UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING IN

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE WESTERN REGION OF GHANA

BY

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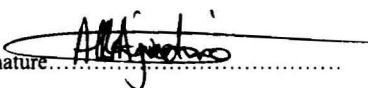
OCTOBER, 2008

DECLARATION

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

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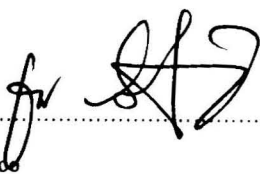
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We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

This study is on students' participation in decision-making in selected senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana. The researcher used descriptive survey by way of questionnaires, which were pilot tested and modified to ensure their validity and reliability, and explored the nature and causes of low student participation in decision-making and its resultant effects on the teaching-learning process as well as a congenial atmosphere for the smooth running of the school.

The population was students, teachers and heads of the forty-three senior high schools in the Western Region. 240 students, 60 teachers and 9 heads and assistant heads were sampled from three senior high schools. In all, a total of 309 respondents constituted the sample size. Purposive sampling technique was used to select three senior high schools and respondents who held leadership positions whilst random sampling techniques were used to sample respondents who played no leadership roles in the schools. Simple descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages were used to analyze data.

The study revealed that, heads and teachers have positive perception of students' participation in decision-making process. It was clear from the study that student participation in decision-making enhances quality of decisions, commitment to decisions and enhances students' feeling of belongingness. In recommendation, participatory decision-making structures should be encouraged in schools in order to bridge communication gaps between administration and students. These could be done through informal consultation or introduction of suggestion boxes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my loving late father, Mr. Albert Koku Dziewonu Amedzro, who
motivated me beyond all odds to pursue higher academic laurels.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

One fundamental activity influencing performance and excellence in any institution is making decisions. Most management scholars and authorities recognize decision-making as one of the major functions of management which, if competently done, leads to success.

According to Shaw (1978:35), "decision-making is a process whereby management, when confronted with a problem, selects a specific course of action, or 'solution ', from a set of possible courses of action". Vroom and Yetton (1973) contend that decision-making is the process that leads to or ends with the final product called a decision. Gorton (1980) stated that decision-making is a complex exercise that needs much time and effort. He further stressed that it employs an analytical thought process, and utilizes relevant sources of information and assistance. It is worthy to note that decisions are not only taken when there is a problem but also when confronted with choices.

Graffiths (1958:20) ascertains that, "Decision-making is the central element of administration". Educational administrators are, therefore, decision-makers but the process is not limited to them just as it is not limited to business executives, military commanders, medical professionals or government officials, in their respective spheres.

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All human beings make one decision or another depending on circumstances. A teacher makes decisions about what will be taught in a day, and how the class will be managed. The spinster may decide to accept a prospective suitor or not. The job applicant may be trying to select from among four job openings, the headmaster of a secondary school may be trying to decide on disbursing ¢15m government grant to the various departments or buying computers for the various housemasters. All these persons are faced with decision-making at one time or another. In short, making choices or making decisions is a characteristic of human life (Newman & Kirby, 1977).

A rational decision can be formulated only when people put their heads together. This is in perfect harmony with what Drucker (1977) describes as "Japanese way of decision-making". He says that in Japan, no decision is formulated until all the people to be affected by a particular decision have been given the chance to express their views on the issue.

Hanson (1996) also shares the same view. He argues that the relevant public that is affected by a decision must be involved in making such a decision so that there might not be seen any trace of malfunctioning in the decision-making process. This is due to the fact that it is not the duty of the chief executive only to make decisions; it is his duty to monitor the decision-making process to make sure that it performs at the optimum level.

Historically, Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) looks at how schools have been administered up to the mid-twentieth century. According to him, since the colonial period, the systems of administration existing in Ghanaian schools were

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mainly autocratic. In the past, students' involvement in school administration had been a matter of upholding the view that children must be seen but must not be heard. Hanson (1996) supported this by stating that schools have for some time been bureaucratic-autocratic. Authority was a "one-way traffic". It flows from the head to the teachers and finally to the students.

Furthermore, according to Asiedu-Akrofi (1978:155), "Human relationships in schools are generally poor". The headmasters consider their powers as being personal and fail to involve students in school administration. No information flows from students through teachers to the head. Students were thus not able to express their grievances, sentiments, problems and basic needs as well as finding solution to acute accommodation problems and general lack of facilities. In effect, the headmaster was the "key" figure. He had unlimited power over all. He could enter the classroom and stop teachers from teaching at any time. Teachers and students had to take orders and instructions from their heads and obey them unquestionably. Students were treated by the heads as their children who must obey them.

To ensure effective and successful school management, the head must create an environment for participatory decision-making in the running of the school. The more opportunities given students to participate in school organisation, the greater is likely to be their sense of commitment to school organisation. This is in line with what Asiedu-Akrofi (1978:132) suggests. He argues that students often assume a militant approach to let their voices be heard as in an example he sites on Kenya. The students in question wrote on a placard,

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"To reject peaceful means is to invite hot ones, therefore a strike". Students want to be heard. They want to participate in decision-making. The school, which is seen as a community centre (Asiedu-Akrofi, 1978) and a social system, (Hanson, 1996), must therefore promote students involvement in decision-making because students are stakeholders who are concerned in determining the ends or purposes to be attained. In effect, schools work better and achieve their set goals and objectives more effectively when the relevant public that is affected by the decision is involved in the decision-making process.

Ukeje, Akabugu, and Ndu (1992) have outlined the rationale for involving others in decision-making, especially at the school level. Some of the important aspects of involving students by Ukeje et al. included the following:

1. The provision of a channel through which the principal may educate leaders and students in their civic responsibilities and in ideals and attitudes of good citizenship;

2. The development of feeling of good will, friendliness and fellowship between students and departments;

3. Reduction of the necessity of supervision and pressure by staff thus relieving them for more professional duties;

4. Increased happiness of school life for students;

5. Improvement in discipline and moral tone of the school;

6. Development of ideals for right conduct, self-control, efficiency and fairness;

7. Opportunity and means for students to solve their own problems;

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8. Provision for training in leadership;

9. Preparation for students to understand and appreciate the   virtues of fair and ethical co-operation demanded in adult and business life.

If the above assertions are true, then it is expedient that students should be involved in the decision-making process. Hanson (1996) vividly gives the background to the involvement of students in the formulation of decisions. He argues that even though students are not the implementers of decisions. the decisions that are implemented invariably affect them. According to him, the relevant public that is affected by a decision must be involved in making such a decision so that there might not appear any trace of dysfunctioning in the decision-making process. This is so because it is not the sole function of the chief executive to make decisions: it is his function to monitor the decision-making process to make sure that it performs at the optimum level. What is true of industrial organization is also true with schools. Heads of schools. like chief executives of organizations. take decisions. They have their relevant publics, that is. those subordinates or otherwise who are affected by the decisions that are taken. It is in this wise that heads must not neglect to involve students in decisions that affect school administration because an attempt to resort to the classical mode, that is. "one-way-traffic" will lead to chaos and demonstrations

In Ghana, the complexities of the school systems and the lack of involvement of students in decision-making have resulted in demonstrations and strikes in some schools. Since the 1970s, student strikes and demonstrations became widespread and more frequent nationwide, with even more disastrous

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consequences. Kadjebi Secondary School, 1969, and St. Francis Training College, 1996, have encountered riot and demonstrations by students. In the Western Region, Fiaseman Secondary School and Tarkwa Secondary School had their own share. According to Morgan (2000), students in Fiaseman staged a violent demonstration against the school authorities in 1979. The students accused the headmaster of incompetence and demanded his removal from office. In the process, students destroyed school property and threatened the lives of the school administrators. The headmaster was eventually removed from office by the education authorities and a new headmaster was appointed in 1980. In Tarkwa Secondary School, it was alleged that a female and two daughters of members of staff were raped by rioting students.

Montagu (1952) observed that co-operation is the key to co-existence of administrators and students. Consequently, he suggested that efforts towards school improvement should take place on co-operation basis. The co-operative approach of sharing, delegating and involving students, who are represented by their prefects in the day-to-day running of schools should be considered beneficial to the smooth running of schools. When sharing and delegation are properly put in place, heads can then have enough time to manage their human resources through what Frase and Hetzel (1990) call "Management by Wandering Around (MBWA)".

The advent of modernization in African countries has brought with it certain structural changes. In Ghana, for instance, there is the government policy of decentralization. It is believed that this policy will enhance grassroots

participation in education. Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) notes that a majority of students from secondary and post-secondary institutions would like to be involved in decision-making. If there are any who do not want to be involved, they are in the minority.

Student participation is a vital step towards fostering responsible attitude among students and bringing about self-discipline within the student body, through the Student Representative Council (SRC) or the prefectoral board. Among other things, their duties include ensuring attendance of students to gatherings, organizing tidiness of the school compound, implementing school rules and regulations, and seeing to the orderliness of students in the school.

It is becoming increasingly clear that, without the much needed student support and commitment, the school would hardly be able to carry out its programmes effectively, after all, the essential reason for setting up schools is to train young men and women to become useful citizens in our worlds. Harbison (1973) contends that human beings are the wealth of nations and their skills, talents and potentials must be developed. This can only be effectively developed if students are allowed to participate in making decisions that invariably affect them.

Statement of the Problem

Reports of Committees of Enquiry into staff and students' grievances in schools and colleges in Ghana (Twumasi, 1974) such as the cases of Kadjebi Secondary School (1969), St. Francis Training College (1996), Tarkwa Secondary School (1971) and Fiaseman Secondary School (1979) seemed to reveal that some

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school administrators deprive students from taking part in the decision-making process. Decisions are taken by the head and forced on students and an attempt to react towards some of the decisions resulted in demonstrations. The four incidents observed in the Volta and Western Regions as reported above, are believed to be examples of a micro situation which serve as an eye opener to the fact that students in other institutions have a low level of participation in the decision-making process. The problem of not involving students in the decision-making process has appeared to be the result of heads of schools hiding behind the idea that, "Children must be seen but must not be heard" (Asiedu-Akrofi, 1978:150). The neglect of students' involvement has often led them to be militant in their demands. Consequently, properties have been destroyed and in certain cases innocent lives have been lost. Situations such as these have not created or promoted a conducive and congenial atmosphere for the teaching and learning process.

Purpose of the Study

Student agitations leading to strike action have been traced to the fact that in many instances, students have been denied the opportunity to be involved in making decisions that affect them. This study was therefore, designed to explore the perceptions of students concerning their involvement in school decision-making process, teachers and headmasters perceptions on student involvement in decision-making and the decision-making structure(s) existing in some selected senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana. The study was also to find out whether students were willing to get involved in the decision-making process

and whether heads were willing to get students involved in the decision-making process. Furthermore, the study unveiled some of the factors associated with student involvement or non-involvement in school decision-making.

Research Questions

The study was specifically aimed at seeking answers to the following questions:

1. What are the structures of the decision-making process in senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana?

2. What are the perceptions of school administrators and students on the participation of students in the decision-making process?

3. In which areas are students actually involved in the decision-making process?

4. Are school administrators willing to involve students in decision-making?

5. Are students themselves willing to participate in decision-making?

6. What factors hinder students from participating in decision-making?

Significance of the Study

It was hoped that this study would go a long way in adding to the body of knowledge on educational administration. It could assist educational administrators to understand the dynamics of students' participation in the school decision-making process. The knowledge of such factors could help administrators of educational institutions to determine the desired level of

involvement of students in their schools and thereby promote congenial atmosphere for the teaching-learning process.

Delimitation

This study would have covered a wider field of coverage but because of constraints of time and finance, the focus was narrowed down to three senior high schools in the Western Region. Decision-making was also delimited to areas such as structures, types, specific areas, the need to involve others, factors and benefits of decision-making.

Limitation

Ideally, this study should have covered all the senior high schools in Ghana so as to have a general idea on students' participation in school-based decision-making. The inadequacies of time and financial constraints did not permit this. In view of this, the study was limited to only three senior high schools in the Western Region.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study, the following definitions were used:

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

2. Participation: Taking part or sharing in an activity to one's ability

3. Head: Headmaster/headmistress or assistant headmaster/ headmistress of a second cycle school.

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CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The literature review is an in-depth search into text materials related to the study. This search is pertinent because the researcher acquainted himself with the existing knowledge which served as the basis for the research. The search involves going through a list of appropriate text materials from several libraries and crystallizing the factors that influence decision-making under the following sub-headings:

a) Historical development of students' involvement in decision-making in West Africa,

b) Perspectives of decisions and decision-making as a process,

c) Types of decisions and conditions for decision-making,

d) Structures or modes of participative decision-making in schools,

e) The need for involving others in decision-making,

f) Reasons for non-involvement of students in decision-making,

g) Conditions and areas for involving students in the decision-making process,

h) Perceptions of heads, teachers and subordinates about students' participation in school decision-making process

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Historical Development of Students' Involvement in

Decision-making in West Africa

The notion of students' leadership in schools and universities, dated back to the colonial period when students from West Africa who were studying in Britain formed an association called National Congress of British West Africa (NCBWA). It was formed in 1920 to unite the four British territories – Gold Coast, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and the Gambia in order to deal with the British Government as one body instead of as four separate groups. At its first meeting in Accra in 1920, the Congress put forward certain demands for the consideration of the British Government. This included the NCBWA to elect half of the members of the legislation council, establishment of universities in West Africa, Africans on the legislative council to control taxation among others.

Fynn(1991) states that the formidable of these youth movements was the Gold Coast Youth Conference which held its first meeting at Achimota School in 1930. The leading scholars of the day who participated in that conference were Dr. J.B Danquah, J.C de Graft Johnson, K.A Bossman, R.S Blay, Dr. F.V Nanka, Edward Adafu, Kobina Sekyi, Bruce and Ruby Quartey.

The West African Students' Union was formed in London in 1925 and was led by Lapido Solanke, in order to remove all obstacles that affected West African students educationally, economically, commercially and politically and to cooperate with the NCBWA. This union helped to train many leaders, for

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example H.O Davies, who on his return to Lagos, helped to organize the Nigerian Youth Movement, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya and Dr. Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.

The union collapsed in the face of the following: internal dissension among the members, emergence of ethnic grouping within the union, lack of funds and the return of members to their home countries after the completion of their courses and programmes. The union had trained leaders who came to devote all their time to serve their nations.

In recent times, student leadership can be found in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels in Ghana. At the senior high school level in Ghana, there are the following prefects: Senior Boys' Prefect, Girls' Prefect, House Prefects, Compound Overseer, Dinning and Entertainment Prefects.

Perspective of Decisions and Decision-Making as a Process

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

Researchers, according to Harding (1987), have made efforts to understand decision-making and some theories have been formulated. Primarily, there have been two main approaches to the study of organizational decision-

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making namely: the prescriptive approach as exemplified by Linblom's Theory of Muddling Through and the descriptive approach as exemplified by Classical Decision-Making Model. The prescriptive model attempts to present how administrators ought to make decisions while the descriptive model presents how administrators do make decisions.

