

## **RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Increased indiscipline cases and declining educational quality have been attributed to a lack of community involvement in secondary schools. But in spite of these initiatives, the quality of education, particularly in public secondary schools, has been deteriorating over time, most recently in the previous five academic years. The aim of the study was to establish the relationship between community involvement in decision making and quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County. The study applied the social system theory proposed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy. The study design for the research was correlational research design whereas, the target population was public secondary schools within Garissa County, Kenya. Precisely, the research targeted all principals, teachers, and students in the 40 public secondary schools. The total target population was 4656 respondents. Purposive sampling was utilized to sample principals, support staff, BOM, area chiefs, sub county directors and religious leaders. Whereas stratified sampling was adopted in sampling the students and teachers. The total sample size was 330 respondents. Reliability was analysed using Cronbach Alpha Co-efficient of 0.75. Validity of qualitative was established through conformability. Questionnaires and interview guides were utilized as research instruments. Quantitative data was assessed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), which generated descriptive statistics such as means and percentages. To display quantitative data, frequency tables were utilized. To determine the link between the study's

variables, multiple correlation was used. The study variables will be used to organize the qualitative data, which was analysed using theme analysis and presented in written narratives. The study was significant in that the findings on involvement of the community in school administration will empower school agents to create policies that will include the community and parents. The study found that very often the community is involved in decision making. The study also found that positive perception of participatory practices, though the presence of uncertainty among some respondents highlights room for improvement in communication, transparency, or inclusivity. The study found that most of the respondents believe there is a positive relationship between community engagement and quality education either highly or moderately and that the community is involved and consulted on matters of monitoring and evaluation on an annual basis. The study concluded that community involvement in school decision-making is common, with many participants acknowledging frequent engagement. This participatory approach is positively perceived and contributes to better student discipline and moral standards. However, the presence of uncertainty among some respondents signals the need to improve inclusivity, communication, and transparency. The study recommended that schools should establish clear, consistent, and transparent channels for communication with the community to reduce uncertainty and improve trust and inclusivity in decision-making processes.

**Keywords:** Community Involvement, Quality of education, Evaluation, Government policies, School Community, Monitoring.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Quality Education is defined as one which attentively focuses on students' social, emotional, cognitive, physical, and mental growth. Producing creative and developed manpower in the form of intelligent teachers, professors, physicians, engineers, scientists, philosophers, critics, poets, educationists, and writers is the primary goal of high-quality education (Mistrianingsih, Imron & Nurabadi, 2015). In the current day, the only way to guarantee quality education is to encourage students to learn through practical experience. A competent teacher always employs an active technique to impart his excellent information through his strong competency and talent. Evidence-based pedagogy and an activity-based teaching-learning process improve the quality of education and create more knowledgeable, self-assured, creative, and capable individuals.

There are numerous approaches to raise the standard of education, including educating parents, providing better resources for instructors, creating innovative teaching methods, etc. Students who receive a high-quality education can advance their basic abilities, critical thinking, communication, practical life skills, self-knowledge, harmony with the environment, and creativity (Anderson, 2013). Enhancing education at all levels primary, secondary, higher secondary, technical, vocational, adult, and women's is crucial to maintaining high standards in the application and provision of fundamental literacy skills, knowledge, labour force, and all educational resources for maintaining quality in all educational institutions and competing with developed nations like the United States, France, China, United Kingdom, and Norway in the field of education (Suheimy, Darwanis & Abdullah, 2016).

The physical infrastructure of educational institutions, including that of the teachers and students, regulations, resources, and use of cutting-edge technology, as well as the appropriate setup and use of science laboratories and the functioning of digital libraries, are all essential components of high-quality education and should not be disregarded (Sumarsono et al., 2016). The community is in favour of keeping educational institutions' decision-making, lesson planning, equitable power allocation, and encouragement of a creative atmosphere high standard. This could contribute to improving human potential and enabling school administrators to make wise decisions that will improve the school in every

way and achieve high standards for instruction (Arifin, 2012). The community can play a variety of roles, including controlling, advising, and supporting agencies. It can also assist with curriculum development, school administration, and the creation of learning resources and instructional materials to improve the educational system as a whole and guarantee educational quality in the truest sense of the word (Botha, 2016).

