational reformers believe that ignoring this need not only among families, teachers and other staff but also among students makes schools alienating places. Glasser (1990) .

Effective participation in decision making involves creating opportunities for subordinates 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 or informal. Involving students in decision making does not only mean asking of their opinions and advice (consultation) but also making them leaders, advisors and decision makers.

Effective involvement of students adds significant value to school's decision making processes, promotes early student engagement with public and community life and provides students with essential life skills. In short, student involvement in decision-making benefits everyone involved-student, staff, parents and communities.

According to the New Zealand report on "Students participation in school decision-making in April, 2003, students participation can lead to improved school policies and practices, support the successful development and implementation of school initiatives, strengthen democratic processes within the school, facilitate better relationships between students, teachers, parents and the wider community and can also improve the understanding of and responsiveness to issues identified by students.

A careful look at the leadership styles of headmasters or headmistresses of Secondary Schools as well as the functional roles performed by school prefects, school committees involving students and the student representative council indicate that students participation in the decision making process at the school

level is not very much encouraged. This unpleasant situation has arisen because of the unwillingness of some heads to involve teachers and students in certain school decisions. There is generally a global cry from students to be involved in decision making. Studies conducted in the industrial sector reveal that the relevant public is involved in the decisions that are taking by management. This system is not so in the educational sector, (Mankoe, 2002)

From the reports of Enquiry into Students' grievances in Ghana, it is evident that some school heads do not involve students in the decision making process. This has resulted in the majority of the students adopting a militant way of making their voices head. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978). According to him majority of the students in Secondary and Post Secondary Schools would like to be greatly involved in decision making but they are not. To him, the heads of institutions are glued to the African traditional belief that children are only to be seen and not heard. They are expected to do what they are told without questioning.

In the history of Secondary Schools in Ghana, several students' unrests commonly referred to as strikes and demonstrations are recorded. The nature of the strikes whether peaceful or violent depends predominantly on prevailing conditions in the school. Strikes and demonstrations have become the medium through which students express their dissatisfaction as to how a school is run. Such strikes can be so violent that sometimes the lives of the head and the teaching staff may be in danger. In some cases, valuable items and property which had taken time and money to acquire are destroyed within a twinkle of an eye. In the early part of the 1970s, strikes and demonstrations were very rampant and the

consequences were also very disastrous. Recently, student unrest has reared its head again. The most recent is the riot that occurred at Konongo Odumasi Secondary School in the year (2002) where a number of computers and other valuable items were destroyed by these angry and dissatisfied students. Even though Fijai Secondary School has not recorded any of such strikes since its establishment fifty (50) years ago, the students have on several occasions through their representatives and the writing of anonymous letters, indicated their displeasure for not being involved in decisions that have to deal with matters like discipline, preparation of menu and the planning of entertainment programs which affect them directly. Most of the students especially the prefects and other leaders desire opportunities to participate in the process of decision making.

According to Mankoe (2002), the school organization may be likened to a tripod that comprises the academic staff support, non-teaching staff and students. To him a tripod cannot discharge its functions without one stand. Therefore each group has an important role to play in the school's operation to achieve its goals. It is commendable that students are given opportunities to participate in at least some of the decision-making processes of the school. The participatory approach to decision-making in the school would commit staff and students to co-operate and team up with administration to successfully implement school programs and to help achieve the goals of the institutions.

Statement of the Problem

In Fijai Secondary school students went to the dining hall on several occasions and found out that the menu had been changed without their

knowledge. Entertainment programs were drawn without the involvement of the entertainment prefects or the prefectural body and also students did not know how the SRC dues were disbursed.

During the 2002/2003 academic year, the students nominated candidates to be voted for the position of school prefects. These candidates were rejected by the school authority and other students were selected. As a result, the students refused to vote for a fresh set of prefects. This action by the School Authority has created a communication gap. Rules and regulations governing the school are disregarded by students. They tend to display lackadaisical attitude towards school affairs and are not committed towards the protection of school property. Tension seems to be mounting between the students and the staff. Such tensions according to Mankoe (2002) may continue to mount like a suppressed volcano which requires time to erupt ashes and lava to cause massive destruction of its environments.

The problems outlined and many others need to be researched into and suggestions made to bring harmony and peace to the school.

Purpose of the Study

Much of student agitations leading to strike actions have been traced to the fact that in the majority of instances students have been denied the opportunity to be involved in decisions that affect them. The study was designed to unearth students' perception of their involvement in school level decision making. It was also meant to find out areas or levels of actual student participation in the decision making process.

The study attempted to find out the degree of students satisfaction with their involvement in decision-making process and some of the effects associated with students' participation in taking decisions at the school level.,

Research Questions

1. What is the present level of student participation in decision making in the administration of the school?
2. What areas in school administration should students be allowed to offer inputs?
3. What benefits will the school derive if students are involved in decision making?

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the study would provide valuable information to heads of schools regarding students' expectations in their involvement in the decision making process of the school. It is also expected to give assistance to heads in the adoption of leadership styles and techniques that will enable them to manage the student personnel services in their schools effectively. The knowledge may also be of great help to heads of educational institutions in determining the desired level of participation of students in their schools and to motivate interested students to get involved. This can help create a congenial atmosphere for effective teaching and learning.

Delimitations

The population of the study consisted of all teachers and students of Fijai Secondary School. However this investigation was delimited to 292 students and

32 teachers. The study was also delimited to student participation in decision-making. These were , Present level of student participation in decision making, Areas in school Administration that students should offer inputs and the Benefits the school will derive if students offer inputs to Decision-Making.

Limitations

The researcher acknowledges the following limitations

- 1 The restrictive weaknesses in the data collection may affect the results of the study. The instruments were restricted to the examination of only three factors:
 - (a) Present level of student participation in decision-making.
 - (b) Areas in school Administration that students should offer inputs
 - (c) Benefits the school will derive if students offer inputs to decision-making

It is possible that other extraneous variables such as: which the instruments did not consider may also influence student participation in decision-making.
- 2 The sample used in the study was taken from only one school and so care is used in generalizing the findings.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The chapter attempts a critical review of literature on participatory management approach. The approach aims at providing opportunities for meaningful student involvement in decision-making peculiar techniques of the participatory management system to be reviewed include:

- Concept of participatory decision-making.
- Decision making in School Administration.
- Leadership styles.
- Perception of students in their involvement in decision-making.
- Area in which students can participate.
- Effects of student participation in decision-making.

Concept of Participatory Approach to School Administration

The first group of people to Institute the concept of participatory management were the Pioneers of Scientific management. Henry Fayol (1841 – 1925) produced some principles of management which he considered necessary for efficiency.

Among the principles was Esprit de Corps by which is implied that personnel must be encouraged to work as a team. Fayol argued that in unity there is strength. F. W. Taylor (1856 – 1917) Father of Scientific management was also

quoted by Walton (1984) to have supported worker participation in management. He stated that the principal objective of management should be to secure prosperity for both employers and employees. To satisfy the needs of employers and employees, he laid down four principles of management. One of the principles advocated constant and intimate co-operation between management and workers.

According to Levin and Young (1994) participation in every social institution is the pursuit of democracy. In participatory leadership, leader shares authority and responsibilities with members of the group without rejecting the responsibilities of leadership. Owens (1970) sees participation as mental and emotional involvement. To him this is the sense of ownership of or buying into decisions. "It is genuine ego involvement not merely being present or going through the motions." This ego involvement and the sense of "ownership" also encourage people to accept greater responsibility for the organizations effectiveness. Having been "brought into the goals and the decisions of the group, the individual sees himself or herself as having a stake of seeing them work out well. He further stressed that in participative decision-making, all the organizational members have the right to be heard, to have their views considered, to express their feelings and to offer knowledge and information.