Linblom's Theory of Muddling Through

This is a descriptive and non-rational approach to decision-making. According to Harding (1987), in this model, the decision-maker is seen as an administrative "man" rather than a rational economic man who makes the most logical decision he can, limited by his inadequate information and his ability to utilize the information. Instead of the best and ideal decisions, managers and school administrators settle for a decision that will adequately serve their purpose or appear reasonable based on their past experiences and knowledge. The administrator follows a course of action that "satisfies", that is, he looks for a "satisfactory decision" or courses of actions that he deems "satisfactory" or "good enough" rather than maximizes or reaches the optimal decision.

The Classical Decision-Making

Harding (1987) considers the Classical Decision-Making Model as one which calls for a rational, deliberate and systematic approach in the decision-making process. This theory is based on the assumption that people are economically rational and attempt to maximize output in an orderly and sequential manner. Each step in this model is considered indispensable and one

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must proceed through the specific order. Different writers give different number of steps in this model but according to Harding (1987), it basically involves five steps. According to him, these steps are:

1. Identification and definition of the problem

2. Statement of the desired state of affairs

3. Generation of alternative course of action

4. Selection of the best alternative

5. Implementation

Simon (1960) describes a general model of making a rational decision. According to him, decision-making involves orderly sequential manner of steps. The first step indicated the identification and definition of the problem. There should be a clear concept of the problem on hand, knowing specifically what the problem is.

Second, there should be a statement of the desired state of affairs. This one, he points out concerns what the decision has to accomplish and the objectives the decision seeks to satisfy. Third, he notes a generation of alternative course of actions. According to him, to any given problem, there would be several alternative solutions. To this end, there should be collection and analysis of up-to-date data. Fourth, he discovers the formulation and selection of the preferred course of action. This, he notes involves identifying and weighing the consequences of each course of action and choosing the preferred course. Fifth, he notes the implementation stage where the preferred solution is put into action.

Si xth. Simon (1960) indicates that the decision-maker needs to assess the effectiveness of the decision through evaluation. He further stressed that evaluation should not only be at the end of the process but at any stage so that the necessary corrective measures could be taken or the problem redefined.

Ukeje, Akabagu and Ndu (1992) also described five steps in the decision-making process. The first step indicated the identification and clarification of the problem. According to them, this stage was very important in management because the accuracy of the administrator's perception of the problem would affect the effectiveness of the chosen course of action. Care must therefore be taken to identify the specific problem.

Secondly, they noted that the process involved the collection of possible information, opinions or ideas that were important for judgment. He/she could collect data from various sources like the internet, libraries and the media. Thirdly, the administrator was to collect more data in an attempt to formulate a feasible alternate solution.

Fourth, they contended that the process involved the selection of the actual decision. This alternative, if evaluated and found out to be effective, would be selected to solve the problem.

In the fifth step, they indicated that decision-making process constituted the implementation of the selected alternative. This step involved making a number of minor decisions needed as a means of accomplishing the task dictated by the major decision.

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Types of Decision and Conditions for Decision-Making

Graffiths (1958) noted a tripartite classification of decisions namely intermediary, appellate and creative. He noted that, "intermediary decisions" were those types which did not originate with the school administrator but were delegated to him or her by a superior in the form of a request or a command, for example, a command from the Ghana Education Office to change the school uniform.

The second type he noted as "appellate decisions". He indicated these types as those not to be delegated or relayed. For example, settling of disputes between subordinates or problems brought up to the educational administrator for redress by prefects. The third type, he identified as "creative decisions". These decisions, according to Graffiths (1958) are used to improve some aspects of education such as curricular programmes and admission policies.

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

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decisions often entail high risk and greater expenditure of resources, for example a decision to construct a new classroom block.

Simon (1960) and Peretomode (1992) described three conditions under which administrators or managers made decisions.

1. Certainty (in which the outcome is predictable),

2. Risk (in which the decision maker can estimate the probability of each outcome occurring).

3. Uncertainty (in which the decision maker has no knowledge of the outcome of each alternative).

Structures or Modes of Participative Decision-Making in Schools

Decision-making structure could be considered as the system adopted by an organization in arriving at decisions (Asare-Bediako, 1990). At the head of students' activities is the Students' Representative Council (SRC). Afful-Broni (2004) states that in Ghana all levels of the educational ladder have the S.R.C as part of the governing body of the school, with their own specific areas of management. The S.R.C is the student parliament for any year group as well as relevant identifiable bodies are represented on it. In most secondary and tertiary institutions, the representatives are usually elected in their classes. These class leaders meet on a regular basis with their colleagues to discuss issues pertaining to students' welfare. The council which is guided by a constitution is headed by the S.R.C president. The students' parliament has been instrumental in achieving success in school administration in most schools. However, experience has shown that over the years since the inception of student' parliament, some student

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leaders are only committed to personal gains instead of the group. Afful-Broni (2004) admits that some student leaders misappropriate school funds worth millions of cedis and others use their offices to acquire travel visas for themselves and intimate friends.

In an article which appeared in "Management Today", Asare-Bediako (1990) noted that, for whatever type of decision that is made by administrators whether intermediary, appellate or creative, five types of structures could be used in making decisions. The first according to him is "Decision by Authority" where an individual in authority made decisions for the group. Th e second type is "Decision by Majority". It refers to the approach where the group members have the liberty or freedom to express their views on a problem, situation or issue. The third, he noted was "Decision by Minority". Here a single person or a small group of people took a decision for a larger group. There is yet another structure known as "Decision by Unanimity". This is a situation where every group member agrees with the decision taken. The last he described as "Consensus Decision-Making". This is the approach where there is a lot of networking, collaboration and discussion, so that in the long run, all members will support the decision.

Historically, the system of administration found in the schools that were earlier established along the west coast of Africa, that is, castle and mission schools, was predominantly autocratic. Merland (1974) carved the term "single-order school pattern" to refer to the structure of small schools of the past. In such schools, the headmaster or principal was the "key" figure. The head of the

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institution usually decided for the school without adequate consultation with his subordinate teachers.

Siddle (1978) remarks that the organization chart of such schools had the head, and at times his deputy, at the apex with all other members of staff at the base even though they may have the same qualifications and ranks. The head as the boss considers himself or herself as having unlimited powers. His or her powers were only limited by state laws, board of governors' rules and administrative regulations. Power therefore, came to be vested in administrative officers who were put in charge of managerial duties in schools. The administrative officer assumed himself or herself to be a thin-god given absolute control over teachers and even classroom procedures.

Campbell, Bridges and Nystrand (1977) argue that the unwillingness of administrators under this type of leadership style to relinquish part of their absolute authority to students is perhaps due to the fact that they are still held accountable to the community for whatever goes on in their schools.

"Decision by majority" which refers to the approach where members of a group freely express their views on a given issue, with the majority feelings taken as the decision has been strongly supported by Montague, cited in Wiredu-Kusi (1990). He observed that co-operation is the key to survival. He thus suggested that efforts towards school improvement should take place on co-operative basis involving all relevant publics in the decision to be taken. Jennings (1975) questions the rationale of holding heads of educational institutions responsible for decisions arrived at collectively. He clearly disagrees with the idea that school

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administrators should be held accountable if they no longer have the final say in the affairs of the school. He argues that if decisions are arrived at collectively, then the entire staff should be held accountable.

"Decision by unanimity" occurs where every group member truly agrees on the decision to be taken. Asiedu–Akrofi (1978), in support of this type of decision-making process views the school as a democratic society where views of individuals as well as groups are respected.

"Consensus decision-making" structure allows a lot of discussions so that group members who do not favour the majority alternative nevertheless understand it clearly and are prepared to support it. For institutional harmony to be achieved leading to the attainment of institutional goals, heads of institutions need to adopt the five decision-making structures, since they are indispensable in the educational system and practice.

Different leadership styles may be employed in the decision-making process. Mankoe (2002) defines leadership as whenever two or more people with a common objective converge to engage in activities of some sort towards achieving that common objective. In other words a leader is one who has the authority to guide, direct and control others in pursuit of the aspirations or goals of the group or community. Leadership can be found at any level of society or group. Leadership is knowing the way and leading people to perform creditably. It relates to motivation, delegation of power, team building and interpersonal relations.

Certain leadership behaviors have been noted by Amedzro and Youdewei (2005:69) as follows:

1. Directive leadership: letting subordinates know and perform their tasks

2. Supportive leadership: displaying love and concern for others

3. Participative leadership: consulting with others before making decisions

4. Achievement-oriented decision leadership: setting goals for the work for subordinates and encouraging them to perform.

Prah (2002) identifies five leadership styles; the democratic, the autocratic, the laissez faire, the charismatic and the paternal leader. A democratic leader enjoins the participation of students and the staff members. Afful-Broni(2004) states that democratic leadership is grounded on the fact that the organization is the responsibility of all even though the leader has the primary role of guiding the rest of the group in arriving at collective mission.

He states further that autocratic leader takes much decision on his own and accepts very little information from the subordinates. The role of student leadership under autocratic head is hardly recognized and in schools where heads are autocratic, the staff has very little to say, and even if there is student governance, it is generally only in name. Afful-Broni strongly believes that once staff and students have little expression in the administration, they could resort to riot and demonstrations as an alternative to verbalize their demands.

Under the Laissez faire leadership system, according to Prah (2002), much freedom is given to the subordinates. The head for one reason or the other does not interfere with the work of the subordinates. The system encourages students'

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participation but may not correct them when they go wrong. Afful-Broni (2004) indicates that the output of the organization may suffer tremendously and the leader may even have difficulty responding to correct them, as it was he who failed to take full leadership responsibilities in the first place.

With regard to a charismatic leader, the leader has a special power and ability to influence and win the devotion and respect of others. Such power can emanate from a special quality of personal magnetism or charm that some individuals appear to possess (Mankoe, 2002). Using their charismatic ability to inspire others, these leaders are often called transformational leaders. Blasé and Blasé (1994) postulate that in order to bring about positive change in education, heads must understand that both teachers and students must experience the school as a place that provides innovative and dynamic opportunities for growth and development. Such heads are those who are consistent with the ideals of "transformative leadership", a leadership style where, "teachers and students are given responsibilities, and their potential is released to make their actions and decisions count" Sergiovanni (1989:121).

Paternal leadership style is midway between the autocratic and laissez-faire. Even though the leader makes provision for the staff and students to participate in the decision-making process, he/she rarely takes their decisions. Guidance services are crucial in the school system in order to empower the student leader to perform their leadership roles effectively.

Mankoe (2002) indicates that although all leadership styles like democratic, autocratic and even laissez-faire can help organizations to grow and

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develop, transformational leadership styles are seen as capable of leading organizations towards completeness or perfection.

Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005) identified four major leadership styles: autocratic, laissez-faire, bureaucratic and democratic styles.

Firstly, they noted that the autocratic leader is bossy; the leader assumes knowledge of everything. In the school condition, the head uses dictatorial approach, always giving instructions to students. No questions, opinions and views are entertained from student. Students are always loaded with instructions. The autocratic administrator does not take advice and believes that his/her line of action and thinking are always the best. They are annoyed when approached by subordinates. When they are present, everybody seems to be sad although each person pretends to be working hard.

Secondly, the laissez-faire administrator allows some measure of freedom to subordinates to work on their own. Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005), however, noted that this type of leadership is viable among professionals who can work with little supervision. Thirdly, the bureaucratic leader complies rigidly with rules, directives, correspondence and regulations from his/her superiors. Whenever anything goes wrong, the subordinates immediately blame the regulations or the bosses. The leader has no empathy for the people, and satisfies the employers.

Last is the democratic or participatory method of decision-making. It provides the platform where members can talk openly about disagreements and problems without fear of being attacked, ridiculed or punished in some way.

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According to Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005:65), "a good team is built on the foundations of good communication, rapport, support, trust, co-operation, discussion, consensus and openness". They further noted that the principle of participatory decision-making can be illustrated with a bicycle in motion. The front wheel and the steering can be regarded as performing the leadership function. The light shows the way in the dark. This is an aspect of the role of leadership. A leader needs to show the way, encourage full participation, identify problems ahead and solve them with the subordinates. In each of the bicycle wheels, there are many spokes that are attached to the wheel rim. Both wheels are connected by the bicycle chain and all parts work together to make the bicycle move. The wheels of the bicycle can be considered as students who are united and work together with school administrators to make decisions together in order to achieve the set objectives of the school.

Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005:93) further gave some guidelines for effective leadership in participatory decision-making:

1. The boss drives his men

   The leader inspires them

2. The boss depends on authority

   The leader depends on goodwill

3. The boss evokes fear

   The leader radiates love

4. The boss says "I"

   The leader says "We"

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5. The boss shows who is wrong

    The leader shows what is wrong

6. The boss knows how it is done

    The leader shows how it is done

7. The boss demands respect

    The leader commands respect

Musaazi (1982) identifies four structures of participatory decision-making in schools. The first he noted was face-to-face discussion of the school head and teachers. The final decision is however taken by him/her. The purpose is to ensure that teachers accept the final decision of the head.

The second mode, involved the situation where the head throws a problem to the teachers and collects information from them. The final decision is however taken by him/her. The purpose is to ensure that the teachers accept the final decision of the head. The third mode he described as "democratic". Here, the school head presents a problem to the staff. He/She then guides the teachers to give suggestions, reactions and ideas. The head then takes a decision which reflects the opinions of participants.

The fourth mode he indicated was "parliamentary". Musaazi (1982) noted that this mode utilizes debates on relevant issues of a problem. The opinions of the minority are taken into consideration. A decision is made after voting on the issues raised. Musaazi, however, did not realize the need to get students involved in the decision-making process.

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The Need for Involving Others in Decision-Making

Glickman (1998) discusses three types of schools: the conventional, the congenial and the collegial school. The conventional school is characterized by dependency, hierarchy and professional isolation; where both teachers and students have to comply strictly with laid down rules and conventions, failure of which will result in drastic action. In this type of school, riots and demonstrations may occur since students want to be heard and their views, opinions and suggestions invited and utilized.

The congenial school is characterized by friendly social interactions. While there is friendliness, things are so relaxed that everyone does what he likes to the detriment of the institutional goals. Glickman refer to the conventional and congenial schools as typically ineffective.

The collegial school, on the other hand, is considered as effective and successful because it is characterized by purposeful adult interactions about improving student-wide teaching and learning. Above all, they recognize that a typical characteristic feature of a successful school is that, someone somewhere is responsible for and committed to the process, function and tasks of supervision. In other words, behind every successful school is an effective supervision programme.