Across the globe, there have been an increase in recognition of the ultimate benefits of community participation in controlling schools to attain quality education (UNICEF, 2017). Governments and learning institutions have community involvement strategies such as school management committees (SMCs) that incorporate societal members undertaking specific tasks such as formulating policies, mentoring, and coaching students among others in a school. Community connexion in the management of learning institutions to attain quality education may also involve technical and complex activities. According to De Grauwe (2017), laws have been implemented in the majority of industrialized countries, particularly those that are part of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, to foster an atmosphere that encourages cooperation between the community, educators, and parents. This collaboration has been seen to be good for governance in schools and consequently enhances school performance, quality of teaching, prudent utilization of resources and improved overall school climate.

In United States of America, since 1986, there has been tremendous effort to build community schooling systems implementation of “education reform” policy to guide community management of schools (Ndede, 2019). In the initial stages, the National Commission for Excellence in Education (NCEE) initiated a report, “A Country at Risk” to guide the introduction of the notion of community involvement initiatives in schools across states (Ndede, 2019). Community involvement initiatives in the United States resulted in changes in school governance. Activities and practices such as formulation and review of the budget, hiring school staff, and decision-making process was devolved from federal and state governments to schools and communities (Ndede, 2019). Therefore, communities in several states across the United States started to be involved in developing a budget, enlistment of staff, and decision-making process in public schools. Ndede (2019) indicates that the implementation of a common association in the administration and learning activities was significant in the improvement of learner outcomes and overall school performance.

In Europe, there is also widespread adoption of community engagement in learning institutions in terms of the management of management of school resources as this is revealed through wide of being wide consultation of parents in overall school management (Kumar, 2019). Further Kumar (2019) in Denmark argue that communities play a significant role in running schools’ affairs such as nurturing talents, mentorship and providing learning resources. In a school in Denmark, there are five to seven community members on the management board. School members play a significant role in formulating school activities, budget approval, and development of the school’s curriculum. Previous studies point out

that it is uncertain whether the school buildings could be connected to advance learner performance. The volume of school, age of buildings and physical characteristics were found to be connected with student achievement, however, providing good working conditions for both pupils and teachers, as well as adequate water supply, presence of a library, and reliable supply of electricity besides the student's achievement in mathematics subjects were found to be worrying in most secondary school (Harbison & Hanushek, 1992). In Africa, community involvement has been seen to increase the responsibility of schools by decreasing teacher non-appearance and laxity (Russell, 2009). Furthermore, community involvement contributes to improved student academic performance. Duhou (2013) pinpointed that neighbourhood circumstances alongside protocols used by managers as a few determinants promoting school–community cooperation in many African nations. In African states such as South Africa, Uganda, Ethiopia and Nigeria have community executives to aid in school management projects (Ndede, 2019). The country's government educational agencies hold a perception that community association in school administration creates a supporting environment for students to seek after their career objectives. Community involvement in most African nations leads to recognized accountability of school development funds, donations, and fundraising for the construction of rooms and the purchase of other materials. In Africa, students learning in a conducive and enabling environment tend to achieve higher grades. Several students are also attracted to remain in learning institutions thus leading to lower school dropout cases. According to another study by Onsomu and Mujidi (2011), teachers and school administrators in many African states have a bad reputation and seem to be resistant to the idea of allowing community involvement. In a similar vein, Bunwaree (2012) notes that community engagement in school management is still in its infancy in Africa. The school administration is against partnering with parents, citing their lack of understanding of the educational process. Additionally, it appears that educators are unwilling to support community involvement or urge parents to become more involved.