Bittel (1985) stated that participation is an amazingly simple way to inspire people, and its simplicity lies in the definition of that word, "to share in common with others". He emphasized that "Sharing, then is the secret. You must share knowledge and information with others in order to attain their co-operation. You

must share your own experience so that employees will benefit from it. You must share the decision-making process itself so that employees can do something the way would like to do. And you must share credit for achievement (p.57).

Mankoe (2000) explained participation in school management as the regular involvement of the significant stakeholders (district administrators, institutional heads, teachers, parents, citizens, pupils where they are of age) and so and in setting goals, resolving problems and decisions that affect the organization, establishing performance standards, making sure that their organization is on target in terms of responding to the needs of the client it serves.

Owens (1970) stated that “as education grows more complex, there appears to be less and less certitude that many important issues can be resolved by experts who pass their solutions on to others to implement. According to Owens, appropriate solutions require free and open communication among a number of individuals who pool and share information. To him, close collaboration is necessary to weigh and evaluate information in the process of developing or informed judgment as to which of the several alternatives might be best.

According to Hanover Community school Bye Laws and Policies on student participation in school affairs, the School Board believes that students should be invited to participate in the governance of school activities at levels appropriate to their ages and competencies because:

1. Students should have a part in the determination of activities which so deeply affect their lives.

2. As institutions fundamental to the operation of a democratic society, the schools should strive to exemplify the democratic ideal of citizen participation in decision-making.
3. As part of their educational development, students should assume some of the responsibility of planning and executing the activities of the school.
4. Students are a valuable resource whose contributions can materially aid and benefit the schools.

The Board further directed that suggestions for the improvement of the schools may be offered by any student, provided they are of a constructive nature and contributes towards the realization of the educational goals of the corporation.

According to the bye laws, the superintendent should develop procedures to implement this policy which:

- i. Provides for the submission, consideration, and response to constructive student suggestions.
- ii. Designs the manner by which students should be selected for participation in school matters.
- iii. Ensures that student participation is fairly representational of the whole student body.

Decision-making in School Administration

Decision-making is defined by Gregg (1975) as choosing from among alternative ways of achieving an objective of providing a solution to a problem. Commonwealth Secretariat, (1993) defined decision-making as the process of

identifying and selecting a course of action to be taken to solve a problem. Levin (1994) defines Decision-making as conscious and deliberate resolve that binds the individual or group to taking an action in a specific way.

It is evident from these definitions that decisions are made at all levels in order to solve problems. School Administrators are frequently faced with the problem of making decisions. One Universal mark of an administrator is decision-making.

Simon H. (1960) identified three major phases in the process of making decisions.

1. Intelligence activity:- This refers to the search of the environment that reveals circumstance that calls for a decision.
2. The second phase is “design activity”. This is the process by which alternative courses of action are envisioned, developed and analyzed.
3. The third phase is “choice activity” This is the process of actively selecting a course of action from among the options under consideration.

Peter Drucker, a leading organizational scholar whose thinking was very influential in corporate circles from the 1950s into the 1960s listed the following steps to be taken in decision-making.

1. Define the problem.
2. Analyze the problem
3. Develop alternatives.
4. Decide on the best solution.

5. Convert decisions into effective actions.

Such a formulation was seen as helping the administrator to organize decision making.

Musaazi: (1982) recommended five methods and tools in decision making.

These are:

1. Study carefully the existing situation.
2. Recognize and define the problem.
3. Examine the detailed make up of the problem.
4. Decide on the criteria for resolving the problem.
5. Develop a plan for action.

Decision-making is not an easy task which can be learned easily. It takes knowledge, effort, time and experience. Administrators have to develop and regulate the decision making process in the most effective manner possible., A school administrator performing the task of decision-making may be seen as an entrepreneur, a disturbance handler, a resource allocator and a negotiator.

Musaazi (1982) emphasized that when taking decisions, administrators must go about it with the greatest possible care to get the best results. A decision taken by the head of a school commits the whole school to a course of action so if a decision taken is a bad one, it will have negative effect on the school. Administrators are therefore required to make intelligent decisions.

According to Asiedu Akrofi (1978) taking intelligent decisions are the most difficult and yet the most interesting aspect of school administration.

He identified four groups of people who are engaged in this task:

1. The first group is the student body represented by student councils, individual students and class groups. These groups have their own decisions to make for the good of the school.
2. Teachers also take decisions in the classrooms, which have relevance to the work done with children.
3. Decision collectively taken by staff at staff meetings or decision taken by committees appointed by the staff.
4. There are decisions taken by the headmaster or principal in his own right as the administrative head of the school.

In the life of a school, a lot of decisions have to be taken concerning work to be done, direction, leadership style, mode of communication and many more. The administrator therefore should be able to spell out the strategy by which the best decisions could be reached. The head alone cannot take those decisions; therefore, he needs the collaborative efforts of both staff and students.

Leadership Styles

The main purpose of an educational institution is to transmit knowledge. This function entails teaching and learning of values, attitudes and skills. Educational administrators are expected to plan, organize, lead and control the work of organizational members or personnel and the resources available to achieve the stated educational goal. The range of administrative approaches or styles is quite varied. The tone of the school is assessed either positively or negatively by the particular style administrators adopt. The extent to which

members participate in decision-making and contribute voluntarily to the progress and development of an organization depends largely on the style adopted by the administrator.

According to Appleby (1987) in any organization there must be a force to direct its resources towards organizational goals and standards. In order to direct subordinates, an administrator must lead, motivate, communicate and ensure co-ordination of activities so that organizational objectives are achieved. The concept of leadership is important because whenever a group of persons come together with common objectives one mentally thinks of a leader who is envisaged to give directions to the affairs of the group to a successful end. Different people employ different methods or styles in managing schools. Vroom and Yelton (1973) have developed taxonomy of the leadership styles as follows:

Autocratic Process

In this kind of leadership style, the leader, manager or administrator makes the decision using whatever information is available. The leader secures necessary information from members of the group, then makes the decision. In obtaining the information, he may or may not tell the followers what the problem is.

Consultative Process

In this type of leadership, the leader shares the problem with relevant members of the group on a one-to-one basis, getting their ideas and suggesting individually without bringing them together as a group, then the leader shares the problem with members of a group at a meeting, then decides.

Group Process

In this style, the leader acting as chairperson at a meeting of the group shares the problem with the group and facilitates the efforts of the group to reach a consensus on a group decision. A leader may give information and express opinion but does not try to “sell” a particular decision or manipulate the group through covert means. Asare Bediako (1990), identifies five types of modes that a group can adopt to formulate decisions.

The first is “Decision by authority”. This refers to a situation where the individual makes decisions for the group. Mussazi (1982) and Walton (1994) refer to this type of model as autocratic leadership. These authors contend that in this model, the leader alone determines the policy and assigns tasks to members without consulting with them. Subordinates are also required to carry out the leader’s directives without questioning. This type of Leadership style has been criticized and disrecommended except in extreme cases.

In the views of Costley and Todd (1981) autocratic leadership is disadvantageous.

The reasons given are:

- It may result in low motivation.
- It tends to reduce creativity.
- Group members may avoid responsibility for their performance.
- Misunderstanding may result from one-way.
- Communication and adopting to change may be difficult.

The next mode described by Asare-Bediako (1990), is decision by majority. In this approach group members have the freedom to express their views on a problem at hand. The majority feeling is then taken as the decision.

Thirdly, there is “Decision by majority”. In this aspect decision is taken by a single person or a group of people for a larger group. The fourth type of decision identified is “Decision by Unanimity”. He argues that this is an ideal type where every member of the group agrees on a decision to be taken. Finally, he makes reference to “consensus decision making” as one in which the decision of the majority is taken. New perspectives of leadership have emerged. These are referred to as Charismatic, heroic, transformational or visionary leadership.