In a study conducted by Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) on the state of school management in Ghana, schools that were effective according to their constructs included those whose headmasters involved the teachers and students in the administration of their schools. Similarly, Sergiovanni (1989) sampled a

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number of heads, teachers and students in what he called "Effective Schools", to find out what attributed to make some schools "Effective". The study revealed that the head as well as the teachers in the effective schools perceived that students, an important segment of the schools' relevant public, need to be involved in decisions that affect them. The students in such effective schools were given some sort of autonomy to operate a "guided democracy". Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) observes that students' participation in school governance today represents a period of great promise in our society with strong democratic aspirations.

Afful-Broni (2004) states that student leadership has been instrumental in laying some infrastructure such as dormitories, classrooms, lecture halls, computer laboratories, means of transport and other fine projects. The leaders serve as intermediaries between the school authorities and the students. They serve as custodians of school discipline, channel students grievances to the authorities for redress, provide suggestion boxes to elicit vital information from the students, to promote democratic principles.

Mankoe (2002) states that S.R.C is a link between the schools' authorities and the students to ensure mutual trust between them. He noted the following advantages of student leadership:

(1)   Students understand and appreciate school problems. The student leaders meet to discuss the problems objectively and make informed decisions.

(2)   A sense of responsibility is instilled in the students and ensures that they willingly obey the school rules and regulations.

(3)   Students are able to see their criticisms and disagreements as moves for dialogue and not as causes for disrupting school administration. Most of the student grievances are heard and steps taken to redress them.

(4)   Positive attitudes which students build through their involvement encourages parents to willingly come to the aid of the school.

Ejiogu (1983) pointed out that democratization of any administrative process implied active involvement of subordinates in the decision-making process. He further stated that those in leadership positions would have to share their managerial authority with those over whom they superintended. Such involvement, he argued transcended the involvement of the hand, the heart and the head. He indicated that students were the central foci of the school system and should be involved in the decision-making process of their institutions.

Bolman and Deal (1997). Atakpa and Ankomah (1998), Sergiovanni (1989) and Ejiogu (1983) all agree that involving the relevant public in the affairs of an organizational set up, be it bureaucratic. socio-political or open-system in nature. helps management to achieve the set objectives. Sergiovanni (1989) further indicated that such involvements through laid down decision-making structures, builds a large commitment base; a commitment which leads to effective implementation of decisions.

Amed/ro and Youdeowei (2005) agree that involving the relevant public in the decision-making process ensures their maximum commitment to the affairs of the organization. People who have been involved in making decisions, are much

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more likely to accept and act on the decisions made because they feel a sense of ownership of the decision.

The rationale for involving others in decision-making, especially at the school level is stated by Gorton (1980:62) as:

1. It increases the number of different viewpoints and ideas which might be relevant to the decision being made.

2. It may boost school morale by showing the individuals involved that the administrator values their opinions; which may give them greater feeling of satisfaction.

3. It makes better utilization of the available expertise and problem-solving skills which exist within the school community.

4. It can aid acceptance and implementation of a decision because the people involved are more likely to understand the decision and be more committed to its success.

5. It is consistent with democratic principles of our society, which hold that those who are affected by public institutions such as the school should have some voice in how they are run.

Gorton (1980), and Van de Van and Delbeacq (1974) pin-pointed out that group interaction is more desirable because it encourages the consideration of a wider variety of alternatives and their probable results. Quality decisions would evolve from group involvement when all alternatives are put together for the best to be selected (Rose, Menasco & Curry, 1982).

Blasé and Blasé (1994:27) conducted a study on "Shared governance". The study indicated that heads who practised "shared governance' help "enhance trust in teachers... and students by working to create school climate free of intimidation. fear, coercion and criticism". Such heads believed that they were working in "problem-solving" environments in which "collegiability is an important strategy for bringing about the kinds of connections that make schools work and work well" (Sergiovanni, 1991:138).

Hanson (1996) indicates that disagreements are "conflicts" which are inevitable in group work. Bolman and Deal (1997) consider "disagreements" as "disequilibrium" which ultimately work for the good of an organization because such moments draw together all minds to a round table to find ways back to "equilibrium". Field (1982) adds that disagreements could be better understood and resolved through collective decision-making. Vroom and Yetton (1973) argued along similar lines. They stated that disagreement could be better understood and resolved through collective decision-making. They added that if leaders resorted to discussing problems individually with staff members, the understanding of the full range of alternatives was not likely to be realized.

A study was conducted at the University of Dakota where 82 graduate students in Education were used in what Piper called "Moonshot" task-oriented decision-making exercise (Piper, 1974). The students played the role of astronauts who crash-landed on the moon. Piper requested them to rank in order of importance 15 items of equipment which they considered might help them get to the mastership 200 miles away. The exercise was done individually and then in

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groups of threes and fives. Decisions made by individuals were compared with those made in groups. This was done to ascertain which process produced the best decisions. The data collected indicated that respondents that used consensus process model had more "correct" decisions on the assigned task than the same subjects deciding individually. This emphasized the point that decisions made when "many minds" are involved yield more positive results.

Gray and Stafford (1988) studied the choice behaviour of groups of individuals among 60 medical school students. Their subjects were selected from Washington University. The study indicated that there is a strong evidence to support the fact that groups are less likely than individuals to choose behaviour with a low relative worth.

The findings of Piper (1974) and Gray ard Stafford (1988) did not provide a definite answer to the particular structure or model of decision-making to be chosen by an organization. Nonetheless, they strongly suggested that involving the relevant public is necessary to make "correct" decisions necessary for achieving organizational goals. Participation in the management of an organization motivates workers and helps them to give off their best because they align their individual goals with that of the organization. It helps management to retain her employees.

Sergiovanni (1989) pointed out that participation in the decision-making process, as a form of motivation, gets people to do things. He further stated that when people are motivated they do not only co-operate to avoid isolation but also assume responsibility, and finally, are ready to be held accountable for

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stewardship. He stressed that when workers or people are empowered by way of taking part in making decisions, they have a sense of ownership, and as a result are committed to implementations of decisions.

Sergiovanni indicated that motivated people do their work with meaning and enthusiasm. He further indicated that the moment motivation comes from the side of management a "large commitment base" or "commitment density" is created for workers. Similarly, Patchen (1974) in his study indicated that increase participation in decision-making was associated with greater job satisfactions, work achievement and personal integration in the organization.

Short and Greer (1997) indicated in a study they conducted that workers found in all organizations would like to be involved in making decisions that made an impact on the quality of their working lives, as well as those decisions essential to the success of the organization. Arggris (1964) argues that if employees are not motivated by way of involving them in decisions, the following happens:

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

Short and Greer (1997) note that leaders who fail to motivate workers by involving them in decision-making processes often think that if anything goes wrong they are the ones who will be held responsible. They indicated that the

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saying: "the principal gains power by giving it away", had no meaning to such heads. The result is that subordinates under such heads are not empowered; that is, there is the absence of the opportunity to act (decision participation), and the desire to act. There is also the absence of the feeling of worth and value. Eventually, trust level is low, a situation which leads to the absence of openness and sharing, the expression of acceptance, and cooperativeness.

In the above studies, emphasis was placed on workers in organizations and institutions and not on students. But they have relevance to this study. Students in schools and colleges form part of the relevant public system. A research conducted by Short and Greer (1997:43) suggested that institutions must not "treat students as products, but as workers with a vested interest in the learning experience in which they participate at school". If students are considered as workers with the same "vested interests" as the other relevant publics, then the study strongly suggests that their involvement in decision-making process will bring about the same positive effects or results as in the case of formal workers.

Cantelon (1980) supports the above notion by stating that when students are relegated to the background and are not treated as "workers" with vested interests in the learning experiences in which they participate in school, the only alternative is to kick against the established norm. This, to him, does not promote a congenial atmosphere for the teaching and learning process. Student demonstrations have adverse effects on the nation, and despite the number of attempts at addressing such acts, they continue to frequently occur on various campuses of our institutions of learning.

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Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) investigated the causes of such a phenomenon. One cause, which is relevant to this study, is the "lack of social relationships". He indicated that heads of institutions must strive to involve students in the decision-making process and take them into partnership in order to build trust. The building of trust, according to him will ultimately remove suspicions and thus promotes the building of cordial relationships between students and teachers as well as between students and administrators.

It is with the notion to involve students in participatory decision-making that Lightfoot (1986:72) stated that students must be empowered; where student empowerment is defined as "the opportunities a student has for autonomy, choice, responsibility and participation in decision making". Jenkins (1988:81), states that "to empower others is to give a stakeholder share in the movement and direction of the enterprise". Jenkins noted that students who are empowered, are able to initiate and carry out new plans. Because they are allowed to be part of decisions, they exhibit higher levels of engagement in learning experiences.

In the Empowerment School District Project Study, Short and Greer (1997) found that indicators of an empowered student include:

1.   Functioning as an active problem solver.

2.   Being a creative and productive group member.

3.   Being competent.

4.   Engaging in self-evaluation, and

5.   Experiencing success in the activities in which he/she engages.

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Short and Greer (1997) in their Arizona Restructuring Projects in Murray and Abraham Lincoln High Schools, found out that administrators as well as teachers were very comfortable with the notion of "student as team member", and "student as worker" rather than "student as product". The studies further revealed that students in those schools were allowed to be part of the decision-making process, and as a result, developed specific ways in ensuring students' empowerment.

All the researchers mentioned above agree on one fundamental fact, that is, students are considered as "mature persons" who have vested interests in the learning experience in which they participate at school, such participation enhancing empowerment would help create a congenial environment where they will feel free to contribute their quota to the achievement of organizational goals and objectives.

Reasons for Non-Involvement of Students in Decision-Making

A study conducted by Crane (1976)) indicated that participative decision-making is a management approach which both allows and encourages subordinates to fully participate in making decisions that will affect them. Short and Greer (1997) indicate that school administrators consider subordinates, including students, as inexperienced and therefore, lacking the requisite knowledge for making managerial and operational decisions that could propel the school in the direction for the achievement of set objectives.

Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) agrees with Short and Greer by saying that many heads of institutions abuse powers entrusted into their care by the state and as a

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result intimidate the very students they are supposed to work with. He observes that in Africa, the child does not and dares not question the actions of the adult; because of traditional and religious beliefs that children must respect and obey adults. In view of the above, some heads look down upon students and treat their request for participation in decision-making with contempt.

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

Woode (1985) attributes the apparent indifference to participation by students in decision-making in Ghana to what he terms "Paternalism". He indicates that persons in authority positions behave and are encouraged to behave like uncles, fathers, elders and old men. For instance, heads of organizations irrespective of their age are called "wofa" (uncle), "Numoi" (father), "Oga" (Boss) or "Togbe" (old man). Ghanaian traditional etiquette expressly forbids one to argue or dispute with one's elders or social superiors publicly irrespective of the merits of the case. The young Ghanaian, and for that matter students, exhibit inferiority complex of some sort when it comes to sitting in conference with their super-ordinates. In fact, Woode (1985) maintains that this situation accounts for the existence of dictators in several organizations in Ghana. The schools are no exceptions.

Studies conducted by Chapman (1988) in Australia to find out factors that were associated with subordinates' participation in decision-making indicated that, subordinates' involvement was associated with age, gender, seniority and experience. This is confirmed by Mandani (1993) that male students and student leaders were more desirous to be involved in operational decisions than female students and those not in leadership positions.

Mankoe (2002) and Afful-Broni (2004) agree that the activities of students in promoting good governance of the school could have some challenges and bring about more harm than good if not properly coordinated and this may lead to gross indiscipline. The fear of this improper co-ordination which consequently leads to indiscipline has contributed to the non-involvement of students in the decision-making process. Many student leaders have conducted themselves well but others have faulted greatly in some parts of the world, the cause of their misbehavior lies greatly in the intake of drug by the youth. Carol (1991) states that it is estimated that there are 28.6 million children of alcoholics in the United States: 6.6 million are less than 18 years and most are enrolled in schools.

Another cause of misbehavior among student leaders is societal infiltration. Tom (1999) states that the school mirror society and problems in society will manifest themselves in the classroom. Mandler and Carvin (1983), cited in Tom (1999), identifies four factors that contribute to problems in the school: the presence of violence in society, the influence of the media, the values of the "me" generation and the lack of a secure family environment. Indiscipline of the student leader may arise when school rules are not well spelt out.

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Afful-Broni (2004) explains that school indiscipline could arise when school rules are perceived to be unclear to the majority, when there is lack of effective orientation for the student leaders and new students, when there is perceived inconsistency on the part of authority and if some school rules are found to be unjust or unfair and students then choose to disobey them. Student leaders need to develop self-control by being allowed to make choices, organizing their time, setting priorities, being peace makers when others engage in disputes, engaging collaborative learning to trust each other.

Conditions and Areas for Involving Students in Decision-Making

Involving people in decision-making required that the administrator be certain "that the individuals or groups whom he is involving are given sufficient training for participation in decision-making" (Gorton: 248). He further indicated that heads of schools think that students' lack the requisite knowledge for an effective involvement in decision-making at the school level. Students on their part, feel that they have adequate information upon which to make a decision.

Ukeje et al. (1992) discovered that students were interested in participating in some of the following areas. The areas included: keeping of the libraries, conducting assemblies and church services, leading sporting activities and other social clubs, preventing vices like gambling, drinking and smoking and generally ensuring discipline among student community. Afful-Broni (2004) says that there is discipline when there is order in the behaviors of the people within an organization, and we refer to a person as disciplined when this individual follows set rules faithfully or adheres to laid down principles in such a way that their lives

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are in tune with the nature of their organization and that they are looked up to in the community. Tom (1999) also defines discipline as unfortunate by-product of education. The emphasis is on dealing with problems quickly and efficiently so that the goals of the prescribed curriculum can be accomplished. In this context, the purpose of discipline is to minimize disruption so that academic goals can be met. Discipline then means that rules and punishments are applied in order to keep students on task.

Ukeje et al. (1992:286) described student government as follows:

At the helm of affairs of the students' government is the Student Representative Council (SRC). The student councils are usually charged with the responsibility of student welfare, transacting pertinent business within the limits of the policies of the school or college, enforcing school rules and at times, awarding punishment to students so far as the college activities allow it.

Afful-Broni (2004) identifies the following clubs and associations in schools where students are involved: Debating Club, Red Cross Society, Drama Troupe, Wildlife Society, the School Choir, Cultural Group, English, Mathematics or Science Clubs, Cadet Corps, Karate Groups and Sporting Clubs. He states that through these and many more groups, the administration would help enliven the spirits of the youth. Through these activities, the youth would be helped to appropriately channel their exuberant energies in productive ways. The students organize themselves to run these clubs and associations by the help of

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their patrons. They elect their own executive members who organize the activities of the clubs. There is always unity and co-operation between leaders and followers in order to achieve their objectives.