In Kenya, parent-youngster engagement encompasses communication with school personnel and educators, participating in school activities, and assisting with academic exercises at home (Onderi, 2013). By legitimate participation of parents in making decisions can result in the provision of better educational equipment, labouring reimbursement of the school costs, provision of good teachers, a great degree of discipline, reasonable oversight for learners' academic tasks, the prosperous culmination of school infrastructural development, the arrangement for school actions and minimize absenteeism among learners and teachers. Hence, the basic objective for every school framework is to supply the community with essential labor to advance and upgrade the quality of living circumstances for their goods. Furthermore, in Kenya secondary schools, community involvement is predominantly through the board of management (BOM). BOM members' responsibilities include making decisions about school finance, staff employment, maintaining discipline, improving school results capacity analysis, quality Standard affirmation, curriculum execution, school growth, bringing up resources for the school undertaking, and school good, among other things (Onderi & Makori, 2013).

Many secondary schools in the North-Eastern region like Garissa County have recorded low community participation in administration within schools, low student grades and general bad results thus steering up bad education poor record optionally, the absence of community participation in secondary school administration in Garissa steers for low financial aid from the community, bad decision-making process led to IP setbacks in school administration (Edward, 2015). The indicators of education in Garissa County as compared to the National indicators of education have shown the absence of community involvement. This is indicated in table 1.

*Table 1. Comparison of Selected Education Indicators in Garissa County and Kenya*

| <b>Secondary Education</b>   | <b>Garissa County</b> | <b>Kenya</b> |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| Gross enrolment ratio (%)    | 21.2                  | 63.3         |
| Net enrolment ratio (%)      | 14.4                  | 47.8         |
| Gender Parity Index (value)  | 0.43                  | 0.89         |
| Student teacher ratio* (no.) | 23.1                  | 20.7         |

*Source: Garissa County (2024)*

From Table 1 it is clear that most of the education indicators in Garissa County are low as compared to the National ones except for student teacher ratio which is high as compared to the national one. This is a clear indication that the community in Garissa do not participate fully in the school operations and thus hold their children from joining the secondary schools which might be attributed to their culture. Hence, the occasion of setbacks in secondary schools in Garissa County because of the absence of community inclusion steers up the poor record on quality (MOE, 2018). Hence, the research's independent variables encompass community inclusion in decision making, community participation in monitoring besides evaluation, and community engagement in resource mobilization. This study thus sought to determine the relationship between community involvement in school management and quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County, Kenya.

### **Problem Statement**

The government's commitment and the Free Education Policy (FEP) have created a great deal of obstacles for the delivery of educational services. The difficulties include having more students enrolled than there are classrooms available, an imbalance in the ratio of students to textbooks, an increase in the ratio of teachers to students, a lack of teacher housing and restrooms for students, and so on. The main obstacle has been the divergent views that the community and the government (education sector) have about how to run ward secondary schools. The communities see and feel that everything under the FEP should be handled by the government, with the community only serving as an advisory body. In the meantime, the government (school authorities) believe that the local communities have a responsibility to fully engage in the operation of the ward-based secondary schools in addition to contributing to school management. This has had an impact on the standard of instruction given to students in secondary schools.

It has been suggested that the primary cause of the increase in indiscipline cases and the decline in educational quality in secondary schools is a lack of community involvement.

The source of the annual decline in Garissa County's educational quality is not widely understood. In this County parents are only engaged in peripheral roles such as paying the school fees for their kids and attending their children's meetings among others, thus begging the question of why the parents aren't involved in crucial decision making of the school such as utilization of school funds as well as planning of the school activities. This creates a knowledge gap that the current study sought to fill by determining the relationship between community participation in management and the quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County, Kenya.

### **Objective**

The objective of the study was to establish the relationship between community involvement in decision making and quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County.