Transactional leadership focuses on the interpersonal transactions between leaders and their followers. These leaders use contingency rewards to motivate employees and also exert corrective action only when subordinates fail to obtain performance goal. Heads of schools must therefore reward staff and students who achieve exemplary results to motivate them and likewise correct under-achievers. Charismatic leadership behavior on the other hand involves establishing a common vision for the future. It also sets high performance standards and expectations because challenging attainable goals lead to greater productivity. Employees can also exert corrective action only when subordinates fail to obtain performance goal.

Heads of schools must therefore reward staff and students who achieve exemplary results to motivate them and likewise correct under-achievers.

In secondary school education in Ghana, it has been established that the type of management or leadership style practiced plays an important role in the overall attainment of the goals of the Institution. In the school situation therefore, if staff and students are discontented with leadership performance, they may not participate fully in the administration and this may erupt into violent confrontations between them and the head of the Institution. No one style of leadership is always effective for leadership varies with the people and situations. Effective administrators use different styles of leadership depending on their subordinates and the situations they find themselves in.

Perception of Student's Participation in Decision-Making:

Participatory process is crucial leading to democratic system of politics and as such, a culture of participation should start in schools as a good basis to create participatory democratic mechanisms and values., Students have on several occasions expressed their desire to be involved in the decision making process in schools.

In July and August 2003, the Ministry of Youth Affairs in New Zealand surveyed student representatives and their peers to find out what young people thought about participation in decision-making at the school.

In the report, students said youth participation means:

1. Joining in, getting involved and taking part in activities.
2. Making decision or helping to make decisions.
3. Expressing opinions and telling adults.
4. Co-operating and working together.

5. Having opportunities to participate.

To them, “Youth participation is young people helping each other out, making their decisions, having a say, participating in a group, and listening to young people’s decisions (St. Patrick’s School, Napier). In the comments about what students would like to tell adults about involving young people in decision-making the student said “Decision-making is a skill that we need to learn at a young age to help prepare us to make responsible decisions when we get older.”

Other comments made by students include:

- i. Having a lot of great ideas.
- ii. Wanting to be included.
- iv. Being allowed to express ideas even if they are not followed up.
- v. Being told what is happening.
- vi. Having representatives on committees.

Students felt that adults should:

- Encourage young people to have a say.
- Trust young people.
- Help young people to make decisions and advise them, but not do it all themselves.
- Provide opportunities that are easily accessible and available and make them obvious by providing information so that young people can make choices.

In the Prague Ministerial Summit, student involvement was singled out as one of the important topics for future discussions within the Bologna process and

the call for a follow up seminar on the topic was eagerly taken by the Norwegian Ministry., For this reason more than 100 representatives from the Ministries, Institutions, European organizations and student Organizations held a seminar from the 12th – 14th of June, 2003 in Oslo under the theme, “The role of students participation in both national and international processes of governance in higher education

There was a focus, from the various perspectives on how legislation may include and regulate students’ participation in governance of higher educational institutions and on students’ participation in the academic life. The participants were generally of the vie that some levels of decision-making are still not fully available to them and that sometimes the formal involvement is not a guarantee of actual participation as equal partners. From the seminar, it was concluded that:

1. Further involvement of students is needed at all levels of decision-making, this involvement should not only be legally permitted but effectively encouraged by providing the means necessary for active participation both in the formal and informal approaches.
2. The encouragement could include mechanisms of recognition and certification of the experience and of the competencies and skills acquired by being a student representative. It should also require effective involvement of other stakeholders in the motivation for students to become student’s representatives and even for simply participate in elections and in the decision-making process.

3. Further involvement brings further responsibilities and demands. Mechanism of assuring accountability, transparency and the flow of information to other students should be prioritized.
4. Student organizations should be supported in obtaining the financial, logistical and human resources necessary for creating a situation of equality on participation.
5. Universities that assure student participation and student organizations that organize this participation must be seen as schools of citizenship and agents of development of society not only at the local level but also within an international responsibility of solidarity and co-operation.

Areas Students can participate in Decision-Making:

The policy of the Ministry of Education (MOPE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) on students involvement in school administration requires heads of Institutions to adopt strategies that will enable and encourage students to participate in the day-to-day running of the school. Students are to serve in committees like the disciplinary committee to help promote discipline in the school (GES, Unified Code of Discipline, 1994 p.1).

Ozigi (1977) recommends that for effective school administration, school administrators must encourage students to play a meaningful role in the administration of the school by delegating duties and responsibilities to them and supervising them to perform well. The prefectorial system, the school committee system, and the Student Representative Council (SRC) were identified as the most

effective ways of involving students directly in the administration of the school. Through these systems students are delegated certain duties connected with the day-to-day life of the school. These duties include the organization and co-ordination of all sorts of extra curricular activities, such as games, societies, clubs, or dealing with minor cases of discipline, taking responsibility of students' welfare, supervision of learning after school hours and checking attendance.

According to the New Zealand Youth Affairs student representative summary report on involving young people in decision-making students can take part in school decision-making in so many ways. These include:

- Class and form meetings, student councils and Youth Affairs' Student Representatives.
- Organizing student events and activities (such as school assemblies, have events, dances, camps etc.).
- Choosing school leaders (such as head boy/girl, prefects, council members, board of trustee representative and house leaders.
- Conducting student surveys and questionnaires or having an opinion box and discussing the results with teachers and principals.

Effects of Student Participation in Decision-Making:

Several views have been expressed on the effects of student participation in Decision-making. In the New Zealand Summary report on 'student participation in school decision-making, in April 2003, student Participation in school decision-making is important when preparing children and young people to participate

fully in Society. According to the report, effective student participation in school decision-making contributes to:

1. The improvement of school practices.
2. The promotion of citizenship, and the personal and social education and development of students.

The report further stressed that providing opportunities for students to participate in school decision making has immediate and long term benefits for both students and schools.

For students, participation in decision-making at school can:

- i. Show students that their views are valued by school staff. Students are more likely to be motivated if they have an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them.
- ii. Provide opportunities for a wide range of student views within the school to be voiced.
- iii. Provide opportunities for greater input into how and what students learn at school and can improve the quality of learning. Learning is more successful when students are involved in decisions about what to learn and how to learn, in setting learning goals and in setting rules that govern behaviour and practice.
- iv. Develop interpersonal and practical skills. Participating in decision-making can be an empowering experience for students and can assist in building confidence and self-esteem and

- v. Facilitate wider recognition of increasing independence as students move through the education system.

For schools, student participation in decision making can:

- i. Lead to improved school policies and practices.
- ii. Support the successful development and implementation of school initiatives.
- iii. Strengthen democratic processes within the school.
- iv. Improve students behavior within and contribution to school and community environments.
- v. Facilitate better relationships between students, teachers, parents and the wider community.
- vi. Improve understanding of and responsiveness to issues identified by students.

To Mankoe (2002) some of the expected benefits associated with participation in Institutional Management are:

- i. School personnel will understand the goals and be committed to their implementation because they have participated in their formulation.
- ii. When individuals understand the objectives of the school, they tend to be more committed to implementing them.
- iii. The goals established by consensus provide a framework for effective conflict resolution within the school.