Specifically, the major roles of the S.R.C were outlined by Afful-Broni (2004:198) as follows:

a. Serving as a link between the administration and the students. Through communicating with the administration what the students grievances and needs are, they also bring responses back to the students.

b. Being the spokesperson on behalf of the students and meeting with the administration of any external body, like the Parent Teacher Association or the Past Students' Association.

c. Serving as the custodians of school discipline, by living out to the best of their ability the rules set by the school.

d. Serving as the law and order guardians by ensuring that rules and regulations are obeyed by the students.

e. Articulating the important messages that the school administration provides to the students.

f. Serving as the democratic organ for the students through their general assemblies and functions which they may organize.

g. Acting as role models by initiating improvement projects on behalf of and with the blessing of the student body.

h. As far as specifically students' issues, rather than the entire institution are concerned, this is the body that represents the students before the government of the day, and the Ministry of Education, issues relating to students' loans, etc.

The findings of Bennet (1987) suggest the mode of decision-making at a school depends on the style of leadership at the central office outside the school. He investigated the way heads' perceptions of certain conditions and practices at the central office level were related to the methods the heads used to involve teachers or their staff in the decision-making process. One hundred and twenty primary and secondary school heads in the United States of America were asked to describe the decision-making mode that best characterized the way instructional decisions were made in their schools on a continuum which ranged from "boss centered " to "subordinate centered". It was found out that a positive relationship existed between the head's perceptions of the leadership at the central office.

Even though Bennet (1987) was concerned with a broader concept, his views are essential to the purpose of this study. The power to make day-to-day educational decisions seems to be concentrated at the central office. In view of this, students' participation in certain decisions involving managerial and operational matters is reduced to the minimum level in some schools.

Shanahan (1987) also looked at the extent to which school heads use participatory management in their schools. The success of heads was also assessed. The results of the study gave an indication that a high percentage of

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school heads used participatory decision-making, at least in some areas of responsibility such as establishing classroom disciplinary policies, determining appropriate teaching method(s), maintaining discipline in the school, and allowing students to exercise control over funds contributed by them for projects. Hanson (1996) and Blasé and Blasé (1994) support Shanahan's findings by indicating that the majority of school heads involved their subordinates, including students in the decision-making process of their schools. The studies confirmed that the use of participatory decision-making in school management increased commitment and a higher level of co-operation. Shanahan's study further revealed that the school size was a contributing factor to the use of participatory mode of decision-making. whereas large school size was found to inhibit active involvement in decision-making processes, small school size promoted it.

Perceptions of Heads, Teachers and Subordinates about Students Participation in Decision-Making

Gorton (1980) conducted a study on the attitudes and perceptions of heads and teachers towards the implementation of shared decision-making in an urban school district. The study revealed that the attitudes of heads and teachers regarding the process of shared decision-making and their perceptions of areas for student participation or involvement differed significantly. Gorton further states that students indicated significantly more agreement than heads and teachers as to how the shared decision-making process was functioning in their schools. Heads were found to be more in favour of the following:

1. That students are to be guided in their involvement in decision-making,

2. That students should have input in setting up goals and priorities,

3. That students are to be provided with requisite information to make appropriate decisions.

On the other hand, teachers who were identified as being faculty advisors to student councils felt that students' councils should not be allowed increased roles in decision-making. Students however, were found to press for their involvement in the following area:

1. Involvement in matters of student discipline; the rationale being that school should be a preparation for and to a large extent, a reflection of the world they will encounter after graduation;

2. Involvement in matters that bother on evaluation of teachers. Students perceive that they are consumers of education, and therefore the product (teaching) must be evaluated by them;

3. Involvement in decisions that have to do with control of all extra-curricula funds without administrative interference.

Keef (1975) studied the role of teachers and other subordinates in school decision-making from the Montana school district. The analysis of the data revealed significant differences among teachers, principals and board members on their perceptions concerning the involvement of teachers and other subordinates. Teachers perceived that they ought to be given the opportunities to participate in all types of school decisions. Administrators on the other hand, perceived that teachers and other subordinates should be involved in either operational or managerial decisions.

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Similarly, Merrit (1987) undertook a study to look at the differences in the perception of parents, teachers and clerical staff of their concept of shared governance in a selected urban school district in Mississippi. A 50 item shared governance opinionnaire was used in the study to collect data from 570 teachers, clerical staff and parents. The following were the results from the analysis of data:

1. There was a significant difference in the perception of shared governance among teachers, school principals, the clerical staff and parents; that is, among the immediate relevant public.

2. There was no significant difference in perceptions when teachers and principals were grouped into primary and secondary schools.

3. There was a significant difference in perception of principals when categorized by gender and age.

The central feature of the studies sited above, was that people concerned with the educational enterprise and the general public differ in their attitude and perceptions concerning students as well as other subordinates participation in school decision-making. Shanahan (1987) looked at the extent to which school heads use participatory management in their schools. The success of heads was also assessed. The results of the study gave an indication that a high percentage of school heads used participatory decision-making, at least in some areas of responsibility such as establishing classroom disciplinary policies, determining appropriate teaching method(s), maintaining discipline in the school, and allowing students to exercise control over funds contributed by them for projects.

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Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) stated that in a situation where the head of school has little confidence in the staff and students' decision-making, the head would rarely invite views and suggestions from them. When that happens, the staff and students would get disappointed.

Blasé and Blasé (1994) reported that the subordinates used in the study on "Empowering Teachers", indicated that heads who practiced shared governance used two strategies namely:

1. encouraging of subordinate autonomy; and

2. encouraging of subordinate innovation.

Blasé and Blasé(1994:72) explain "autonomy" as "degree of freedom that subordinates have in determining their work processes", and "innovation" as referring to "the design and implementation of experimental processes and new content for use". The study indicated that students or subordinates perceive that

they are likely to get actively involved in decision-making processes in environments where heads promote autonomy and are themselves innovative.

Sergiovanni (1991) agreed with Blasé and Blasé by saying that heads who employ shared governance believe that they were working in " problem-solving" environments in which collegiality is an important strategy for bringing about the kinds of connection that make schools work and work very well.

In a study conducted by Mandani (1993), a number of students were randomly selected to respond to questionnaire showing their "desired" and "actual" levels of participation in decision-making. The study indicated that the participation level for both "desired" and "actual" was greatest for appellate decisions and least for intermediary ones, that is executive managerial decisions. It was found out students who had spent more years on campus referred to as – senior students – and those in leadership positions, showed much desire to participate more in creative as well as, operational and managerial decisions.

A study was conducted by Johnson (1975) among San Francisco heads of schools. It was confirmed that there existed in the schools participatory decision-making structures It was further revealed that school heads had the fear that expanded subordinate influence through involvement would undermine their work. On the contrary, it was explained that because collective work structures help to develop workers' professional competence, teachers showed much interest in such structures. Consequently, the desire of subordinates, including students to participate in decision-making, depends on the leadership style of the head.

Summary of Literature Review

From the review of literature, it becomes clear that there is the need in schools for the existence of structures that will promote effective involvement of subordinates in decision-making process. Administrators who promoted or encouraged participatory management in their schools were more successful as heads than those who used the "one-way-traffic" model of administration. The top-down planning approach to development may fail to produce the expected results when subordinates are not taken as partners in the process and this may lead to strike actions and chaos in the school.

Secondly, it was revealed that the best relationship exists between the educational administrator, staff and students if the head empowers students by allowing them to be actively involved in the decision-making process. This contributes to a conducive atmosphere for the teaching-learning process.

Thirdly, there exists different decision-making structures in schools. Some heads feel strongly that teachers and students must be involved in decision-making. Students share the view that they must be involved in any decision that affects their lives as students. Fourthly, students want to take part in all decision-making situations but they mostly want to participate in areas such as keeping the school libraries, conducting assemblies and church services, leading sporting activities and other social clubs and ensuring discipline among junior students.

Student participation in decision-making has advantages: It reduces tension, agitations, or unrests; it builds trust which ultimately enhances the teaching-learning process; it ensures higher quality decision and greater

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acceptance and commitment; it removes suspicions from the minds of students and promotes transparency in school administration.

It was also found that certain factors contribute to students' non-involvement in the decision-making process of their schools. Some of these factors include the notion of school administrators that students are inexperience and therefore lacking the requisite knowledge for making decisions and the fact that some students are ignorant of the specific roles they have to play in the decision-making process. Administrators also think that if there is improper co-ordination regarding students' involvement, it may lead to gross indiscipline on the part of students and this may adversely affect the teaching-learning process.

There is therefore, the need for educational administrators to determine the extent to which their students should be involved in the decision-making process. It is strongly believed that if administrators create a tension-free atmosphere for students to fully participate in the decision-making process, there will be a positive feeling towards them and this friendly environment will go a long way to promote the teaching and learning process to the satisfaction of all. Consequently, the school can achieve its set goals. If on the other hand students are denied the opportunities for their empowerment that seeks to release students' potentials, then school heads must be prepared for other ways of letting their voices be heard.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the research design used for the study. It discusses the various procedures and processes that were used to collect and analyse data.

Population

The total population consists of all students, teachers, heads and assistant heads of the forty-three senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana. This is because all these categories of people are stakeholders in the school decision-making process. Students participate in decision-making mainly through the Student Representative Council. Teachers also participate by being represented on boards of directors, supervisors' board, work councils and consultative committees. The heads who are at the top of the organizational hierarchy may decide to involve students in the decision-making process thus it is necessary to select them to find out whether or not they involve students in decision-making.

Sample

Two-hundred and forty students were sampled from three senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana; 80 students from each school. These schools consisted of one of the following: all boys' school, all girls' school and a mixed school. Random sampling was used to select students who did not form

part of the SRC. In all, 240 students were sampled. The three heads and the six assistant heads of the selected schools formed another group of respondents. Twenty teachers from each school were also sampled. In all, sixty teachers were sampled. Respondents thus consisted of 240 students, 60 teachers and all the three heads and their assistants. A total of 309 respondents thus constituted the sample size.

Sampling Procedure

Both purposive and random sampling techniques were used. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Archbishop Porter Girls' Senior High School which is the only girls school in the Western Region. Tarkwa Secondary, a mixed school, was also purposely selected because even though there had been a riot action by students there about three decades ago, the researcher wanted to find out the views and opinions of students, teachers and heads concerning students' involvement in school decision-making. St. John's School was also purposively selected out of the three boys' school because it was the first boys' school established in the Western Region to enroll students in all disciplines.

The purposive type was also used for the heads and assistant heads, the students of the SRC and a category of teachers. These teachers were the senior house master/mistress and heads of departments. In all five teachers were purposively selected from each school. It was believed that by virtue of their positions, they were in a good position to give relevant information concerning students' participation in the decision-making process.

Random sampling was used for the category of students who did not form part of the SRC. The rationale for choosing the random sampling technique was to ensure that each participant in the study population had equal and independent chance of being selected. In the random sampling, the class registers of the third-year students in each school was used. The total number of third-year students in each school was divided by the number of students who were randomly selected. For instance, in a school where there are 200 third-year students and the researcher had to select 66 students who were not part of the SRC, the researcher divided 200 by 66. Students were then counted in cycles of that number which represents the answer to the division. The last name within each cycle was selected. In this case, since the answer to the division is 3, students' names on the class register were counted in cycles of 3 and the last name within this cycle was selected until all the sixty-six students were randomly selected.

Fifteen teachers were randomly sampled from each school. A list of teachers in the selected schools was collected from the heads and the samples were randomly selected from the list. The fish-bowl method was used to sample teacher respondents who were not purposively selected. The researcher wrote the names of teachers on the same size of pieces of paper, folded and put them in a container. The papers were mixed together by shaking the container. Once a name was picked, it was recorded and not put back into the container. This continued until the required number of teachers was obtained.

In each of the schools, emphasis was placed on students and teachers who had spent more than two years on the various campuses. This was because the

researcher assumed that it needs at least two years to stay at the school to be able to make meaningful assessment of both students and teachers' participation in the decision-making process.

Research Design

The descriptive design was used. Osuala (1991), cited in Wiredu-Kusi (1990), believes that descriptive surveys are versatile and practical, especially to the administrator in that they identify present conditions and point out present needs. Descriptive design is highly regarded by policy makers in the social sciences where large populations are dealt with and widely used in educational research since data gathered through descriptive survey represent field conditions.

Descriptive survey was therefore adopted. The design enabled the researcher to investigate, describe and evaluate the involvement of students in school level decision-making as it currently exists. Furthermore, it enabled the researcher to evaluate the extent to which heads, teachers and students perceive students' involvement in the decision-making process of their schools.

Instrument

The researcher adapted and modified a 27-item research instrument designed by Wiredu-Kusi (1990) who conducted a similar research in some selected senior high schools in the Cape Coast Municipality. The questionnaire consisted of open and close-ended items. It consisted of three major parts. The first part of the questionnaire asked respondents to provide biographic data such as age, sex, number of years spent in school, and leadership roles played or being

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played. The remaining part of the questionnaire was divided into sections for each group of respondents, that is, heads, teachers and students.

The second major part consisted of three sections namely:

1.   Section 'A'- The structure and procedures of decision-making in schools

2.   Section 'B'- Students', teachers' and heads' perceptions of students' involvement in decision-making

3.   Section 'C' - Actual student participation in decision-making

Section A of each questionnaire looked at the structure of decision-making in schools. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of students' meeting with school administrators, the existing channels for them to communicate their views on school-related matters and the use of veto power by the head of the institution. Questions were also asked on the way students' leaders are chosen and whether the opinions, views and suggestions of students are taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

Section B has only one section for students but also has a sub-section for teachers and heads. They consisted of items aimed at seeking the perception of students, teachers and heads about school decision-making. For example, respondents were asked whether they believe that student participation in decision-making enhances the quality of decisions, promotes commitment to decisions, make students pay ample attention to academics or delay actions

Section C consisted of ten items, out of which five were adapted from an instrument used by Styles and Germinario (1985), cited in Wiredu-Kusi (1990), in

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a similar study, to look at actual subordinate participation in school decision-making. Respondents were asked to show the extent to which students have actually been involved in decision-making in situations such as choosing school prefects and disciplining students.

The last section of the questionnaire, the third major part (Section D), consisted of three items which were made up of both close-ended and open-ended questions. Three open-ended questions were asked. The first asked about the preferred decision-making situations which respondents would like students to participate in. The second inquired respondents to rank in descending order, factors they considered as hindering students participation in decision-making. The third gave the opportunity for heads, teachers and students to make general comments about students' participation in decision-making. (Refer to Appendix B for sample questionnaire).

Responses to items in Sections "A", "B" and "C" follow the four point Likert scale in descending order of 4,3,2,1 (Oppenheim, 1966). In Sections A and B, the responses were arranged as:

4   strongly agree

3   agree

2   disagree

1 - strongly disagree

The responses to items in Section C were scored as follows:

4   to a great extent

3   to some extent

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2 - to a little extent

1 - don't know

In Section D, responses were scored as ranking, from highest to lowest.