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

Kusumaningrum et al., (2017) did a study on community participation in improving educational quality. The study is being conducted at Batu City's elementary schools. Using a grouping strategy, a proportionate sampling from 20 schools was conducted. The data was obtained through the use of questionnaires. The data was analysed using the descriptive analysis technique. Based on the research findings, the level of advice-giving by school committee members is classified as high and positively correlated with improving educational quality; providing supportive advice is classified as low and positively correlated with improving educational quality; providing controlling advice is classified as high and positively correlated with improving educational quality; and serving as a mediator is classified as low and positively correlated with improving educational quality. A knowledge gap exists because the findings of the previous study, which employed a descriptive design, are not directly applicable to the present research that adopts a correlational approach. This study attempted to address this gap by analyzing the link between community involvement in decision-making processes and the quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County.

Sundani and Mamokhere (2021) examined how the student-teacher relationship impacts informed decision-making and the improvement of quality in higher education and training institutions. The authors used CDA to understand the student-lecturer relationship as it pertains to decision-making and quality improvement. Given the nuances of the student-lecturer relationship, the authors conducted a review and synthesis of secondary data to understand how student-lecturer relationships impact decision-making and the quality of education. The authors found that a good relationship between students and teachers can facilitate improvement in the educational process and is a prerequisite for informed decision-making in higher education and training (HET) institutions. Furthermore, positive student-teacher relationships foster increase in learner competence. However, it was established that low motivation, learner withdrawal, and poor preparation on the part of the lecturer contribute to the deterioration of the student-teacher relationship. The authors made

a number of recommendations to improve the student-teacher relationship and emphasized the impact of the relationship on quality and informed decision-making in HET institutions. The previous study used a descriptive study and therefore the findings cannot be applied to the current research that uses a correlational approach. This study aimed to address that gap by exploring the relationship between community involvement in the decision-making process and the level of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County.

Kusumawati (2022) examined the role of the school committees in the education quality in her research. The purpose of the research was to understand how school committees contribute to the improving the quality of the education. Using a descriptive research design, she studied the principal, some committee members, a teacher, some parents, a community member, and the chairperson of the school committee. One of the findings of the research was that the school committee influences and improves the quality of education when they undertake some activities such as education planning, provision of education advice to the school, education goal setting, supervision and monitoring the school development utilization of the funds (material and moral). The improving effort of the school committee was noted to reinforce school administration, especially in the areas of student affairs, curriculum, public relations and education facilities. Because the indicative study employed a descriptive design and the current study a correlational design, she was unable to use the findings; therefore, this study intends to fill this void. This research attempts to fill this gap by attempting to identify the relationship between the community's role in the decision-making process and the community's quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County.

Similarly, Amos et al. (2022) researched how participative leadership affected collective decision-making and the quality of instruction in public secondary schools in Tanzania. The researchers implemented a correlation survey design study on how collective decision-making impacted the quality of education. The researchers used correlational descriptive methodology. Means/ averages, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarize the data, and multiple regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The study found that effective participative leadership, requires both educators and students to be involved, and make a decision to remedy the challenges in the education domain. However, the study found that, compared to academic masters and mistresses, teachers and students were less involved in participative decision making. It also presented the challenges that arise from the predominant top-down leadership frameworks where the decision of higher orders takes control of participative decision making. The study posed a contradiction and also presented challenges that arise from top-down leadership frameworks where the decision of higher orders takes control of participative decision making. Although the study posed challenges that arise from top-down leadership, it was descriptive, and hence the findings cannot be applied to this particular context. Therefore, the present study intends to fill the gap in research on the linkage between community involvement in decision-making and quality of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This research was based on the Social Systems Theory developed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968). This is applicable since a school is an open social system which is in continual interaction with the environment. Social Systems Theory is usually divided into two systems: open, which interact with the environment and closed, which do not. Given that open systems rely on the environment and emphasize interaction with external systems, they are the main interest of this theory. Regardless of their substance, nature, or dimensions in space and time, Systems Theory offers a transdisciplinary framework for analysing the interconnections among phenomena.