Kolb, Osland and Rubin (1995) and Everand (1986) identified some of the benefits derived when school heads effectively involve students in decision-making as follows:

- i. Participation enhances understanding of issues by students and therefore reduces conflict situations and tension in the school.
- ii. Participation helps to create peace and harmony among students, teachers and administrators of the Institution.
- iii. Students become more committed to decisions since they took part in fashioning them.
- iv. Compliance with school rules and regulation improves.
- v. Students would help administrators to make good and appropriate decisions.
- vi. Participation generates confidence and trust among staff and students.
- vii. It boosts the morale of students to feel that they are taking part in administering the Institution.
- viii. When joint decisions are they are more comprehensive since two heads are better than one.
- ix. Relegation of routine duties to students reduces the burden of the head and staff and therefore enables them to have time to attend to more pressing and urgent issues.
- x. By involving students in administration, it serves as a kind of in-service training for students in democratic principles which will prepare them for life.

Research Action Brief (1977) identified five reasons for involving others in decision-making. There are:

- i. Involvement increased the number of different view points and ideas which might be relevant to the decision being made.
- ii. Involvement made better utilization of available expertise and problem solving within the school community.
- iii. Involvement must improve school morale by showing the individuals involved that the administrator valued their opinions which might give them greater feeling of professional pride and satisfaction.
- iv. Involvement could aid acceptance and implementation of a decision because the people involved were more likely to understand the decision and be more committed to its success.
- v. Involvement of others has been found to be consistent with democratic principle of our society which notes that those affected by public institutions such as the school have some voice in how the schools are run.

Ukeje et al (1992) similarly discovered the importance of student participation in the management of schools. Some of the important aspects raised by them included the following:

- a) The provision of a channel through which the principal may educate the leaders and students in civic responsibilities and in ideals and attitude of good citizenship.

- b) The development of feelings of goodwill friendliness and fellowship between students and departments.
- c) Reduction of the necessity of supervision and pressure by staff this relieving them for more professional duties.
- d) Increased happiness of school life for students.
- e) Improvement in the discipline, moral and tone of the school.
- f) Opportunity and means for students to solve their own problems.
- g) Development of ideas for right conduct, self-control, co-operation of students to understand and appreciate virtues of fair and ethical co-operation demanded in adult and business life.

Notwithstanding the benefits organizations could derive from the participatory Decision-making. The concept is not fully embraced in schools. Some school heads may shun participative leadership because of fear of negative consequences.

Gorton (1980) 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 participatory decision-making” (p.248). In Gorton’s study, it was indicated that students lack the requisite knowledge for an effective involvement in decision-making at the school level.

Costley & Todd (1987) outlined the disadvantages of participation as follows:

1. Individuals may dominate the participation or make disruptive contributions.

2. This approach can be time consuming for the leader.
Compromises can result in actions that are not the most effective.
3. Compromises can result in actions that are not the most effective.
4. Conflict may be resolved by making the least offensive decision rather than the most effective.
5. Non-preparedness of subordinates to take up additional responsibilities.
6. Professional incompetence of staff.
7. Lack of additional resources which participants may require.

Summary of the Related Literature

Unrest in Senior High Schools is a major problem in Ghana. Therefore Decision-making in high schools deserves special attention. The style of management and the school climate are important factors to consider in Senior High School Administration. There is the need to foster good and cordial relationship with the student body and solicit their views in taking certain decisions that has direct bearing on their social life and academic progress as a missing gap could precipitate students' unrest that might result in undesirable consequences.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The chapter describes the research design, the population, sample and the sampling procedure used for the study. The research instrument used for the collection and analysis of data and the data collection procedure are also described in the chapter.

Research Design

The study was a descriptive survey. The study was a descriptive survey because it looked at various statements that reflected students and teachers perception of decision-making in Fijai Secondary School. This type of design as pointed out by Gay (1992) involves collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status or situation of the subjects of the study.

Population

The population for the study was made up of students and staff of Fijai Secondary School. The entire student population of 1,239 and 58 teaching staff constituted the population of the study.

Sample

A sample of 292 students and 32 teachers constituted the sample of the study. All the 51 prefects of the school were selected .14 students were

randomly selected from each of the 14 classes of the second and third year students to constitute the sample for the study. Five students from each of the 9 classes of the 1st year students were also selected using the table of random numbers. Though the study was based on students, 32 teachers were selected to provide additional views to balance the views of students.

Sample Procedure

Both purposive and random sampling techniques were used. All the 51 prefects of the school were selected purposively because they are part of the decision-making process of the school. The two Assistant headmasters, house masters, house mistresses and heads of departments were also selected purposively. The researcher believed that such category of respondents was in the position to give relevant information. A table of random numbers was used to select students who were not prefects. Thirty-two teachers were randomly selected using the table of random numbers. The males were however not separated from the females.

Research Instruments

Questionnaires were the main instruments that were used for the research. Questionnaires are normally used when factual information is desired. (Best & Khan, 1995). One of the reasons for using the questionnaire was that, each respondent received the same set of questions. Another advantage was that the questionnaire was much more efficient since it required less time and permitted collection of data from a much larger sample (Gay, 1992). Also, analysis is easy.

There were two sets of questionnaires. One for students and the other for teachers. The questionnaire for students was in two parts. The first part was based on Biographical data. Students were required to provide information such as the class the students were in, program of study and any leadership position held. The second part of the questionnaire had three main sections labeled B, C, and D.

Section B was made up of 14 items which investigated the present level of student participation in decision making. Students were required to indicate the extent to which they have been involved in decisions such as maintaining order in the classroom and dormitories, planning of examinations time table, disbursement of SRC and house dues and vetting of prefects.

The 10 items in section C examined the areas of school administration that students would like to deal with and other areas of school life in which they would like to be involved so far as decision-making is concerned. In section D which is made of 7 items, respondents were required to indicate the benefits the school would derive when students are involved in decision-making. The questionnaire for teachers was structured along the same lines as the questionnaire for students, although some of the questions were reframed. The questionnaire had two parts. The first part was based on biographical data.

In the second part, there were three sections labeled B, C, and D. Section B had 7 items which were structured to explore the present level of student involvement in decision-making. The five items in section C sought to find out the areas in school administration that students should be allowed to offer inputs. In Section D, there were 7 items. Respondents were to indicate the benefits the

school would derive when students are involved in decision-making. The responses to the close-ended questions were measured on the five point Likert

Ranking Scale as follows:

- 5 Strongly Agree (SA)
- 4 Agree (A)
- 3 Undecided (U)
- 2 Disagree (DA)
- 1 Strongly Disagree (SDA)

Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was based on the Likert Attitude Scale. The questionnaires were numbered. Data collected from the staff and students were coded and SPSS software was used to analyze the data using frequency and percentages. In order to show a clear distinction between those who agreed and those who disagreed, the two columns under agree and strongly agree were put together to indicate agreement while disagree and strongly disagree were combined to indicate disagreement.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter provides an overview of the results obtained and a discussion of the results. The study was designed to unearth student perception of their involvement in decision-making at the school level. The results have been organized along the three research questions that follow.

- 1) What is the present level of student participation in decision-making in the administration of a school?
- 2) What areas in school administration should students be allowed to offer inputs?
- 3) What benefits will the school derive if students are involved in decision-making?

Questionnaires were the main instruments used for the research. There were two sets of questionnaires for each research question; one for students and the other for teachers. The views of students have been balanced by those of the teachers. Respondents were to indicate the agreement or disagreement with statements by choosing from a five point likert Scale of responses ranging from Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

In discussing the data, two columns under agree and strongly agree were put together to indicate agreement while disagree and strongly disagree were combined to indicate disagreements. This was done to provide a clear distinction between those who agreed and those who disagreed. To elicit answers to those questions, frequency and percentage distributions were used.

Research Question 1: What is the present level of student participation in decision-making in the administration of the school?