In all, there were 28 items on students' questionnaire, 30 and 32 items on teachers' and heads' questionnaire respectively. The instruments which were designed on a four-point Likert scale were administered by the researcher directly to the respondents. There was a 97.1% return rate. Simple descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages were employed in the analysis of data collected.

Pilot Testing

In order to ascertain the reliability of the adapted questionnaire, the questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot testing. It was carried out at Bompeh Secondary Technical School in the Shama Ahanta East Metropolitan Education Directorate. Bompeh Secondary Technical School is a mixed school in Takoradi in the Western Region of Ghana. The school was selected for the pre-test study on the grounds that it shared many common characteristics with the sampled schools: namely, environmental, socio-cultural and the general economic milieu. It was hoped that the analysis of the pilot test would reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the items in the questionnaire. The adapted questionnaires were modified before they were used for the target population. The modified questionnaires are given as appendices B, C and D.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sent a Letter of Introduction from the Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (Refer to Appendix A) to the heads of the selected senior high schools and made prior arrangements before administering the questionnaires. During prior arrangements, the heads, teachers and students were briefed on the purpose of the study and an appeal was made for their co-operation.

Due to unreliability of the country's postal system and the fact that the schools selected were easily accessible, copies of questionnaires were delivered to respondents by hand. During the long break, after lunch and immediately after some papers were written, the students and teachers were contacted. Because the researcher went to the schools during the examination period, data collection was cumbersome but at the end of the data collection, there was a high return rate of 97.1 percent, the mortality rate being 2.9 percent. The data collection period for the three senior high schools was from 4th to 8th April 2005.

The Data Analysis Plan

Since the study was a descriptive one, simple descriptive statistics involving frequencies, percentages and ranking were used in the analysis of data. The scores of the various items in each section were tallied and frequency distribution tables drawn for the responses. Total percentages were calculated for each item after the frequencies of the school had been summed up for each item and section of the questionnaires.

The researcher envisaged that some of the columns under four points Likert scale in the questionnaire would be put together for analysis. Such a procedure of collating data helped to provide a clear picture and a better understanding of the trend of opinions expressed by respondents. For Sections A which dealt with the structure and procedure of decision-making in schools and Section B which concerned the perceptions of respondents on students' participation in the decision-making process, responses which were scored 4 and 3 and labeled "strongly agree" and "agree" respectively were combined to indicate "agreement" (Positive Response). This was compared with responses which were scored 1 and 2 and labeled "strongly disagree" and "disagree" to indicate "disagreement" (negative responses).

Similarly, in Section C, responses which were scored 4 and 3 and were labeled "to a great extent' and "to some extent" were combined to indicate positive participation or involvement, and the columns "to a little extent" (2) and "don't know" (1) to indicate non-participation or involvement. This method was adopted to provide clear dichotomy between those who agreed and those who disagreed.

The responses of the open-ended questions were grouped according to common ideas expressed and a general pattern was sorted out for them. The general comments were grouped into two major areas namely:

1. Factors preventing students from active participation in school decision-making; and

2. Suggestions on students participation

Surprisingly, none of the head gave suggestions.

In some cases, frequencies were established for the groups of opinions observed, and percentages were calculated to give a clear picture of responses.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the findings. It discusses the biographic data, the structure and procedure of decision-making, perceptions on students' participation in decision-making, the willingness of heads to involve students in decision-making and whether students themselves were willing to be involved. Lastly, factors affecting the participation of students in decision-making are discussed.

Biographic Data

The sex distribution of heads, teachers and students was found out.

Table1

Sex Distribution of Respondents

Sex	Students		Teachers		Heads	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	120	51.9	40	66.7	5	55.6
Female	111	48.1	20	33.3	4	44.4
Total	231	100	60	100	9	100

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Table 1 indicates that slightly more than half the number of student respondents 120 (51.9%) were males and 111 (48.1%) of respondents were females. The information provided by student respondents represents a fair contribution of both male and female students.

Analysis of data on the sex distribution of teachers showed that majority of respondents, 40 (66.7%) were females. The research therefore had ideas from both males and female teachers as regards students' participation in decision-making.

The researcher elicited information from heads regarding their sex distribution for the study. The data from Table 1 indicated that 55.6 percent respondents were males and 44.4 percent were females. The information provided by the heads was thus a fair representation of both males and females.

A question was asked in order to find the age distribution of students. Table 2 below provides data on students' responses.

Table 2

Age Distribution of Students

Age	No.	%
Under 20 years	221	95.7
21 25 years	10	4.3
26 30 years	0	0 0
Over 35 years	0	0.0
Total	231	100

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The picture in Table 2 clearly shows that out of the 231 student respondents, over three quarters of them were under 20 years and only 10 students (4.3%) were between 21 – 25 years. None of the students was more than 25 years old.

Teachers were asked to indicate their ages. Table 3 provides data on the age distribution of teacher respondents.

Table 3

Age Distribution of Teachers

Age	No.	%
Under 30 years	10	16.7
31 – 40 years	34	56.6
41 – 50 years	13	21.7
Over 50 years	3	5.0
Total	60	100

Analysis of data on age of teachers as indicated in Table 3 shows that majority of the teachers, thirty-four (56.6%) were within the age range of 31 – 40, thirteen (21.7%) were within the age range of 41 – 50, ten (16.7%) were under 30 and only three (5.0%) were over 50 years. This means that there were more young teachers who had recently completed school and are now leaders themselves and so will be able to provide fair views on decision-making in secondary schools.

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The age ranges of heads were also investigated. The table below provides this vital information.

Table 4

Age Distribution of Heads

Age	No.	%
Under 45 years	0	0.0
46 – 50 years	2	22.2
51 - 55 years	5	55.6
Over 55 years	2	22.2
Total	9	100

Table 4 indicates that none of the heads was aged under 45 years. Majority of them were between 51- 55 years old. In both cases, 22.2 percent were between the ages of 46 - 50 years and 55 years and above. From the data, it can be inferred that all the heads sampled for the study are matured, have had a lot of teaching experience and know the rudiments of leadership. Heads indicated that they had played some leadership roles before becoming heads. They all noted that they had held two or more of the following positions: form tutors, housemasters, senior housemaster/mistress, entertainment master/mistress and chaired other committees in the school.

The heads were asked to indicate the number of years they had spent in the leadership position. Table 5 provides data on their responses.

Table 5

Total Number of Years Spent as Head

Years spent	No.	%
Under 5 years	4	44.4
6 – 10 years	5	55.6
11 – 15 years	0	0.0
Total	9	100

Table 5 indicates that majority of the heads, 5 (55.6%) had been heads of their present schools for between 6 – 10 years and 4 (44.4%) respondents had spent less than 5 years as heads. None of them had been head for eleven years and above. Farrant (1990: 233) indicates that "leadership, like authority, does not come readily to the person who grabs it, but comes with knowledge and experience and an understanding of people and human relations". It is an undeniable fact that good knowledge and experience are the basis of effective leadership in every organization including the school. Since the heads had administrative experiences, the information they provided was vital to the success of the study.

Teacher respondents were asked to indicate the number of years they spent in their present school. Table 6 indicates their responses.

Table 6

Number of Years Teachers Spent in Present School

Number of years	No.	%
2 - 5 years	27	44.8
6 10 years	13	21.7
11 - 15 years	8	13.3
16 - 20 years	4	6.9
Over 21 years	8	13.3
Total	60	100

Table 6 indicates that slightly less than half of the teachers (44.8%) had spent less than five years at their present schools. More than half of the teacher respondents (55.2%) had spent more than 6 years in their present school. This finding presupposes that all the respondents were experienced enough and know the status of students' participation in the decision-making process in their schools.

Teachers sometimes hold leadership positions in their schools. The researcher elicited information from teachers regarding the positions they held in their schools as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Positions Teachers Held in Schools

Position	No.	%
Head of Department	9	15.0
Chairperson, Disciplinary Committee	3	5.0
Senior Housemaster/Mistress	7	11.7
House Master/Mistress	10	16.7
Class Tutor	26	43.3
Staff Secretary	2	3.3
Guidance & Counselling Coordinator	3	5.0
Total	60	100

Table 7 reveals that slightly less than half of the teacher respondents, 26 (43.3%) were class tutors, 10 (16.7%) were house masters/mistresses, 9 (15.0%) were head of departments, 7 (11.7%) were senior housemasters/mistress, 3 (5.0%) were guidance coordinators, 3 (5.0%) were members of the disciplinary committee and 2 (3.3%) were staff secretaries. This indicates that the teachers have had some administrative experiences and understand the rudiments of leadership and the decision-making process. The information they had provided was therefore vital to the success of the study.

The leadership roles played by students in their schools were investigated as shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Status of Students in School

Status	No.	%
Prefect	37	16.0
Members of SRC	47	20.3
Ordinary Student	147	63.7
Total	231	100

Table 8 shows that less than one third of the student respondents 37 (16.0%) were prefects. All the 37 prefects were found to be members of the Students' Representative Council (SRC). 47 (20.3%) were found to be members of the SRC. 147 (63.7%) students out of the 231 were ordinary students; neither prefects nor members of the SRC.

Research Question 1: What are the Structures and Procedures of Decision-Making Process in Secondary Schools in the Western Region of Ghana?

The respondents were asked to describe the structure and procedure of decision-making process in their schools. Table 9 illustrates their responses.

Table 9

The Structure and Procedure of Decision-Making in the School

Structure and Procedure	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
There is an SRC in my school	282	93.9	18	6.1	300	100
The SRC in my school meets frequently	175	58.3	125	41.7	300	100
Students are selected by popular choice	148	49.2	152	50.8	300	100
Students often serve on the school disciplinary committee	105	34.8	195	65.2	300	100
Students have the option of appeal in disciplinary matters	48	15.9	252	84.1	300	100
Students are often invited by the school administration to express their opinion on issues	128	42.7	172	57.3	300	100
The administration often takes the views of students into consideration in arriving at final decision affecting them	139	46.2	161	53.8	300	100
Students' opinion on effecting or bringing about changes are often welcome by the administration	125	41.7	175	58.3	300	100

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The analysis of data from Table 9 indicates that almost all the students agree that they have SRC in their schools. Since all the students in the school cannot be present at a meeting with school administration to take decisions, there has been the need to establish Students' Representative Council on various campuses.

As illustrated in Table 9, 175 (58.3%) respondents are of the view that the SRC in their schools meet frequently and 125 (41.7%) respondents indicated that the SRC in their schools do not meet frequently. The analysis of the data revealed that in the mixed school, under 30 percent of respondents indicated that the SRC meets frequently whilst in the boys' and girls' institutions, over 80 percent respondents indicated that the SRC regularly met. The general impression created here is that the SRC meetings are common at single sex schools than at mixed schools.

Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005:70) stated that "leaders may be appointed or elected". Sometimes, people may usurp leadership naturally because of experience, knowledge, charisma or training, wealth, education, long service and hard work. However, others usurp leadership through brute force. On the issue of the mode of selecting student leaders, slightly less that half of the respondents 148 (49.2%) agreed that students are selected by popular choice and 152 (50.8%) respondents disagreed that students are selected by popular choice. The general impression created here is that the choice of student leaders is a combination

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effort of both the school administration and students. Some of the general comments students made was that they should be allowed to select their own prefects, especially the class prefects. In cases where there was selection by popular choice, there was a period of campaigning, manifesto presentation and finally, balloting. Prior to these, aspiring prefects were vetted by the school administration.

Disciplining students helps to deter others from engaging in such bad behaviors that attracted disciplinary measures suited out to the culprits. However, inappropriate disciplinary measures have in most cases led to negative reactions from students in the name of solidarity (Mandani, 1973). As illustrated in Table 9 on whether students serve on the schools' disciplinary committee, the data indicated that majority of respondents 195 (65.2%) disagreed and only a minority of respondents 105 (34.8%) agreed that students serve on the schools' disciplinary committee but it is only by name. Since in many instances decisions taken by the disciplinary committee had been vetoed by the headmasters of their schools. Shanahan (1987) indicated that students want to be involved in establishing classroom disciplinary policies and maintaining discipline in the school. Afful-Broni (2004) indicates that there is discipline when there is order in the behaviors of the people within an organization. When students are involved in issues of discipline, they become disciplined since they turn to follow set rules faithfully or

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adhere to laid down principles in such a way that their lives are in tune with the nature of their schools.

On the question as to whether students have the option of appeal in disciplinary matters, more than three-thirds of respondents 252 (84.1%) disagree that students have the option of appeal in disciplinary matters. The impression of the researcher from this data is that some school administrators use their veto powers to take decisions and are final arbiters in most school matters. Gorton (1980), in his study admonished that school administrators must not be found to be playing the role of police, prosecutor, jury and judge.

Studies conducted on subordinate participation in decision-making have shown that such participation enhances the quality of decisions. The analysis of responses expressed on whether school administrators invited students to express their opinions on issues indicated that slightly more than half the number of respondents 172 (57.3%) disagreed that students are often invited by the school administration. A common comment made by students was, 'students are not allowed to express their views in the decision-making process. The authorities are autocratic'. A minority of respondents, 128 (42.7%) however indicated that students' views are often invited by the school administration on issues before arriving at final decisions affecting them.

The data from Table 9 also shows that the majority of respondents 161 (53.8%) indicated that students' views and suggestions are not taken into

consideration before final decisions affecting students are made. Asiedu- Akrofi (1978) stated that in a situation where the head of a school has little confidence in the staff and students' decision-making, the head would rarely invite views and suggestions from them. When that happens, the staff and students would get disappointed.

On whether the school administrator welcomes students opinions to effect or bring about change, it became clear from Table 9 that majority of respondents, 175 (58.3%) disagreed that students' opinions on effecting changes are welcome by the school administration. Interesting, an analysis of the information provided by the heads alone showed that all (100%) indicated that they welcome the opinions of students in effecting changes (Refer to Table14). It can therefore be inferred that even though the heads are ready to welcome such opinions, students are afraid not only of being victimized but the authoritative nature of some heads also hinder them from making their opinions known (Refer to Table 17).

Research Question 2: What are the Perceptions of School Administrators and Students on the Participation of Students in the Decision-making Process?

The researcher sought to find out the perceptions of students, teachers and heads on students' participation in decision-making?