A system is generally defined by four key elements. The first is objects, which refer to the parts, elements, or variables that make up the system. Depending on the type of system, these objects may be physical, abstract, or a combination of both. The second element is attributes, which denote the characteristics or properties of the system and its objects. Another element is that; the system consists of internal connections within its objects. Lastly, systems occur within an environment. The school is similar to the system, additionally as a group of elements influencing each other within a surrounding establishing a larger pattern distinct from other parts. This is to declare the school as a system that correlates with the community. The community on other hand assists the school in terms of contributing resources for constructing school classes, reimbursing Board teachers, and also guaranteeing the smooth running of the school hence generating satisfactory results.

The vital systems interactive aspect of organizational examination components continuous phases for input, largely (processing), in addition to output, that depict frankness and Closeness. A closed system doesn't link with the surrounding. Without upholding information, thus it becomes at risk of fading away. An open system gets information, utilized in interacting interchangeably with its surrounding. Frankness raises the system's possibility of surviving in addition to its success. School organization is the best depiction of the open system the reason that it continually relates to its surrounding. As per this matter, public secondary schools obtain input from parents alongside the community in addition to employing a sequence of actions to shift or renovate substantial inputs to outputs (inputs for different systems) in attaining several goals. It puts up with its resources including learners, monetary funds, and material alongside information; shifts in addition to changes reimbursing them to the surrounding (society or community) as converted people. Based on this, it becomes difficult for the school to become a closed system.

A school requires precise goals in addition to purposes that discern the nature of inputs and sequence of actions for attaining outputs in addition to the actualizations of institutional aims. Feedback on the operation of the system in addition to impacts of its undertakings on the atmosphere is computed considering the attainment of goals in addition to purposes. Fundamental standards for organization and administration undertake in any cycle of actions in each institution. The popular components of administration planning, directing,

organizing, coordinating and controlling play a role in every circumstance. These fundamental administrative responsibilities ought to be conducted within the school, as an institution as well. Although each organization has common principles and practices, differences in their objectives and aims affect the input-output process and the cycle of activities that make up this method. In addition to aspects of outputs, the type of inputs and the conversion process will highlight certain aspects of a given institution.

This theory was considered appropriate for the present study because it recognizes that learners must flourish within both their immediate environments the school and the wider community in order to achieve desired educational outcomes. In this context, public secondary schools receive inputs from parents and the community, which are then processed through structured procedures to generate outputs aimed at meeting specific educational objectives. The school utilizes its resources such as students, finances, facilities, and expertise which are transformed through various processes before reintegrating the developed individuals back into society. In this regard, a school cannot function as a closed system. To ensure effectiveness, the institution must have well-defined goals and objectives, as these determine the nature of inputs, the sequence of activities required to generate outputs, and the overall attainment of organizational aims.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The study embraced a correlational research design. This was said to be most appropriate because it allows the combination of qualitative and quantitative data which gives the researcher the opportunity to make more various conclusions and recommendations. According to Fraenkel and Warren (2000), correlational research is useful in analyzing phenomena as they exist in real-life settings, since it quantifies the direction and strength of relationships among variables, whether positive or negative. The design was particularly suitable for this study as it allowed the researcher to examine complex phenomena involving multiple variables simultaneously, and to establish possible associations between them. Furthermore, data obtained through this design is grounded in real-world contexts, making it valuable for informing public policy and guiding educational practice.

### **Target Population**

The research focused only on the school community in Garissa County's public secondary schools. A school community is made up of individuals or organisations that collaborate with one another in order to support efficient learning. According to the Ministry of Education reports, the County has 40 public secondary schools, 2 national schools, 4 extra county schools, 12 county schools, and 22 sub-county schools. Particularly, the research targeted the school community which included all the principals, teachers, learners within schools, BOM, Area Chief, Sub County Directors of Education, religious leaders and school support staff. Specifically, the study targeted 4,656 participants drawn from (40 principals + 436 teachers + 4142 students in form 3, 14 BOM, 6 Area Chiefs, 6 sub county directors

of education, 6 religious leaders and 6 support staff). The study population was considered adequate as it provided a representative group of individuals capable of supplying the information required for the research. In the context of this study, teachers play a central role in ensuring that effective learning takes place by facilitating pupils' comprehension of instructional content. On the other hand, school principals are primarily responsible for overseeing school administration and ensuring that the learning environment is well managed to support educational quality, while Form 3 are selected to take part in this study since they are not busy revising for the national examination unlike their form four counterparts who will always be busy taking both formative and summative test as far as their national examination is concerned. The study population was as shown in table 2.