Analysis of results is based on item 1 to 14 of the questionnaire in Appendix A, for students and items 1 to 7 for teachers. The results are presented in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1**Present Level of students' participation in Decision Making – Students' Views**

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|---|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. The headmaster staff meet students to discuss issues affecting them | 176 | 61.76 | 61 | 21.40 | 48 | 16.84 | 285 | 100 |
| 2. The housemasters and housemistresses meet students to discuss issues affecting them. | 241 | 84.56 | 6 | 2.10 | 38 | 13.33 | 285 | 100 |
| 3. The SRC meets the headmaster regularly to discuss issues affecting students | 160 | 56.14 | 20 | 7.02 | 105 | 36.84 | 285 | 100 |
| 4. Students are involved in the allocation of duties to prefects | 102 | 35.76 | 26 | 9.12 | 157 | 55.08 | 285 | 100 |
| 5. Students are involved in the planning of the academic calendar | 69 | 24.21 | 13 | 4.56 | 203 | 71.22 | 285 | 100 |
| 6. Students are involved in the maintenance of class discipline | 244 | 85.61 | 13 | 4.56 | 28 | 9.82 | 285 | 100 |
| 7. Students are involved in keeping order inthe dining hall. | 247 | 86.70 | 6 | 2.11 | 32 | 11.22 | 285 | 100 |
| 8. Students are involved in keeping order and cleanliness in the dormitories | 271 | 95.09 | 5 | 1.75 | 9 | 3.16 | 285 | 100 |

Table 1 continued

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|--|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 9. Students are involved in the planning of students' excursions and field trips. | 227 | 79.65 | 24 | 8.42 | 34 | 11.93 | 285 | 100 |
| 10. Students are involved in the planning of school menu | 54 | 18.95 | 16 | 5.6 | 215 | 75.44 | 285 | 100 |
| 11. Students are involved in the planning of exam time table | 44 | 15.44 | 10 | 3.51 | 231 | 81.05 | 285 | 100 |
| 12. Students are involved in the disbursement of SRC dues | 118 | 41.41 | 39 | 13.68 | 128 | 44.91 | 285 | 100 |
| 13. Students are involved in the vetting of prefects before they are finally appointed | 151 | 52.98 | 9 | 3.16 | 125 | 43.86 | 285 | 100 |
| 14. Students are represented on disciplinary committees | 93 | 32.63 | 24 | 8.42 | 168 | 58.55 | 285 | 100 |

Table 2**Present Level of Students Participation in Decision Making – Teachers’ Views**

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|---|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 1. The headmaster and staff meet students to discuss issues affecting them. | 30 | 93.25 | 2 | 6.25 | - | - | 32 | 100 |
| 2. Students in the boarding house take part in planning their menu. | 16 | 50.0 | 11 | 34.37 | 5 | 15.63 | 32 | 100 |
| 3. Students take part in the planning of the examination time table | 2 | 6.25 | 8 | 25.0 | 22 | 68.75 | 32 | 100 |
| 4. Students take part in the vetting of prefects before they are finally appointed. | 18 | 56.25 | 6 | 18.75 | 8 | 25.0 | 32 | 100 |
| 5. Students have a say in the disbursement of SRC dues | 19 | 59.38 | 8 | 25.0 | 5 | 15.62 | 32 | 100 |
| 6. Students have a say in the dues for running dormitories | 18 | 56.25 | 8 | 25.0 | 6 | 18.75 | 32 | 100 |
| 7. Students take part in drawing entertainment programs. | 28 | 87.50 | 3 | 9.38 | 1 | 3.12 | 32 | 100 |

The first statement sought students' views on whether the headmaster and staff meet students to discuss issues affecting them or not. 61.76% of the student respondents agreed that the headmaster and staff meet students to discuss issues affecting them. Regarding teacher respondents, 93.75% agreed with the statement. The disparity between the percentage of teachers and that of the students indicate that the students are not very much satisfied. Perhaps the students expect the headmaster and staff to meet them more often.

The second statement elicited responses on whether the housemasters and housemistress hold meetings with members of their houses to discuss with them matters that affect them. 84.56% of the students agreed that the housemasters and housemistress hold meetings with them. The findings revealed that the participation of students in decision making is high at the house level. Issues at the house level such as cleanliness, siesta and lights out were mostly dealt with by students.

On the issue of whether the headmaster meets the SRC regularly to discuss issues affecting them, 56.14% of the students indicated agreement. The findings suggest that students think that SRC meetings with the headmaster are not enough. Regarding students involvement in the allocation of duties to prefects, 35.8% of the respondents indicated agreement while 55% disagreed to the statement. The findings revealed that the involvement of students in the allocation of duties to prefects was rather low.

On the issue of student involvement in the planning of the academic calendar, 24.21% of the respondents agreed while 71.22% disagreed. The findings portray that students are not very much involved in planning programs for the school. Their involvement is restricted to entertainment and sports and not in areas like curriculum and academic matters. Only prefects are involved in this area. Involving students through their class representatives should be critically looked into.

Regarding students involvement in the maintenance of class discipline, 85.61% of the respondents indicated agreement. This is in line with the policy of the Ministry of Education which requires the heads of institutions to adopt strategies which will enable and encourage students to participate in the day to day running of the school. The 7th statement sought participant's views on whether or not they are involved in keeping order in the dining hall. The high percentage of respondents [86.70%] that agreed to the statement indicated a general satisfaction among students.

More than two thirds of the student respondents [79.65%] agreed to the fact that they are involved in planning excursions and field trips. The findings seem to suggest that students are satisfied with the level of involvement. While 18.95% of the student respondents agreed to their involvement in the planning of the school menu. 50% of the teacher respondents are of the view that students are involved in the planning of the school menu. This is a clear indication that students were

not satisfied with their level of involvement. There is therefore the need to strengthen the student participation in this area of school life since students should have a say in the determination of activities which deeply affect their lives.

The eleventh statement elicited views on whether students take part in planning the school's examination time table. Both students and teachers indicated a low percentage participation in this area. Perhaps the teachers think that the planning of the examination time table should be done solely by them.

On the issue of disbursement of SRC dues, 41.4% of the student respondents indicated their involvement. Regarding teacher respondents 59.3% agreed to the statement. The findings revealed that students are not very much satisfied with their level of involvement. There is therefore the need to strengthen their involvement.

Responses to item number 13 indicated that students are almost split in the middle between those who agreed and those who disagreed to the issue of vetting of prefects before they are finally appointed. Regarding teacher respondent, 50% agreed. The findings describe the mixed feelings students have about their present involvement.

With regards to students being represented on disciplinary committees, more than half of the student respondents indicated a low involvement. The findings is supported by Gorton (1980), who observes that students have all along not been involved in matters like discipline. The findings seem to suggest that students want their involvement to be strengthened.

Research Question 2: What areas in school administration should students be allowed to offer inputs?