Tables 10 provides data on these perceptions:

Table 10

Perceptions of Students, Teachers and Heads on Students' Participation in Decision-making

Perception on decision-making	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Enhances quality of decisions made	203	67.7	97	32.3	300	100
Enhances students commitment to the school's programme	199	66.4	101	33.6	300	100
Student participation exposes them to real life situations	65	94.2	4	5.8	69	100
Enhances students' feeling of belongingness	187	62.5	113	37.5	300	100
Promotes workable and lasting relationship between staff and students	264	87.9	36	12.1	300	100
Student participation promotes creation of congenial atmosphere	64	92.8	5	7.2	69	100
Students participation builds rapport between students and school administration	9	100	0	0.0	9	100
Students participation builds trust between them and the school administration	9	100	0	0.0	9	100

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Table 10 indicated that about two-thirds of respondents (67.7%) agree that students' participation in decision-making enhances the quality of decisions made. A study conducted by Gorton (1980) affirms this when he stated that one of the rationale for involving others in decision-making is to increase the number of different view points and ideas which might be relevant to the decisions being made. On the other hand, only about a third (32.3%) of respondents indicated their disagreement.

Similarly, Table 10 shows that a good number of respondents, 199 (66.4%) are of the view that students' participation enhances their commitment to the programme of the school. A third of respondents (33.6%) indicated their disagreement. It is worth nothing that the findings confirm what Beeby (1966) termed as "Hawthorne effect" of genuine participation in the affairs of the school. He argued that students became more committed and performed so much just because they were at the centre of attention in decision-making situations. Arggris (1964). on the other hand indicated that subordinate non-participation in decision-making leads to psychological withdrawal and chronic absenteeism.

When the responses of teachers and heads regarding whether students' participation exposes them to real life situations for which their training prepares them were tallied and percentages calculated, the result obtained showed that more than three-quarters of respondents (94.2%) indicated that students' participation exposes them to real life situations for which their training prepares them. Only a negligible number 4 (5.8%) of respondents disagreed.

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Studies conducted by Arggris (1964) state that when subordinate workers are involved in decisions that affect their welfare, their feeling of belongingness to the organizations where they work is enhanced. Table 10 illustrates the responses of respondents as to whether they agree or disagree that students' participation in decision-making process enhances students feeling of belongingness. The table shows that many of the respondents, 187 (62.5%) agreed that students' participation in decision-making process enhances students' feeling of belongingness. 113 (37.5%) of respondents, however, disagreed. The findings confirm the work of Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) on what they referred to as "effective schools". According to them "effective schools" involve students in the decision-making process because they see them as part of the school's relevant public.

Studies conducted by Blasé and Blasé (1994), Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) and Crane (1976) have shown that students' participation in decision-making does not only promote a workable relationship between staff and students but also ensures a lasting relationship between them. Table 10 also indicates that more than three-quarters of respondents (97.9%) agree that involving students in the decision-making process promotes a workable and lasting relationship between staff and students. Only a minority 36 (12.1%) showed their disagreement. The staff and students work as a team aiming at the best for the school. Some students indicated that after leaving the school, they come back after some years to show their

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appreciation to their teachers in the form of gifts. Some students also call their teachers on phone once in a while, all in an attempt to build a lasting relationship. The researcher gathered from such remarks that probably students participation in decision-making used to be effective in their schools; the result been that a workable and lasting relationship between staff and students had been built.

Table 10 also provides data on opinions of teachers and heads on whether students' participation in decision-making promotes the creation of a congenial atmosphere that boosts the teaching-learning process. A research finding like Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) indicate that the building of social relationships in schools through student participation helps to build trust, remove suspicions and consequently promote the building of cordial relationships between students and teachers as well as between students and administration It is shown in Table 10 that a vast majority of teachers and heads (92.8%) agreed that student participation promotes the creation of a congenial atmosphere that boosts the teaching learning process. Only 5 (7.2%) of respondents disagreed. When the responses of heads alone were analyzed, it was found that all the nine heads (100.0%) agree that students' participation in decision-making promotes the creation of a congenial atmosphere. The above findings is supported by Short and Greer(1997) who indicate that if students are treated as "adults" and "workers" through participation in decision-making, then they would put in their maximum

best to build and promote an atmosphere that will be conducive to teaching and learning.

Furthermore, Table 10 provides data on how heads alone indicated whether or not student participation in decision-making builds rapport between students and the school administration. Research findings of Johnson and Johnson (as cited in Blasé and Blasé; 1994) state that shared governance fosters co-operation and effective communication. It also promotes trust but when subordinate participation is low, trust will automatically be low, and when trust level is low, group members will be evasive, dishonest and inconsiderate in their work essential to the effective operation of a school. Analysis of results from Table 10 indicates that all the nine heads agreed that student participation in decision-making builds rapport between students and the school administration. In effect, all the heads feel that student participation would provide a platform where there would be understanding between students and the school administration thereby helping to achieve the set goals and objectives of the school.

A study conducted by Sergiovanni (1991) indicated that one way a head of a school can build a trusting environment is to involve his students in the decision-making process of the school. Table 10 also provides data on heads' view as to whether they saw a correlation between the students' participation in decision-making and the trust students had in the school administration. The data shows that all the nine heads expressed that students built trust in their

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administration if they are involved in the decision-making process. Tables 11 and 12 however indicated that students have not actually been involved in both operational and managerial decision. It can therefore be deducted that students have not built any consideration trust in their schools' administration.

Research Question 3: In What Areas are Students Actually Involved in the Decision-making Process?

The researcher also seeks to find out the specific areas in which students were involved in the decision-making process. The two main decision-making situations which were considered were operational decisions and managerial decisions. Operational decisions are routine and repetitive decisions that are taken during or outside teaching-learning process but may not be directly connected with the actual teaching or learning process. Choosing class monitors/prefects and assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities are examples of operational decision-making situations. Also, an important task of administrators is to take managerial decisions. These decisions concern itself with controlling, directing and conducting the school into an orderly organization for the achievement of the set educational objectives.

Tables 11 and 12 provide data from respondents regarding their participation in these two decision-making situations. The table below looks at the extent to which students are actually involved in operational decision-making situations.

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Table 11

Students Participation in Operational Decisions

Area of decision-making	A great extent (Well involved)		A little extent (Not well involved)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Choosing class monitors Prefects	232	77.3	68	22.7	300	100
Planning new projects for the school	83	27.7	217	72.3	300	100
Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities e.g. sports, social functions	189	62.9	111	37.1	300	100
Disciplining students e.g. assigning punishment	175	58.3	125	41.7	300	100

Table 11 above shows that a good number of respondents 232 (77.3%) agree that students are actively involved in decisions that entail the choice of class monitors or prefects. These class prefects are able to convey information about activities in the classroom efficiently to the school administration and vice versa.

On the contrary, a great number of respondents 217 (72.3%) indicated the non-participation of students in the planning of new projects for the school. This means that they are not involved in the planning of new bungalows for staff, new classrooms and other important infrastructures. 83 (27.7%) of respondents,

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however, indicated that students' participation in the planning of new projects for the school is very little.

On the issue as to whether students were involved in assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities like sports and games, organizing social functions like drama, debates, entertainment and talks, majority of respondents responded in the affirmative. A minority of respondents 111 (37.1%), however, indicated that students are not actively involved in assigning co-curricular activities.

The findings also indicated that slightly more than half of respondents (58.3%) agree that students are actively involved in disciplinary matters. e.g. assigning punishment to junior students. Afful-Broni (2004) indicates schools must ensure that student leaders are themselves disciplined so that it can encourage their colleagues to exhibit the same good behavior in order to achieve the goals of the school.

Percentage scores as shown in Table 11 reveals that students are more actively involved in decisions that pertain to choosing class prefects, assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities and in matters of discipline than it is with decisions concerning the planning of new projects.

The issue as to whether students are involved in managerial decisions is investigated in Table 12 that follows:

Table 12

Students Participation in Managerial Decisions

Area of decision-making	A great extent (well involved)		A little extent (Not well involved)		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Planning the school menu	185	61.7	115	38.3	300	100
Purchasing items sold to students	74	22.6	226	75.4	300	100
Teachers and housemasters assessment	135	45.0	165	55.0	300	100
Planning the school's time table for preps and other extra curricular activities	70	23.3	230	76.7	300	100
Selecting teachers and students for special awards for speech day	73	24.3	227	75.7	300	100

On the issue of students' involvement in planning the school menu, majority of respondents 185 (61.7%) have noted in Table 12 that students have been actively involved in the planning of the school menu. A minority, 115 (38.3%) noted that students were not well involved in planning the school menu. In order to avoid agitations, it is important to involve students in planning the schools' menu.

On the issue of purchasing of items sold to students e.g. house jerseys, approximate three-quarters of respondents (75.4%) indicated that students are not actually involved in such activities. The items are bought and students are billed in their school fees.

Similarly, 227 (75.7%) of respondents indicated that students were not actually involved in selecting teachers and students for special awards for speech days. The situation was not different with the planning of timetable for preps and other extra-curricular activities. The data indicated that a majority of respondents 230 (76.7%) had indicated that students were not much involved in planning the school's time table for preps and other extra curricular activities. Also, as many as 227 (75.7%) respondents had noted that students were not well involved in selecting teachers and students for special awards.

On the issue of teachers and housemasters' assessment, 165 (55.0%) respondents indicated that students were not well involved. It can therefore be inferred that students were involved in the assessment of their teachers and housemasters.

Information from the data clearly shows that with regard to operational decisions, students are not involved in planning new projects for the school and concerning managerial decisions, students are not involved in issues like purchasing items sold to them, planning the school's timetable for preps and other activities and selecting teachers and students for special awards for speech day.

On the contrary, information thus gathered shows that with regard to operational decisions, students are actually involved in areas of choosing class monitors/prefects, assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities and disciplining students. As regards managerial decision, they are only involved in planning the school menu and assessing teachers and housemasters/mistresses. The general impression created here is that students in senior high schools are more involved in operational decision-making processes than managerial decision-making processes.

The findings support the research findings of Burke (1987) that student's participation level for both 'desired' and 'actual' was least for managerial decisions. The findings further reveal that it is not all managerial and operational decisions that students are involved in but heads could include them in making decisions pertaining directly to their day to day activities, especially in areas of discipline and the preparation of the school's menu, since involving students in these areas would help prevent vices like gambling, drinking, stealing and smoking.

The researcher investigated what heads and teachers considered to be the effects of students' participation in decision-making on the students themselves. Table 13 illustrates the responses of heads and teachers on this issue.

Table 13

Heads' and Teachers' Responses on the Effects of Students' Participation in Decision-Making as Regards Students' Commitment to any Extra Work besides Academics

Response	Heads		Teachers	
	No.	%	No.	%
Strongly agree	7	7.8	22	36.7
Agree	2	22.2	35	58.3
Disagree	0	0.0	3	5.0
Strongly disagree	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	9	100	60	100

Table 13 shows a very interesting result. It indicates that all the heads agree that students desire to take part in extra-work besides academics. More over, the data shows that almost all the teacher respondents (95.0%) indicated that students want to be involved in extra work besides academics. Only a small minority (5.0%) indicated their disagreement.

These interesting responses from heads and teachers indicate that when students, in their desire to be involved in extra activities are made to actually get involved then they would become more committed to activities in the school so that every set objective in the school can be fully achieved. If on the other hand, students are denied actual involvement in that which they desire to do, then it can

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be inferred from Short and Greer (1997) findings that as long as decisions are made elsewhere and laid on students to implement, their initiative is stifled and as a result, any activity they perform outside of their formal schedule would be done grudgingly.

According to Tanker, cited in Short and Greer (1997), when students share the vision of their schools, they take initiative to perform duties besides what is formally assigned them, if not, they see any extra-curricular activity as "an imposition". They do it "grudgingly" whenever they have complied and in most cases they would delay or sabotage critical elements of such programmes simply because they felt they were coerced to perform such duties.

The general impression created here is that when students are given the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process, then they are motivated to add their quota to clubs and associations in schools such as the Debating Club, Red Cross Society, Drama Troupe, Wildlife Society, the School Choir, Cultural Group, English, Mathematics or Science Clubs, Cadet Corps, Karate Groups and Sporting activities.

Research Question 4: Are School Administrators Willing to Involve Students in Decision-Making?

An important aspect of decision-making is the readiness and willingness of the school administrator to involve his subordinates in the decision-making process. This issue was analyzed as shown in Table 14.

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Table 14

The Willingness of School Administrators to Involve Students in Decision-Making

Area of willingness	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Heads welcome the opinions of students before effecting or bringing about changes	9	100	0	0.0	100	100
Heads often Invited students to express their opinions on issues	9	100	0	0.0	100	100
Heads consider students' suggestions when arriving at final decisions	6	66.7	3	33.3	9	100

Table 14 shows that all the heads (100%) indicated that they welcome the opinions of students before effecting or bringing about changes. This according to them is the reason why the S.R.C meets often to deliberate on issues which are later passed on to the school administration for consideration. Analysis from Table 17, however, shows that even though heads are ready to welcome such

opinions, students are afraid of being victimized by authoritative heads and therefore they do not make all their opinions known.

The data from Table 14 shows that all the respondents agree that they often invited students to express their opinions on issues. This accounts for the reason of the establishment of Student Representative Council (SRC) in the schools. The findings confirm the work of Atakpa and Ankomah (1998) that "effective schools" see students as relevant public and as such invite them to express their opinions when taking decisions which affect them.

Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005) have the view that when the opinions and views of subordinates are taken into consideration, they have some pride in identifying themselves with the programmes of the school and this leads to a feeling of belongingness. Students in these schools do not therefore feel disillusioned about the programmes of the school since the objectives are made very clear to them.

Table 14 shows that six (66.7%) heads agreed that students' suggestions are taken into consideration in arriving at final decisions affecting students, however, three (33.3%) heads disagreed. The researcher concludes that even though students' views are sometimes invited, their suggestions are not always used when arriving at final decisions.

This agrees with the findings of Asiedu-Akrofi (1978) that in situations where the head of school has little confidence in students' decision-making, the

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head would rarely invite, welcome and use the views and suggestions of students. This attitude of administrators agrees with the paternal leadership style postulated by Prah (2002). He noted that paternal leadership style is midway between the autocratic and laissez-faire. Even though the leader makes provision for students to participate in the decision-making process, he/she rarely takes their decisions into consideration.

Woode (1985) also attributes the low students' participation to decision-making in Ghana to what he terms "Paternalism". He indicates that persons in authority positions behave and are encouraged to behave like uncles, fathers, elders and old men and as such impose decisions on their subordinates.

Research Question 5: Are Students Themselves Willing to Participate in Decision-Making?