**Table 2. Study Population**

| <b>Population</b>                 | <b>Frequency</b> |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Principals                        | 40               |
| Teachers                          | 436              |
| Students                          | 4142             |
| BOM                               | 14               |
| Area Chiefs                       | 6                |
| Sub County Directors of Education | 6                |
| Religious Leaders                 | 6                |
| Support Staff                     | 6                |
| <b>Total</b>                      | <b>4656</b>      |

### **Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Determination**

Stratified sampling was employed to select both teachers and pupils from the chosen schools. This method was considered appropriate because it ensured that subgroups within the population were adequately represented, thereby enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the findings. Rai and Thapa (2015) state that stratification becomes more effective when there are particular roles within a population, i.e., teachers and students, who receive and provide the information needed, in this case, curriculum oversight and learning experiences. In this regard, stratified random sampling was used to minimize sampling bias (Etikan et al, 2016) to advance the proportional representation of each subgroup within the study. In this case, stratification, particularly for the selection of principals, enabled the researcher to capture the representative diversity of the total population of principals that were being studied, and provided a higher degree of representativeness and generalizability to the results of the study.

Purposive sampling was used to choose participants such as principals, members of the Board of Management (BOM), area chiefs, the Sub-County Director of Education, religious leaders, and support staff. As noted by Saunders (2009), the cases of studies that do not represent the entire population and display the specific characteristics of the sample population are best to be selected using purposive sampling. For this study, these participants were selected due to their specific importance in the area of school governance, community leadership, and policy implementation. Their particular roles in and around the school community made them sufficiently positioned to articulate the extent of the involvement of community members in school management in relation to the educational

standards. As noted by Rai and Thapa (2015), purposive sampling captures invaluable cases that are likely to significantly inform the study objectives.

A sample is a smaller part of the larger group from which conclusions can be drawn (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Orodho (2005) states that sampling is an approach where a researcher focuses on a defined portion of a target group and extends the results of that analysis to a larger group, items, or even issues. For this study, 15% of all of the teachers in the 40 identified schools were sampled, using the stratified random sampling method. It was believed that this percentage would be enough to provide reliable and sufficiently representative information while keeping the sample small enough to be manageable during the analysis phase. In addition, Form Three pupils were selected through stratified random sampling, with 5% of the students drawn at random from each school. According to Orodho (2009), Form Three students, having been in school for at least three years, possess relatively higher knowledge and understanding of school administration compared to those in lower forms.

On the other hand, purposive sampling was employed in selecting school principals, whereby half (50%) of the principals were included in the study. This proportion was considered appropriate given the time constraints and limited resources available for the research. This was 50% of 40 which was equal to 20 principals. The teachers were sampled through purposive sampling where 15% was chosen. This was determined by calculating using the formula 15% of 436 which was the same as 65 teachers. Teachers were drawn from 20 public secondary schools within Garissa County. Stratified random sampling was also used to sample form three students where 5% of total students' population was randomly selected from every school. This was the same as saying 5% of 4142 which is equal to 207 students. Also, purposive sampling was used to sample all the 14 BOM, six (6) area chiefs, six (6) sub county directors of education, six (6) religious leaders and five (6) support staff. This gave a total of 329 participants in the research. This was displayed on table 3 below.