Analysis of data to this question was based on items 15 to 24 for students and items 8 to 12 for teachers of the questionnaire in Appendix B. This is presented in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 3**Areas in School Administration that Students should offer inputs -Students' Views**

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|---|------|-------|------|-------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 15. Students should prepare the menu for the school. | 159 | 55.79 | | 93.16 | 117 | 41.05 | 285 | 100 |
| 16. SRC dues should be controlled by students | 206 | 72.28 | 39 | 13.68 | 40 | 44.04 | 285 | 100 |
| 17. House dues should be controlled by house prefects | 181 | 63.59 | 15 | 5.26 | 89 | 31.28 | 285 | 100 |
| 18. School prefects should be appointed by students | 235 | 82.46 | 14 | 4.91 | 36 | 12.63 | 285 | 100 |
| 19. Students should be involved in the appointment of house masters and mistresses | 171 | 60.03 | 27 | 9.47 | 87 | 30.50 | 285 | 100 |
| 20. Students should be involved in the choice of programs to be studied on admission in the first year | 249 | 87.37 | 20 | 7.02 | 16 | 5.61 | 285 | 100 |
| 21. Students Should assess teachers teaching performance. | 232 | 81.41 | 30 | 10.53 | 23 | 8.06 | 285 | 100 |
| 22. Students should have a say in the timing of classroom activities of the teaching time table | 214 | 75.08 | 33 | 11.58 | 38 | 13.35 | 285 | 100 |
| 23. Students should be involved in the development and implementation of internal disciplinary procedures | 231 | 81.05 | 30 | 10.53 | 24 | 8.42 | 285 | 100 |
| 24. Students should have a say in how the school cloth should be designed | 206 | 70.18 | 23 | 8.07 | 62 | 21.75 | 285 | 100 |

Table 4**Areas in School Administration that Students should offer inputs- Teachers' Views**

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|--|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 8. SRC dues should be controlled by SRC executives | 3 | 9.375 | 7 | 21.875 | 22 | 68.75 | 32 | 100 |
| 9. House dues should be controlled by house prefects | 2 | 6.25 | 4 | 12.50 | 26 | 81.25 | 32 | 100 |
| 10. Students should be involved in the fixing of extra classes fees | 5 | 15.625 | 5 | 15.625 | 22 | 68.65 | 32 | 100 |
| 11. Students should assess teachers' performance in teaching | 9 | 28.225 | 1 | 3.125 | 22 | 68.65 | 32 | 100 |
| 12. Students should be involved in the choice of subjects to programs to be first year | 25 | 78.125 | 3 | 9.375 | 4 | 12.50 | 32 | 100 |

Item number 15 elicited responses from students whether they would like to prepare their own menu. While 55.79% wanted to prepare their own menu, 41.05% disagreed to preparing their own menu. According to Mankoe (2002), feeding in boarding schools has indeed been one of the major causes of students' unrest. Students sometimes boycott meals provided at the dining hall and engage in strikes and demonstrations which have sometimes led to the destruction of school property and injury to school authorities and their relatives. To him schools should form food committees on which students representatives must serve. Such representation should not be just taken measures but a major policy to enable students to see things clearly and be allowed to voice out their genuine concerns.

A good number of students' respondents which represents 72.28% were of the view that they should be given the chance to control SRC dues. On the contrary, 68.75% of the teacher respondents were not in favor with this view. The attitude of the teachers clearly confirms the need for a change in administrative procedure to enable the students to fully disburse the SRC dues. This assertion is supported by Ozigi (1977) who recommends that for effective school administration, school administrators must encourage students to play a meaningful role in the administrations by delegating duties and responsibilities to them by supervising them to perform them well.

On the issue of house prefects controlling house dues, majority of the student respondents (63.51%) supported the view while 81.25% of the teacher respondents disagreed to the view. The views of the teachers is in contradiction

with the Policy of Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) on students involvements in school administration which requires heads of institutions to adopt strategies that will enable and encourage students to participate in the day to day running of the school. 82.46% of the student respondents were of the opinion that they should be given the chance to appoint school prefects. Perhaps the system of selection of prefects must be critically looked into. 60.03% of the students expressed their desire to be involved in the appointment of housemasters and mistresses. This implies that the students are not in favor with the system whereby housemasters and housemistresses are appointed solely by the head. 87.37% of the students' respondents expressed their desire to be involved in the choice of programs to be studied on admission into the first year. This view was supported by 78.125% of the teacher respondents. There is therefore the need to strengthen students' participation in this area.

A good number of student respondents which represented 81.41% were of the view that they should be given the chance to assess teachers' performance in teaching. However, 68.65% of the teacher respondents strongly opposed this view. The assertion of the students is supported by Gorton (1980), who states that students have been denied involvement in decisions taken for the assessment of their teachers. He argues that students are consumers of education, and they are therefore in the best position to determine whether the teaching they receive is worthwhile or not.

Students were asked to state whether they would like to be involved in classroom activities on the time table 75.08% which is a good proportion of the

respondents indicated their desire to be involved. Involvement of students in this area must be strengthened. 81.05% of the students indicated that they would like to be involved in the development and implementation of internal discipline procedures. The finding is consistent with the policy of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ghana Education Service (GES), which states that students are to serve on committees like the disciplinary committee to help promote discipline in schools (GES, Unified code of Discipline, 1994 pg.1) 68.65% of the teachers disagreed to students being allowed to take part in the fixing of extra classes fee. 70.18% of the students expressed their desire to have a say in how the school uniform and the school cloth should be designed. According to Glasser (1990), effective participation in decision making involves creating opportunities for subordinates and young people to increase their influence over what happens to them and around them. Therefore student participation in this area should be strengthened.

Research Question 3: What benefits will the school derive if students are involved in decision making?

Analysis of data to this question was based on items 25 to 34 for students and items 13 to 19 for teachers of the questionnaire in Appendix C. This is presented in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5**Benefit to School Administration if Students offer Inputs to Decision Making Students' Views**

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|---|------|-------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 25. Students participation in decision making can bring about peace and harmony on the school compound. | 268 | 94.04 | 8 | 2.81 | 9 | 3.15 | 285 | 100 |
| 26. Students participation in decision making can strengthen democratic process in the classroom. | 267 | 93.68 | 8 | 2.81 | 10 | 3.25 | 285 | 100 |
| 27. Students participation in decision making can Strengthen democratic process in the classroom. | 262 | 91.93 | 6 | 2.11 | 17 | 5.96 | 285 | 100 |
| 28. Students participation can lad to enforcement of School rules | 228 | 80.00 | 9 | 3.16 | 48 | 16.84 | 285 | 100 |
| 29. Students participation in decision making lead Improve students' behaviour in the local community Environment | 262 | 91.93 | 10 | 3.51 | 13 | 4.56 | 285 | 100 |
| 30. Students participation indecision making can Improve students' academic performance. | 240 | 84.21 | 15 | 5.26 | 21 | 7.37 | 285 | 100 |
| 31. Students participation in decision making can Assist in building confidence and self esteem in students | 255 | 89.47 | 18 | 6.32 | 12 | 4.12 | 285 | 100 |

Table 6**Benefit to School Administration of Students offer Inputs in Decision Making Teachers' View**

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|---|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 13. Students participation in decision making contributes to the improvement of school practices | 27 | 84.357 | 32 | 15.625 | - | - | 32 | 100 |
| 14. Students participation in decision making contributes to the promotion of leadership qualities in students | 29 | 90.625 | 3 | 9.375 | - | - | 32 | 100 |
| 15. Students participation in decision making contributes to the promotion of good citizenship | 26 | 81.250 | 3 | 9.375 | - | - | 32 | 100 |
| 16. Students participation in decision making contributes to improving responsiveness to issues identified by students. | 30 | 93.75 | 2 | 6.250 | - | - | 32 | 100 |
| 17. Students participation in decision making contributes to improvement in compliance with school rules and regulations. | 26 | 81.250 | 5 | 15.625 | 1 | 3.125 | 32 | 100 |

Table 6 continued

| Item | A | | U | | DA | | Total | |
|--|------|--------|------|--------|------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % | Freq | % |
| 18. Students participation in decision making helps administration to make good and appropriate decisions. | 25 | 78.125 | 3 | 9.375 | 4 | 12.50 | 32 | 100 |
| 19. Students participation in decision making contributes to reduction in the burden on the head Due to arbitrary unilateral decisions by school authorities | 23 | 71.875 | 5 | 15.625 | 4 | 12.50 | 32 | 100 |

Majority of the student respondents (94.04%) agreed to the fact that student's participation in decision making can bring about peace and harmony on the school compound. This idea is supported by Kolb, Osland and Rubin (1995), who state that when school heads effectively involve students in decision-making; it helps to create peace and harmony among students, teachers and administrators of the institute. A greater percentage of students respondents (93.68%) believe that students participation in decision making can facilitate better relationships between students and teachers. Studies conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1994) on subordinate participation in school decision making process have shown that such involvement promotes workable relationships between staff and students as well as creating a rapport between students and administrators. 91.93% of the student respondents agreed that student participation in decision making can strengthen democratic process in the classroom. Their view is supported by Adisena (1990) who believes that students' participation can assist students to clearly identify negative aspects of democracy and to learn to develop positive insight in handling items.