Heads can be willing to involve students in the decision-making process but the pressing question the researcher wants to find answer to is whether students themselves are willing to participate in the decision-making process. In analyzing the specific areas in which students are willing to participate in, the following results were obtained as shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Decision-Making Areas that Students Desired to Participate In

Decision-making area	No.	%
Disciplining students	72	31.2
Planning the school menu	60	25.9
Selecting teachers and students for special awards	46	19.9
Planning new projects	29	12.6
Purchasing food items for the school	20	8.7
Purchasing items e.g. house jersey	4	1.7
Total	231	100

Table 15 indicated that the decision-making situations in which students want to be involved cut across operational and managerial decisions. It indicated that majority of student respondents 72 (31.2%) desired to be involved in issues concerning disciplining students. This is confirmed by the findings of Ukeje et al. (1992:287) that, "generally, students want to enforce school rules and award punishment to students so far as the college activities allow it". 60 (25.9%) indicated the area of planning the school menu and 46 (19.9%) indicated an interest in selecting teachers and students for special awards. Gorton (1980) observes that students have all along not been involved in matters like discipline

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and they have been denied involvement in decisions taken for the assessment of their teachers. The situation seems not to be different from the schools of study. It is for this reason that students have preferred to be involved in matters of discipline. planning the menu and assessing their teachers.

Furthermore, 29 (12.6%) respondents indicated they want to be involved in making decisions concerning the planning of new projects, 20 (8.7%) noted the purchasing of food items for the school and 4 (1.7%) indicated they wanted to be involved in purchasing items that were later sold to them by the school administration. These findings indicate that students are willing to be involved in all the decision-making areas of their schools hence their desire to take part in both operational and managerial decision-making situations.

The research finding as shown from the suggestions of respondents in the open-ended part of the questionnaire further buttress the point that students want an increase involvement and participation in planning the school menu, choosing their housemasters and critically involved in issues of discipline. The suggestions made by students also confirm that students are willing to be involved in the decision-making process of their schools and want administrators to specify the roles they should play. This is shown in Table 16.

Table 16

Suggestions Made by Students

Suggestion	No.	%
Increase involvement in planning the menu	53	26.9
Increase involvement in disciplinary matters	91	46.2
Choice of housemasters	30	15.2
Roles and duties should be specified for students	23	11.7
Total	197	100

Table 16 indicates that 53 (26.9%) of the respondents suggested that there should be an increase involvement of students in planning of the school menu, 91 (46.2%) suggested an increase involvement in disciplinary matters, 30 (15.2%) suggested that students should be involved in the choice of their housemasters and 23 (11.7%) suggested that the roles and duties of students should be made known to them and the specific decision-making situations in which they are to be involved should also be clearly outlined for them.

The data clearly indicates that students have been involved in some decision-making situations of their schools and they are willing to be much more involved in making decisions in areas of planning the school menu, discipline and the choice of their housemasters and mistresses. Heads should try to involve students in making both operational and managerial decisions since it is the desire

of students to be involved in all aspects of the decision-making process of their schools.

Research Question 6: What Factors Hinder Students from Participating in Decision-making?

The researcher seeks to find out the factors which act as hindrances to students' participation in the decision-making process of their schools. Heads, teachers and students were asked to rank the factors they considered as hindrances to students involvement in decision-making. Table 17 provides data on their responses:

Table 17

Factors that Hinder Students from fully Participating in Decision-Making

Hindering Factor	Heads		Teachers		Students	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Authoritative nature of the head	5	55.6	17	28.3	55	23.8
The fear of being victimized	3	33.3	23	38.4	89	38.5
Lack of students' representation on committees	1	11.1	5	8.3	37	16
Non-functional SRC	0	0.0	7	11.7	26	11.3
Students unwillingness to participate	0	0.0	2	3.3	5	2.2
Students' Ignorance	0	0.0	4	6.7	9	3.9
External Influence	0	0.0	2	3.3	10	4.3
Total	9	100	60	100	231	100

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Table 17 shows the first factor which majority of heads 5 (55.6%) indicated as a hindrance to students' participation in the decision-making process was their own authoritative nature, which resulted in a closed channel of communication between the administration and the students. The second factor, noted by 3 (33.3%) of heads was student's fear of being victimized and lastly, 1 (11.1%) head noted the lack of students' representation on committees. The heads believe that their leadership positions in one way or the other resulted in students' fear of being victimized if they aired their views. This hindered them from fully taking part in the decision-making process. None of the heads chose non-functional SRC, students' unwillingness to participate in decision-making, ignorance of students as to the specific roles they are expected to play in the decision-making process and external influence. The data indicates that heads are very much aware that students want to be involved in participating in decision-making but their autocratic leadership style inculcates fear in students thus their low involvement in decision-making. Heads did not see external factors, for example, old students influence, and the ignorance of students as to what their specific roles were, as hindrances to students' participation in decision-making. Heads believe that students are aware of what roles they have to play in school administration. Students have however indicated that their roles and duties should be specified (Refer to Table 16).

When the results of the teachers were also analyzed, it was found out as shown on Table 17 that 23 (38.4%) teachers indicated the fear of being

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victimized. 17 (28.3%) teachers indicated authoritative nature of the head, 7 (11.7%) indicated non-functional SRC, 5 (11.7%) teachers indicated lack of student representation on committees, 4 (6.7%) teachers indicated students' ignorance on the specific roles they are to play in the decision-making process, 2 (3.3%) teachers indicated external influence and 2 (3.3%) teachers indicated students' unwillingness to participate as factors that hindered students from participating in decision-making.

Comparing the results of teachers and students from Table 17, it can be noted that teachers and students have the same opinions about factors hindering students' participation in decision-making. A majority of student respondents 89 (38.5%) indicated that the fear of being victimized highly accounted for their low involvement in the decision-making process. The second factor according to 55 (23.8%) of student respondents was the authoritative nature of the heads. According to Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005) heads in this type of school condition use dictatorial approach, always giving instructions to students. No questions, opinions and views are entertained from students and students are always loaded with instructions. The authoritative nature of heads coupled with students' fear of being victimized account for a closed channel of communication between administrators and students. They felt such a closure hinders active involvement in decision-making because there cannot be a smooth bottom-up or top-down communication. Amedzro and Youdeowei (2005) indicated that since close channel of communications do not bring about the achievement of organizational goals, there is the need to adopt certain measures to improve the

communication process hence, administrators and students must develop good listening skills, use appropriate and simple language, speak with clear voice, place emphasis on important and relevant issues and make speeches at an appropriate pace, not too fast for listeners not to follow what is being said or too slow to bore people.

The third factor which according to 26 (11.3%) student respondents as noted in Table 17 is the non-functional nature of the Students Representative Council. Even though students agreed that S.R.C exists in the school their decisions are often not taken into consideration when final decisions were made hence they saw the S.R.C as non-functional. 9 (3.9%) of student respondents noted the ignorance on the part of students with regard to the specific areas of participation. From the findings, it came to light tnat students do not know their rights and specific roles they are supposed to play and as such, this hinders them from actively participating in decision-making. Ten student respondents (4.3%) however mentioned external influence as a factor hindering students' participation. Specifically, they mentioned "Old boyism", the influence of past students, as a tool that hinders students' participation. This agrees with the finding of Afful-Broni (2004). He notes that old students of schools have in many cases influenced the management of their schools. For instance, students may prefer that a new toilet facility should be constructed for them but the old students may decide on the construction of a new school block. Since these old students may happen to provide part of the funds for the project, the school administrator decides to construct the school block instead of the toilet.

Analyzing the responses of the heads, teachers and students, it becomes evident that it is not students who are unwilling to participate in the decision-making process, neither is it that they are not represented on the school committee but rather, the fear of being victimized by the authorities coupled with the authoritative nature of heads are the main hindrances to their active participation in the decision-making process of their schools.

When the school administration puts in measures to minimize, if not eradicate completely, the fear of students from being victimized, and many school heads become more friendly and employ participatory approach of leadership, then students would be comfortable to air their views on the various committees on which they represent the students body.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study investigated students' involvement in decision-making in senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana. Several researchers (Asiedu Akrofi, 1978; Gorton, 1980; Mandani, 1983; Chapman, 1988 and Atakpa and Ankomah, 1998) have conducted studies into student participation in decision-making. The researchers confirm the view that students' participation in decision-making leads to quality of decisions, promotes commitment to programmes of the school, promotes lasting relationships between staff and students and creates a congenial atmosphere that enhances the teaching-learning process.

In Ghana, it has been found out that a majority of school heads have deprived students in decision-making processes. Consequently, there have been many student agitations and chaos; some of which resulted in strike actions. The study therefore aimed at eliciting students', teachers' and heads perceptions of students' involvement in decision-making.

The structure and procedures for making decisions in the school was also explored. The extent to which students were involved in decision-making processes was investigated. The study also attempted to examine the effect of certain biographic factors like sex and age on students' participation in school

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decision-making process and also investigated the main factors which hinder students' participation in the decision-making process.

The researcher hoped that the findings of the study would help administrators increase students' participation in decision-making so as to get them committed to the programmes of the school in order to achieve the set instructional objectives of their schools. The population covered all the forty-three senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana but because of the constraints of time, finance etc the focus was narrowed down to student participation in three senior high schools. Precisely, the target population for the study was made up of 240 students, 9 heads and 60 teachers drawn from Archbishop Porter Girls' Senior High School, St. John's School and Tarkwa Senior High School. Data producing sample were 300.

The researcher used structured questionnaire for the study; after being scrutinized, polished and accepted by his supervisors. The researcher adapted and modified a 27 item research instrument designed by Wiredu-Kusi (1990) who conducted a similar research in some selected senior secondary schools in the Cape Coast Municipality.

Findings

The main findings from the analysis of the biographic data can be summarized as follows:

1. Majority of students (95.7%) fell within the same age group: that is below 20 years, a greater percentage of students (63.7%) are not members of the SRC, majority of teachers (83.3%) and all heads were

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above the age of 30 years, majority of heads (55.6%) had held positions as heads for more than five years and majority of respondents were males: students (51.9%), teachers (66.7%) and heads (55.6%).

2. There were Students' Representative Councils (SRC) in senior high schools in the Western Region of Ghana and the Students' Representative Councils' meeting with the school administration were found to be frequent, but it was found out that students' views, suggestions and opinions were not often accepted when decisions were finally made. This does not augur well for the smooth running of schools since the involvement of students enhances the quality of decisions and promotes the teaching-learning process. It was also clear that there were both participatory and non-participatory structures of decision-making structures in the schools of study. For instance, students were involved when choosing their class prefects but were not consulted when decisions were taken to purchase items that were later sold to them.

3. It was clear from the study that respondents had positive perceptions about students' involvement in decision-making. They noted that students' participation enhances the quality of decisions taken, helps students to be committed to the programmes of their schools, prepares them for real life situations for which their training prepares them, enhances students feeling of belongingness, promotes workable

relationship between staff and students, promotes the creation of congenial atmospheres for effective teaching and learning, builds rapport between students and the school administration and builds a trusting relationship between students and the school administration. It was found that the absence of suspicion and the presence of trust foster long lasting cordial relationships therefore promoting the teaching-learning process. Majority of the students did not think that their participation in decisions would affect their academic performance or delay action by the administration but rather reduce agitations and chaos in the school.

4. It was found that students "Desire" and "Actual" levels of participation in decision-making situations were not in equilibrium. Students participated in operational decisions such as choosing class prefects, assigning co-curricular activities and disciplining students. On the contrary, participation in managerial decisions was generally very low with students being involved in planning the school menu and assessing teachers and housemasters/mistresses. However, planning new projects for the school, purchasing items sold to students, planning the school's time table were seen as the preserve of the school administration. Furthermore, students were more involved in making operational than managerial decisions. They, however, desired to participate in both decision-making areas. Heads therefore need to have a second look into students' actual participation levels and not

deprive students from participating in decision-making so that students would have a sense of belongingness to their schools.

5. It stood out that heads were willing to involve students in the decision-making process. Heads welcome the opinions of students before effecting or bringing about changes, they often invited students to express their opinions on issues and they saw the need to consider the suggestions of students when arriving at final decisions.

6. Students were willing to participate in the formulation of decisions aimed at the smooth running of the schools. Thus, when students were asked to rank decision-making situations they most liked to be involved in, their selection cut across all aspects of school administration, that is operational and managerial decisions. This portrays a strong desire on the part of students to get involved in the decision-making process. In order of preference, students indicated that disciplining students, planning the school menu and selecting teachers for special awards were the three decision-making areas they most wanted to be involved. However, it was observed that students' involvement in certain aspects of school decision-making was not encouraging.

7. It was found out that different factors are responsible for the non-involvement of students in decision-making, prominent amongst which are the fear of being victimized and the authoritativeness of the heads. Heads used authoritative leadership styles to run their schools thereby

instilling fear in students. Consequently, students being afraid of being victimized do not freely participate in the decision-making process.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: Foremost, it was found out that two main types of decision-making structures were in the schools: participatory and non-participatory decision-making. The participatory type entails the existence of Students' Representative Council (SRC) which meet frequently and the existence of Committees on which students had representations, for example the disciplinary committee. This type allows students to discuss issues and problems at the SRC level and later communicating students' views to the administration. However, students did not consider their representation as real since even though their views and opinions are sometimes invited, they are in most cases not considered in arriving at final decisions. The non-participatory decision-making type on the other hand entails making the SRC non-functional, rejection of students' views or suggestions and a top-down flow of authority which shows domination in decision-making by the school administration. This non-participatory type was mostly used when administrators made managerial decisions. In effect, it was found out that heads mostly use the Paternal Leadership Style to administrator their schools. As indicated by Woode (1985), they behave like uncles, fathers, elders and old men and for that reasons, heads of organizations irrespective of their age are called "wofa" (uncle), "Numoi" (father), "Oga" (Boss) or "Togbe" (old man).

The perceptions of heads, teachers and students on students' participation in school decision-making process are positive. Consequently, the research findings indicated that students' participation enhances the quality of decisions, helps students to be committed to the programmes of their schools, enhances students feeling of belongingness, promotes workable relationship between staff and students, prepares them for real life situations for which their training prepares them, promotes the creation of congenial atmospheres for effective teaching and learning, builds rapport between students and the school administration, and builds a trusting relationship between students and the school administration.

Since heads had positive perceptions about students' participation in the decision-making process, they were willing to involve students in the decision-making process but they preferred to involve students in making more of operational decisions than managerial decisions. Students were also willing to be involved in the decision-making process. Students want to be involved in both operational and managerial decision-making situations but with regard to operational decisions, they were mostly involved in choosing class monitors/prefects, disciplining students and assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities. Planning the school menu, teachers and housemasters/mistresses assessment were the managerial decisions students were involved in. Moreover, the three most important decision-making situations where students want to take active part are disciplining students, planning the school menu and selecting teachers and students for special awards.

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On the issue of what hinders students from active participation in the decision-making process, it was found out that students were willing to fully participate in both operational and managerial decision-making but the fear of being victimized and authoritative nature of heads hindered them from fully participating in the decision-making process of their schools. Heads were authoritative and students' views, opinions and ideas were not used in making final decisions. Students therefore had little or no trust in their school administration and were thus suspicious of their administrators. Ignorance on the part of students with regard to the specific areas of participation they were to be involved with also accounts for their low level of participation in the decision-making process. External influence especially from old boys of the school posed a hindrance to positive students' participation in decision-making.