***Table 3. Sampling Size***

| <b>Category</b>                   | <b>Sampling Technique</b> | <b>Population</b> | <b>Sample size</b> | <b>Sample %</b> |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Principals                        | Purposive                 | 40                | 20                 | 50%             |
| Teachers                          | Stratified random         | 436               | 65                 | 15%             |
| Students                          | Stratified random         | 4142              | 207                | 5%              |
| BOM                               | Purposive                 | 14                | 14                 | 100%            |
| Area chiefs                       | Purposive                 | 6                 | 6                  | 100%            |
| Sub County Directors of Education | Purposive                 | 6                 | 6                  | 100%            |
| Religious leaders                 | Purposive                 | 6                 | 6                  | 100%            |
| Support staff                     | Purposive                 | 6                 | 6                  | 100%            |
| <b>Total</b>                      |                           | <b>4636</b>       | <b>330</b>         |                 |

### **Research Instruments**

This study utilized a combination of questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data from the different categories of respondents. The selection of tools was guided by the nature

of respondents, the type of data required and the need to enhance validity through triangulation.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

A research permit was acquired from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Approvals for the collection of data was received from the County Education Officers. An introductory letter was used for researcher facilitation to access and conduct the study in the sub-county. Prior to data collection, the researcher visited the selected schools to get familiar with the environment and to establish rapport with the principals and the teaching staff. During data collection, the participants were informed of the purpose of the study, their rights concerning the study and what was expected of them. Form Three students, who consented to taking part in this study, filled the questionnaires on the spot, while the teachers used the drop-and- pick data collection method. In addition, the researcher interviewed the Sub-County Director of Education.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis is the process of getting useful information from data and is often used for drawing conclusions and making decisions (Paul, 2004). Once data has been collected, the researcher organizes it by coding data into categories and building structures to provide order, meaning, and insight. After classifying the data, the researcher compared findings of the data to information gathered from the literature review. Data analysis was conducted using version 22 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Means and standard deviation were computed using the descriptive statistics function of SPSS and the results were interpreted in tables, sorted by frequencies, and expressed in percentages. The qualitative data consisted of thematic words and observation rather than numerical data. This type of data was organized and grouped into subheadings per the study's objectives. Narratives of the qualitative data were analysed, while quantitative data was used to provide additional information to the analysis. The data analysis matrix was displayed in Table 4.

*Table 4. Data Analyses Matrix*

| <b>Objective</b>                                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Type of data</b> | <b>Method of analysis</b>                      | <b>Data presentation</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| To establish whether community involvement in decision making has any relationship with the quality of education provided in public secondary schools in Garissa County            | Quantitative        | Descriptive statistics, Inferential statistics | Tables and figures       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Qualitative         | Content analysis                               | Written narratives       |
| To establish whether community involvement in monitoring and evaluation has any relationship with the quality of education provided in public secondary schools in Garissa County. | Quantitative        | Descriptive statistics, Inferential statistics | Tables and figures       |
|                                                                                                                                                                                    | Qualitative         | Content analysis                               | Written narratives       |
| To find out whether community involvement in resource mobilization has any relationship with the quality                                                                           | Quantitative        | Descriptive statistics, Inferential statistics | Tables and figures       |

|                                                                                                                                                                           |              |                                                |                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| of education provided in public secondary schools in Garissa County.                                                                                                      | Qualitative  | Content analysis                               | Written narratives |
| To assess whether community involvement in motivating teachers has any relationship with the quality of education provided in public secondary schools in Garissa County. | Quantitative | Descriptive statistics, Inferential statistics | Tables and figures |
|                                                                                                                                                                           | Qualitative  | Content analysis                               | Written narratives |

## RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of the study was to determine the correlation between the engagement of the community in decision-making processes and the standard of education in public secondary schools in Garissa County.

### Level of Agreement on Community Involvement in Decision Making and Quality of Education

The teacher respondents were requested to indicate their level of agreement on community involvement in decision making and quality of education. The findings are shown in table 5.