80% of the student respondents and 81.250% of the teacher respondents strongly believe that student participation in decision making can contribute to improvement in compliance of school rules and regulations. When students are involved in decision making, they become part of it and are committed to these decisions. 91.03 of students respondents agreed that student participation in

decision making can lead to improved students behavior in the local community environment.

Students overwhelmingly indicated that student participation in decision making can lead to improved students behavior in the local community environment. Within the school setting, students gain training for future living as they learn to express their views. Adisena (1990) believes that the school is not only a place where formal teaching and learning go on but it is also a unit of governance and economic entity, a congress of relationships.

Regarding the statement that student's participation in school decision making can improve students' academic work, 87.37% of the student respondents were in favor of the view. Their assertion is supported by New Zealand summary report on student participation in school decision making in April 2003 which stressed that providing opportunities for greater input into how and what students learn at school can improve the quality of learning. The report further stated that learning is more successful when students are involved in decisions about what to learn and how to learn, in setting goals and in setting rules that govern their behaviors. 89.47% of the student respondents believe that participation in decision making can assist in building confidence and self esteem in students. The finding is consistent with the New Zealand summary report on student participation in decision making April, 2003. The report stated that participating in decision making can be an empowering experience for students and can assist in building confidence and self-esteem. A high percentage of 84, 357 of the teacher respondents believe that student participation in school decision making

contributes to improvement of school practices. This idea is supported by Asare Bediako (1990) who states that students grow and learn more from activities which they are involved in planning and carrying out. He stressed that student participation in the development and control of the life of the school is the most effective means of realizing the desirable discipline in the schools. 90,625% of the teacher respondents agreed that student participation in decision making contributes to the promotion of leadership qualities in students. Majority of the teacher respondents (90.625) agreed that student participation in decision making contributes to good citizenship. Owens (1970) similarly discovered the benefits of student participation in the management of schools. According to him, student participation in decision making provides a channel through which the principal may educate leaders and students in civic responsibilities and in ideals and attitude of good citizenship. 93.750% of the teacher respondents supported the view that student participation in decision making contributes to improving responsiveness to issues identified by students.

Teacher respondents were asked to state whether students participation in decision making helps administrators to make good and appropriate decisions. 78.125% of them strongly agreed to this view. This view is supported by Kolb, Osland and Rubin (1995) and Everard (1986). In identifying some of the benefits derived when school heads effectively involve students in decision making, stated among other things that students would help administrators to make good and appropriate decisions. 71,815% of teacher respondents strongly agreed that

student participation in decision making contributes to reduction in the burden of the head due to arbitrary unilateral decisions.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Information has been presented according to the questions covered in the questionnaire. The findings give detail of the present level of student participation in decision making in the administration of the school, areas of school administration that students will like to participate in and the benefits the school will derive when students are involved in decision making.

Summary of Findings

A Response to questionnaire for students and teachers:

Present level of student participation in the administration of the school. Majority of the student and teacher respondents agreed that the headmaster and staff meet students to discuss issues affecting them.

- (i) Majority of the student respondents agreed that the housemasters or housemistresses meet students to discuss issues affecting them.
- (ii) Students agreed that the SRC meets the headmaster regularly to discuss issues affecting them.
- (iii) Students disagreed that they are involved in the allocation of duties to prefects.
- (iv) Students are not involved in the planning of the school's academic calendar.

- (v) Majority of the students agreed that they are involved in the maintenance of class discipline.
- (vi) Students agreed that they are involved in the keeping of order in the dining hall.
- (vii) Students agreed that they are involved in keeping order and cleanliness in the dormitories.
- (viii) Majority of the students disagreed that they are involved in the planning of the school menu. Half of the teacher respondents agreed that students are involved in the planning of the school menu.

Both student and teacher respondents indicated a low percentage participation of students involvement in the planning of the examination time table.

- (1) Majority of students disagreed that they are involved in the disbursement of SRC dues. Majority of the teachers on the other hand agreed that students are involved in the disbursement of SRC dues.
- (2) Students are split in the middle between those who agreed and those who disagreed to the statement that students are involved in the vetting of students before they are finally appointed. Majority of the teachers agreed to the statement.
- (3) Majority of the students disagreed to the fact that they are represented on discipline committees.
- (4) More than two thirds of the student respondents agreed that they are involved in planning excursions and field trips.

- (5) Most of the teachers agreed that students have a say in the disbursement of dues for the running of the dormitories.
 - (6) Majority of the teachers agreed that students take part in the drawing of examination time table.
- B. Areas of school administration that students should be allowed to offer inputs.
- (1) Students were of the view that they should be given the chance to prepare their own menu.
 - (2) Majority of the students were of the view that the SRC dues should be controlled by the SRC executive. On the contrary, majority of the teachers were not in favor.
 - (3) Whilst most of the students agreed that the house dues should be controlled by house prefects, majority of the teachers were against the view.
 - (4) Majority of the students agreed that school prefects should be appointed by students.
 - (5) Most of the student respondents agreed that students should be involved in the appointment of housemasters and mistresses.
 - (6) A good number of students and teachers supported the view that students should be involved in the choice of subjects to programs to be studied on admission in the first year.

- (7) Whilst most of the students were of the view that students should be given the chance to assess teachers' teaching performance, most of the teachers were against this view.
- (8) Students think that they should be involved in the development and implementation of internal disciplinary procedures.
- (9) Most of the teachers disagreed that students should be involved in the fixing of extra classes fees.
- (10) Majority of the students wanted to have a say in how the school uniform and the school cloth are designed.

C. Benefits the school will derive when students are involved in decision making.

- (1) A lot of the students were of the view that student participation in decision-making can bring about peace and harmony on the school compound.
- (2) Majority of the respondents believe that students participation can facilitate better relationship between students and teachers.
- (3) Majority of the students were of the view that student participation in decision-making can strengthen democratic process of the school.
- (4) Majority of the students agreed that student participation in decision-making can lead to enforcement of school rules.
- (5) Most of the students agreed that student participation in decision-making can lead to improved students behavior in the local community environment

- (6) Majority of the students agreed that student participation in decision-making can improve students' academic performance.
- (7) Most of the students agreed to the fact that students participation in decision-making can assist in building confidence and self-esteem in students.
- (8) Most of the teachers were of the view that students participation in decision-making contribute to improvement of school practices.
- (9) Majority of the teachers agreed that student participation in decision making contributes to the promotion of leadership qualities in students.
- (10) Majority of the teachers believe that student participation in decision-making contributes to the promotion of good citizenship.
- (11) Most of the teachers agreed that students participation in decision making contributes to improving responsiveness to issues identified by students.
- (12) Most of the teachers were of the view that student participation in decision-making contributes to improvement in compliance with school rules and regulations.
- (13) Majority of the teachers agreed that student participation in decision making contributes to reduction in the burden on the headmaster due to arbitrary unilateral decisions.

Conclusions

The thesis provides a picture of student participation in decision making at Fijai Secondary School. Both the students and teachers agree that students have been involved in some areas of school administration such as maintaining class

disciplines, keeping order in the dining hall, and keeping order and cleanliness in the dormitory.