Heads have positive perceptions about students' participation in the decision-making process and are willing to involve students in the decision-making process. Students themselves are also willing to take active part in the decision-making process. Consequently, the researcher foresees a brighter and a more conducive atmosphere for the teaching-learning process, and a subsequent increase in educational excellence if students are given the opportunity to actively participate in the decision-making process of their schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since heads and teachers have positive perceptions of students' involvement in the school's decision-making process, they should consider students' suggestions and opinions in arriving at decisions that affect them e.g decision on purchasing of items that are later sold to students.

2. School authorities should encourage participatory decision-making structures in schools. In order to bridge communication gap between administration and students, they can utilize the following avenues:

   a. Informal consultation - heads could from time to time invite the S.R.C to discuss topical issues on the school administration. This will go a long way to build rapport and trust between school administration and the students.

   b. Introduction of Suggestion Boxes – Suggestion boxes could be placed at vantage points for students and other stake holders to submit their suggestion to the administration.

3. Authorities should accord student grievances great attention so that student leaders may have feedback at the right time. This will improve administrator-student relationship in the school.

4. Since the fear of being victimized is the main factor which students admit prevents them from participating in school decision-making, it is suggested that heads do well to remove such fear from students by constantly taking their views into consideration.

5. Heads should organize orientation for the first year students and most importantly prefects and members of the S.R.C so that they will know their specific roles and duties in the decision-making process.

Suggestions for Further Research

Since the study was limited to a small section of the Western Region, a similar study could be replicated to cover all the senior high schools in the whole Western Region, to make the finding generalizable to that section of the country.

It seems some heads have something to hide from their students hence their unwillingness to actually involve them in certain areas of the school administration; especially finance, planning new projects and purchasing items that are later sold to students. It is therefore recommended that a study be conducted to find out.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

iepa UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

University Post Office
Cape Coast, Ghana

April 1, 200_

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

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APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire seeks information on student participation in decision making in secondary schools.

You are assured that any information given is solely for academic purposes and would be kept confidential

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Please, respond to each of the items in this section by ticking ($\sqrt{}$) the response that is appropriate to your situation.

1.   Sex : (i) Male (   )   (ii) Female (   )

2.   Age as at last birthday

      I.   Under 20 years   (   )

      II.   21 – 25 years   (   )

      III.   26 – 30 years   (   )

      IV.   Over 35 years   (   )

3.   Status (roles) played in school

      I. Prefect   (   )

      II. Member of SRC   (   )

      iii. Ordinary student   (   )

SECTION A: THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE SCHOOL

Please, circle the number in the scale that best describes your response

4 - Strongly agree

3 - Agree

2 - Disagree

1 - Strongly Disagree

4. There is a Students' Representative Council

(SRC) in my school   4   3   2   1

5. The SRC in my school meets frequently   4   3   2   1

6. Students leaders are selected by popular

choice.   4   3   2   1

7. Students often serve on the school

disciplinary committee   4   3   2   1

8. Students have the option of appeal in disciplinary

matters.   4   3   2   1

9. Students are often invited by the school

administration to express their opinions

on issues.   4   3   2   1

10. The school administration often takes the views

of students into consideration in arriving at final

decisions affecting students.   4   3   2   1

11. Students' opinions on effecting or bringing about

changes are often welcome by the administration.   4   3   2   1

SECTION B: STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THEIR PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING

Please, circle the number on the scale given below that best describes your response for each of the following items:

4 – Strongly agree

3 – Agree

2 – Disagree

1 – Strongly Disagree

Students' participation in school decision-making:

12. Enhances the quality of decisions made   4   3   2   1

13. Enhances students' commitment to the programmes

of the school   4   3   2   1

14. Promotes workable relationships between staff

and students   4   3   2   1

15. Enhances students' feeling of belongingness   4   3   2   1

SECTION C: STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Circle the number on the scale given below that best describes the degree to which students are involved in the following decision-making situations in your school at present.

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4 – to a great extent

3 – to some extent

2 – to a little extent

1 – don't know

OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

16. Choosing class monitors/prefects	4	3	2	1
17. Planning new projects for the school				
e.g. school farm	4	3	2	1
18. Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities				
e.g. sports, social functions etc.	4	3	2	1
19. Disciplining students e.g. assigning punishment	4	3	2	1

MANAGERIAL DECISION

Students have been involved in the following decision-making situations

20. Planning the school menu	4	3	2	1
21. Purchasing items that are sold to students				
e.g. house jerseys	4	3	2	1
22. Teachers and housemasters assessment	4	3	2	1
23. Planning the school's time-table for preps				
and other extra-curricular activity	4	3	2	1
24. Selecting teachers and students for				
special awards on speech days	4	3	2	1

SECTION D

25. Rank the following decision-making situations as 1,2 etc (1 as highest and 6 as lowest) depending on which you would like most for students to participate in.

Purchasing food items for the school ( )

Planning the school menu ( )

Purchasing items (e.g. house jerseys that are sold to students) ( )

Disciplining students ( )

Planning new projects for the school ( )

Selecting teachers and students for special awards ( )

26. Rank the following as 1,2 etc(1 as highest and 5 as lowest) depending on how much you think they prevent students from participating fully in the decision-making process of your school?

The fear of being victimized ( )

Authoritive nature of the head ( )

Lack of students representation on committees ( )

Non-functional S.R.C ( )

Students unwillingness to participate ( )

Students' Ignorance ( )

External Influence ( )

27. Please use the space below for any other comments that you like to make

....
....

Thank you

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QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Please respond to all statements in this questionnaire. It is the concern of the researcher to ensure the confidentiality of respondents' responses. So, you are requested not to write your name.

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Please, respond to each of items in this section by ticking (√) the response that is appropriate to your situation.

1, Sex: (1) Male   ( )

     (ii) Female   ( )

2. Age as at last birthday

     (1) Under 30 years   ( )

     (ii) 31 – 40 years   ( )

     (iii) 41– 50 years   ( )

     (iv) Over 50 years   ( )

3. Number of years spent in present school

     (1) Under 5years   ( )

     (ii) 6 -10 years   ( )

     (iii) 11-15 years   ( )

     (iv) 16-20 years   ( )

     (v) Over 21 years   ( )

4. Positions held in school

    (I) Head of Department   (   )

    (II) Chairperson Disciplinary Committee   (   )

    (III) Senior House Master/Mistress   (   )

    (IV) House Master/Mistress   (   )

    (V) Class Tutor   (   )

    (VI) Any other (specify)

....

SECTION A: THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE SCHOOL

Please, circle the number in the scale that best describes your response

        4 – Strongly agree

        3 - Agree

        2 - Disagree

        1 – Strongly Disagree

5. There is a Students' Representative Council

   (SRC) in my school   4   3   2   1

6. The SRC in my school meets frequently   4   3   2   1

7. Students leaders are selected by popular

   choice.   4   3   2   1

8. Students often serve on the school

   Disciplinary committee   4   3   2   1

9. Students have the option of appeal in disciplinary

matters.   4   3   2   1

10. Students are often invited by the school

administration to express their opinions

on issues.   4   3   2   1

11. The school administration often takes the views

of students into consideration in arriving at final

decisions affecting students.   4   3   2   1

12. Students' opinions on effecting or bringing about

changes are often welcome by the administration.   4   3   2   1

SECTION   B: TEACHERS'   PERCEPTION   OF   STUDENTS

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION -MAKING

Please, circle the number on the scale given below that best describes your response for each of the following items:

                4 – Strongly agree

                3 – Agree

                2 - Disagree

                1 – Strongly Disagree

Students' participation in school decision-making:

12. Enhances the quality of decisions made   4   3   2   1

13. Exposes them to real life situations for which

their training prepares them   4   3   2   1

14. Enhances students' commitment to the programmes

of the school   4   3   2   1

SUB-SECTION B: PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND THE BUILDING OF CORDIAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT PROMOTE THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.

Circle the number on the scale given below that best describes your response.

4 – Strongly agree

3 – Agree

2 – Disagree

1 – Strongly Disagree

Students participation in school decision-making:

15. Enhances students' feeling of belongingness   4   3   2   1

16. Promotes workable and lasting relationships

between staff and students   4   3   2   1

17. Promotes the creation of a congenial atmosphere

that boosts the teaching learning process   4   3   2   1

SECTION C: ACTUAL STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Circle the number on the scale given below that best describes the degree to which students are involved in the following decision-making situations in your school at present.

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4 – to a great extent

3 – to some extent

2 - to a little extent

1 – Don't know

OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

18. Choosing class monitors/prefects	4	3	2	1
19. Planning new projects for the school				
e.g. school farm	4	3	2	1
20. Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities				
e.g. sports, social functions etc.	4	3	2	1
21. Disciplining students e.g. assigning punishment	4	3	2	1

MANAGERIAL DECISION

Students have been involved in the following decision-making situations

22. Planning the school menu	4	3	2	1
23. Purchasing items that are sold to students				
e.g. house jerseys	4	3	2	1
24. Teachers and housemasters assessment	4	3	2	1
25. Planning the school's time-table for preps				
and other extra-curricular activity	4	3	2	1
26. Selecting teachers and students for				
special awards on speech days	4	3	2	1

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Owing to the extent of their involvement in the decision-making process, students:

27. Are prepared to take part in any extra

work besides academics   .   4   3   2   1

SECTION D

28. Rank the following decision-making situations as 1,2 etc (1 as highest and 6 as lowest) depending on which you would like most for students to participate in.

Purchasing food items for the school	( )
Planning the school menu	( )
Purchasing items (e.g. house jerseys that are sold to students)	( )
Disciplining students	( )
Planning new projects for the school	( )
Selecting teachers and students for special awards	( )

29. Rank the following as 1,2 etc(1 as highest and 5 as lowest) depending on how much you think they prevent students from participating fully in the decision-making process of your school?

The fear of being victimized	( )
Authoritive nature of the head	( )
Lack of students representation on committees	( )
Non-functional S.R.C	( )
Students unwillingness to participate	( )
Students' ignorance	( )

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External Influence   ( )

30. Please use the space below for any other comments that you like to make

....
....
....
....
....

Thank you.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEADS

Please respond to all statements in the questionnaire. It is the concern of the researcher to ensure the confidentiality of respondents' responses. So, you are requested not to write your name

BIOGRAPHIC DATA

Please, respond to each of items in this section by ticking ($\sqrt{}$) the response that is appropriate to your situation.

1. Sex: (I) Male   ( )

     ii) Female   ( )

2. Age as at last birthday

     (I) Under 45 years   ( )

     (ii) 46 – 50 years   ( )

     (iii) 51– 55 years   ( )

     (v) Over 55 years   ( )

3. Number of years spent in present school

     (I) 2-6 years   ( )

     (ii) 7–11 years   ( )

     (iii) 12-16 years   ( )

     (iv) 17-21 years   ( )

     (v) Over 21 years   ( )

4. Total number of years spent as Headmaster/Mistress

    (I) Under 5years   ( )

    (ii) 6–10 years   ( )

    (iii) 11-15 years   ( )

    (iv) 16-20 years   ( )

    (v) Over 20 years   ( )

SECTION A: THE STRUCTURE OF DECISION-MAKING IN THE SCHOOL

Please, circle the number in the scale that best describes your response

    4 - Strongly agree

    3 – Agree

    2 – Disagree

    1 - Strongly Disagree

5. There is a Students' Representative Council

    (SRC) in my school   4   3   2   1

6. The SRC in my school meets frequently   4   3   2   1

7. Students leaders are selected by popular

    choice.   4   3   2   1

8. Students often serve on the school

    Disciplinary committee   4   3   2   1

9. Students have the option of appeal

    in disciplinary matters   4   3   2   1

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10. Students are often invited by the school

administration to express their opinions

on issues.   4   3   2   1

11. The school administration often takes the views

of students into consideration in arriving at final

decisions affecting students.   4   3   2   1

12. Students' opinions on effecting or bringing about

changes are often welcome by the administration. 4   3   2   1

SECTION B: HEADS' PERCEPTION OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATION

IN SCHOOL DECISION -MAKING

Please, circle the number on the scale given below that best describes your

response for each of the following items:

        4 – Strongly agree

        3 – Agree

        2 – Disagree

        1 – Strongly Disagree

Students' participation in school decision-making:

12. Enhances the quality of decisions made   4   3   2   1

13. Exposes them to real life situations for which

their training prepares them   4   3   2   1

14. Enhances students' commitment to the programmes

of the school   4   3   2   1

SUB-SECTION B: PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING AND THE BUILDING OF CORDIAL RELATIONSHIPS THAT PROMOTE THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS.

Circle the number on the scale given below that best describes your response.

4 – Strongly agree

3 – Agree

2 - Disagree

1   Strongly Disagree

Students participation in school decision-making

15. Enhances student feeling of belonging

16. Promotes learning relationship between teachers and students

17. Promotes the creation of a congenial atmosphere that boost the teaching learning process

18. Builds rapport between students and school administration

19. Promotes friendship between students and school administration

SECTION C: ACTUAL STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Circle the number on the scale given below that best describes the degree to which students are involved in the following decision-making situations in your school at present.

4 – to a great extent

3 – to some extent

2 – to a little extent

1 – Don't know

OPERATIONAL DECISIONS

20. Choosing class monitors/prefects   4   3   2   1

21. Planning new projects for the school

    e.g. school farm   4   3   2   1

22. Assigning duties concerning co-curricular activities

    e.g. sports, social functions etc.   4   3   2   1

23. Disciplining students e.g. assigning punishment   4   3   2   1

MANAGERIAL DECISION

Students have been involved in the following decision-making situations

24. Planning the school menu   4   3   2   1

25. Purchasing items that are sold to students

    e.g. house jerseys   4   3   2   1

26. Teachers and housemasters assessment   4   3   2   1

27. Planning the school's time-table for preps

and other extra-curricular activity   4   3   2   1

28. Selecting teachers and students for

    special awards on speech days   4   3   2   1

Owing to the extent of their involvement in the decision-making process, students:

29. Are prepared to take part in any extra

    work besides academics   4   3   2   1

SECTION D

30. Rank the following decision-making situations as 1,2 etc (1 as highest and 6 as lowest) depending on which you would like most for students to participate in.

Purchasing food items for the school	( )
Planning the school menu	( )
Purchasing items (e.g. house jerseys that are sold to students)	( )
Disciplining students	( )
Planning new projects for the school	( )
Selecting teachers and students for special awards	( )

31. Rank the following as 1,2 etc(1 as highest and 5 as lowest) depending on how much you think they prevent students from participating fully in the decision-making process of your school?

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