*Table 5. Level of Agreement on Community Involvement in Decision Making and Quality of Education*

| Level of Agreement on Community Involvement                                                                                                            | N  | Mean  | Std. Dev |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-------|----------|
| Community involvement is key for quality education to be realized in secondary schools                                                                 | 53 | 3.925 | 0.675    |
| There is need for community around the school to be part and parcel of the running and management of school                                            | 53 | 3.981 | 0.665    |
| Secondary school which involves community tend to produce students who not only excel in the academic work but are well discipline and morally upright | 53 | 4.019 | 0.747    |

From the findings, the respondents agreed that secondary school which involves community tend to produce students who not only excel in the academic work but are well discipline and morally upright (mean=4.019), followed by there is need for community around the school to be part and parcel of the running and management of school (mean=3.981), and that community involvement is key for quality education to be realized in secondary schools (mean=3.925). This depicts that secondary school which involves community tend to produce students who not only excel in the academic work but are well discipline and morally upright. Epstein (2024) highlights that when schools, families, and communities collaborate, students tend to perform better academically and show improved behaviour and attitudes. She highlights the value of community collaboration in fostering the sense of responsibility, self-discipline, and ethical growth in the students as they achieve academically.

### Effectiveness of School in Regards to Involving Community in the School

Student respondents were asked to evaluate how effective their school was in engaging the community in the school activities and management. Their responses are shown in Table 6.

*Table 6. Effectiveness of School in Regards to Involving Community in the School*

| Effectiveness of School | Frequency  | Percent    |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|
| Moderate effective      | 39         | 23.4       |
| Uncertain               | 63         | 37.7       |
| Less effective          | 65         | 38.9       |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>167</b> | <b>100</b> |

From the findings, perception of effectiveness of schools is generally low. Only 23% believe that the school is at least moderately effective. Over three-quarters (76.6%) are either uncertain or see the school as less effective. The ambiguity, uncommunicated negativity, and the school ineffectiveness perception are caused by poor resources, poor academic performances, uncommunicated school and teacher communities, and uncommunicated school leadership. According to UNESCO, 2017, in developing countries, poor quality of education is attributed to the absence of teachers, classrooms, and textbooks as basic resources. World Bank (2018) schools that lack resources and materials to teach academically record poor student performance and engagement. This record further compounds the community's poor perception of the school.

### Relating Community Involvement and Quality Education

Student respondents were invited to articulate the association between the level of community involvement and quality of teaching in the classroom. Their responses are compiled in Table 7.

*Table 7. Relating Community Involvement and Quality Education*

| Relating Community Involvement | Frequency  | Percent    |
|--------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Highly relate                  | 82         | 49.1       |
| Moderately relate              | 38         | 22.8       |
| Uncertain                      | 20         | 12         |
| Lowly relate                   | 27         | 16.2       |
| <b>Total</b>                   | <b>167</b> | <b>100</b> |

From the findings, 49.1% (82 out of 167) considered community involvement quite strongly connected to educational outcomes, while 22.8% (38 respondents) rated community involvement moderately, showing community involvement as a notable, but not overwhelming, factor. 16.2% (27 respondents) thought that community involvement is weakly related to education, meaning that a few respondents weakly or minimally perceive this connection. 12% (20 respondents) did not know, showing community involvement is less clear, but is perhaps important or impactful. This shows that most of the participants emphasized the relationship between community involvement and educational success and among the most participants, community involvement is essential to success. Henderson & Mapp (2022) shows family/community involvement is important and essential to success

among school children of all ages. It is important to children's education that the school and community work together.

### **Conclusion**

The research concluded that most participants acknowledged the community's contribution to decision making at the school. Communities' involvement is positively viewed and helps improve students' discipline and ethics. However, some respondents' lack of confidence shows that there are still gaps to be addressed in regards to the degree of community involvement and the need for improved communication and transparency. All in all, community involvement in decision making is nurturing for the improvement of students' academic and behavioral performance.

### **Recommendations of The Study**

Schools must create well-defined and reliable community communication channels to address concerns and build trust and community confidence in their collaborative role in the decision-making process. Provide training for community members, especially those serving in Boards of Management (BoMs) and school committees, on the constructive involvement of community members in school governance and decision-making in education. Set guidelines for equitable and ongoing community involvement in the school's monitoring and evaluation from the Ministry of Education and school management.

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