However whilst the students claim that they are not involved in certain areas of school administration such as allocation of duties to prefects, planning the school calendar, planning of examination time table, disbursement of SRC dues, vetting of prefects and not represented on disciplinary committee, the teachers are of the view that students are involved in all those areas. Whilst the students would like to be involved in fixing of extra classes fees, controlling of SRC dues, and assessing teachers performances, most of the teachers think otherwise. On the other hand, both the teachers and students believe that student participation in decision making will go a long way to facilitate the running of the school.

Implication for School Administration

The school seems to rely heavily on SRC as a means of ensuring student participation in decision making at an organizational level. The “chosen” students may not necessarily represent the views and needs of the whole student population. The school needs to review the extent to which current final machinations for student participation in decision-making will encourage the participation of all students.

Students form an integral part of school administration. They are key stakeholder group in school communities. Involving them in school administration can provide the school with valuable information. Students participation in decision making also promotes early student engagement and (and

connection) with public and community life and provides students with essential life skills, therefore opportunities to participate in decision making should be available to all.

Areas for Further Research

- a. There is the need to duplicate the study at other Senior High Schools in Ghana to unveil the causes of student unrest.
- b. The study should be replicated throughout Ghana to reveal the reliability and the generalization of its findings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire is designed to find out the level of students involvement in the decision making process in Fijai secondary school.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaire.
2. Express your feelings frankly.
3. There is no right or wrong answer to each item.
4. Please be assured that your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Mark [x] in the appropriate box.

1. AGE

13 – 15 []

16 – 18 []

19 – 21 []

OVER 21 []

2. SEX

Male [] Female []

5. COURSE OF STUDY

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-----|--------------|-----|
| Science | [] | General Arts | [] |
| Visual Arts | [] | Business | [] |
| Home Science | [] | Technical | [] |
| Agricultural Science | [] | | |

SECTION B

Please tick only one of the five options after each statement to indicate the extent to which you feel about the statement.

The abbreviations in the options are interpreted as follows:

- | | | | | | |
|-----|---|-------------------|----|---|----------|
| SA | - | Strongly Agree | A | - | Agree |
| U | - | Undecided | DA | - | Disagree |
| SDA | - | Strongly Disagree | | | |

Present Level of Student Participation in Decision Making.

| ITEMS | SA | A | U | DA | SDA |
|---|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1. The headmaster and staff meet students to discuss issues affecting them | | | | | |
| 2. The housemaster or housemistress meets students to discuss issues affecting them. | | | | | |
| 3. The SRC meets the headmaster regularly to discuss issues affecting students. | | | | | |
| 4. Students are involved in the allocation of duties to prefects. | | | | | |
| 5. Students are involved in the planning of the school's academic calendar. | | | | | |
| 6., Students are involved in the maintenance of class discipline. | | | | | |
| 7. Students are involved in keeping order in the dining hall. | | | | | |
| 8. Students are involved in keeping order and cleanliness in the dormitories. | | | | | |
| 9. Students are involved in the planning of students' excursions and field trips. | | | | | |
| 10. Students are involved in the planning of school menu. | | | | | |
| 11. Students are involved in the planning of examination time table. | | | | | |
| 13 Students are involved in the vetting of Prefects before they are finally appointed.. | | | | | |
| 14. Students are represented on disciplinary committee. | | | | | |

SECTION C

Areas in school administration that students should be allowed to offer inputs to the decision making process.

Present Level of Student Participation in Decision Making.

| ITEMS | SA | A | U | DA | SDA |
|---|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 15. Students should prepare the menu for the school. | | | | | |
| 16.S.R.C. dues should be controlled by SRC executives | | | | | |
| 17. House dues should be controlled by house prefects. | | | | | |
| 18. School prefects should be appointed by students. | | | | | |
| 19. Students should be involved in the appointment of housemasters and mistresses. | | | | | |
| 20. Students should be involved in the choice of subjects or programmes to be studied by them on admission in the first year. | | | | | |
| 21. Students should assess teachers teaching performance. | | | | | |
| 22. Students should have a say in the timing of classroom activities e.g. the teaching time table. | | | | | |
| 23. Students should be involved in the development and implementation of internal disciplinary procedures. | | | | | |
| 24. Students should have a say in how the school uniform and school cloth are designed. | | | | | |

SECTION D

Benefits the school will derive when students are involved in decision making.

Present Level of |Student Participation in Decision Making.

| ITEMS | SA | A | U | DA | SDA |
|--|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 25. Student participation in decision making can bring about peace and harmony on the school compound. | | | | | |
| 26. Student participation in decision making can facilitate better relationship between students and teachers. | | | | | |
| 27. Student participation in decision making can strengthen democratic processes within the school. | | | | | |
| 28. Student participation in decision making can lead to enforcement of school rules. | | | | | |
| 29. Student participation in decision making can lead to improved students behaviour in the local community environment. | | | | | |
| 30. Student participation in decision making can improve students' academic performances. | | | | | |
| 31. Student participation in decision making can assist in building confidence and self-esteem in students. | | | | | |

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

This questionnaire is designed to find out the level of students involvement in the decision-making process in Fijai secondary school.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. You are kindly requested to complete the following questionnaire.
2. Express your feelings frankly.
3. There is no right or wrong answer to each item.
4. Please be assured that your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

SECTION A

A. BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Mark [x] in the appropriate box.

1. SEX: Male [] Female []
2. CATEGORISATION OF TEACHERS
Housemaster/mistress [] Class master/mistress []
Member of a committee [] Chairman of a committee []

SECTION B

Present level of student participation in decision making in the administration of the school.

Please tick only one of the five options after each statement to indicate the extent to which you feel about the statement.

The abbreviations in the options are interpreted as follows.

- | | | | | | |
|------------|---|-------------------|-----------|---|----------|
| SA | - | Strongly Agree | A | - | Agree |
| U | - | Undecided | DA | - | Disagree |
| SDA | - | Strongly Disagree | | | |

Present level of Student Participation in Decision making.

| ITEMS | SA | A | U | DA | SDA |
|--|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1. Teachers meet students to discuss issues affecting them. | | | | | |
| 2. Students in the boarding house take part in the planning of their menu. | | | | | |
| 3. Students take part in the planning of the examination time table. | | | | | |
| 4. Students take part in vetting of prefects before they are finally appointed. | | | | | |
| 5. Students have a say in the disbursement of the S.R.C. dues. | | | | | |
| 6. Students have a say in the disbursement of dues for running the various houses. | | | | | |
| 7. Students take part in drawing entertainment programmes. | | | | | |

SECTION C

Areas in school administration that students should be allowed to offer inputs to the decision making process.

| ITEMS | SA | A | U | DA | SDA |
|---|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 8. SRC dues should be controlled by SRC executives. | | | | | |
| 9. House dues should be controlled by house prefects. | | | | | |
| 10. Students should assess teachers' performance in teaching. | | | | | |
| 11. Student should be involved in the fixing of extra classes' fees. | | | | | |
| 12. Students should be involved in the choice of subjects to be studied on first admission to the school. | | | | | |

SECTION D

What benefits will the school derive if students are involved in decision making?
 Student's participation in decision making contributes to.

| ITEMS | SA | A | U | DA | SDA |
|--|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 13. The improvement of school practices. | | | | | |
| 14. The promotion of the development of leadership qualities in students. | | | | | |
| 15. The promotion of good citizenship. | | | | | |
| 16. Improving responsiveness to issues identified by students. | | | | | |
| 17. Compliance with school rules and regulations improves. | | | | | |
| 18. Help administrators to make good and appropriate decisions. | | | | | |
| 19. Reduction in the burden on the head due to arbitrary unilateral decisions by the school authorities. | | | | | |