

**STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY
SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN A DEMOCRATIC MALAWI**

**THE CASE OF SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN
THE SOUTH EAST EDUCATION DIVISION**

A THESIS

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents, brothers and sisters.

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ABSTRACT

The problem of secondary school indiscipline has been a concern in Malawi more especially after the attainment of multiparty democracy in 1994. This study investigated whether or not secondary school management has had any influence on this. In particular, the study investigated the level of participation of different stakeholders in school management, a practice that is believed to be an aspect of democratic dispensation.

The study was conducted in six purposefully selected secondary schools of the South East Education Division in the southern region of Malawi. The six secondary schools were grouped into Community Day Secondary Schools, Private Secondary Schools and Conventional Secondary Schools and two were sampled from each group. The study was qualitative in approach and employed a case study design. In-depth structured and semi-structured interviews were used to gather responses from the respondents. Thirty-two teachers, two parents and fifty-two prefects took part in the study.

The main finding from the study was that teachers' and students' participation in school management was mainly through collaboration and information-sharing. For the parents, information-sharing was the main level of participation evident. There was less of consultation and joint decision-making on the part of the three stakeholders in the schools meaning that the views from different stakeholders are not sought before a decision is made in most cases. Consequently, management practices in secondary schools are less democratic. The study, therefore, recommends a lot more of consultation and joint decision-making in secondary school management in order for the schools to be consistent with the democratic dispensation.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CDSS: Community Day Secondary School

DfID:	Department for International Development
EDF:	Education Foundations
EDM:	Education Division Manager
HOD:	Head of Department
PTA:	Parent-Teacher Association
RCL:	Representative Council for Learners
SEED:	South East Education Division
SMT:	School Management Team
UPIC:	University Partners for Institutional Capacity

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Malawi opted for a multiparty political system and democracy in 1994. However, it is feared that multiparty democracy has negatively affected the secondary education sector. Secondary schools have reported quite a larger number of indiscipline cases than in the years before the attainment of multiparty democracy. A study by Kuthemba Mwale et al (1996), for example concluded that the escalating cases of indiscipline in secondary schools were as a result of misconception, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of human rights and democracy. The Malunga Report (2000: xv) also found that students are being more disrespectful towards teachers and school administrators and do not prepare adequately for the examinations and generally lack discipline due partly to misconception of democracy. Mpinganjira (1998), who was then a minister of education, also expressed government's concern with the breakdown of discipline in schools and institutions of higher learning. He said that it is regrettable to note that many acts of indiscipline are being committed in the name of democracy.

Other individuals have expressed similar concerns as well. Musopole (2000) and Machado (2006) also observe that in the recent past, we have witnessed the worst indiscipline cases in our schools. There have been reports of cases such as riots in schools, absenteeism, drunkenness, drug abuse and use of abusive language. They have attributed these cases to the misunderstanding of democracy as freedom without responsibility, and add that the advent of multiparty democracy was misconstrued by pupils as a warrant for misbehaviour in schools.

The two studies, Kuthemba Mwale et al (1996) and the Malunga Report (2000), as well as other examples cited above have attributed the rise of secondary school indiscipline to misconception of democracy and human rights. However, there seems to be scanty literature on studies that have been carried out on how effectively secondary schools are managed in this democratic dispensation. Therefore, the present study will attempt to

look at management styles used in secondary schools in Malawi to find out if they are consistent with democracy.

Secondary school indiscipline might be caused by a number of factors. Misconception, misunderstanding and misinterpretation of democracy and human rights, as cited in the above examples could be just one of the many factors. Malawi as a country is now undergoing a democratisation process. In this case, schools also need to be democratised. The extent to which a school is democratised might also have a bearing on school discipline. Some of the indiscipline cases in schools might be reduced if schools are democratised.

According to Roper (2004: 73), key research findings indicate that perhaps the most important factor in facilitating school safety is school management. Roper (2004) further continues to highlight that 'research indicates that the management style and the organisational functionality of the school are key determinants of stability in the school. Higher morale by teachers and pupils and lower levels of disorders are found in schools where teachers, administrators and management communicate and work together according to a problem-solving action plan.' Huber (2004: 675) points out, due to the complex hierarchy within the school, democracy and cooperation represent an adequate rationale for actions concerning the intrinsic willingness and motivation of staff and pupils for codesigning the individual schools. The type of management at a school, therefore, has a direct contribution to school discipline as it can be observed from the two authors cited above who favour a democratic management style.

1.1 Statement of the problem

The problem that this study will attempt to address is the rise of indiscipline cases in Malawi's government, government aided and private secondary schools after the attainment of multiparty democracy in 1994. For example, in 2000 Dedza Secondary School students vandalised school property. They claimed lack of seriousness by some of their teachers when teaching, a move they said degenerated into poor education standards at the school (Daily Times, 11th July, 2000). In the same year, Moya (2000: 1) reported

that Stella Maris Secondary School girls took to the streets in protest against diet at the school. Other secondary schools also reported similar cases. For example, there had been similar reports in the press from Mulunguzi Secondary School in 1996, Dzenza Secondary School in 2000, Mzuzu Government Secondary School in 2002 and others with reasons such as poor administration and poor school diet.

The situation has attracted public attention and concern. Kumwenda (1998: 11) argues that the situation in our schools is no longer as good as it used to be. Every sunrise brings with it stories of the deteriorating behaviour standards especially on the part of students. In a random interview in Blantyre, one parent, a Mponda, complained that 'schools have become breeding places for the most notorious criminals and immoral citizens' (Kumwenda, 1998: 11).

Some studies have been conducted on this situation in secondary schools. For example, studies were done by Kuthemba Mwale et al (1996) and the Malunga Report (2000). The two studies attributed the escalation of indiscipline in secondary school to the misunderstanding, misconception and misinterpretation of human rights and democracy. The present study, however, would like to approach the problem by investigating management practices in secondary schools to find out whether or not they are participatory.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate level of stakeholder participation in secondary school management in a democratic Malawi.

The specific objectives include:

1. To find out the level to which teachers, students and local community members (PTA) participate in the management of a school.
2. To identify the challenges that inhibit teachers', students' and local community member's (PTA) participation in the management of a school.

3. To find out how teachers, students and local community (PTA) members respond to these challenges.
4. To suggest ways through which secondary school management could be improved in line with democratic principles.

1.3 Research questions

The study therefore tried to answer the following research questions:

1. To what level do teachers, students and local community members (PTA) participate in the management of a school?
2. What are the challenges that inhibit teachers', students' and local community member's (PTA) participation in the management of a school?
3. How do teachers, students and local community members (PTA) respond to these challenges?
4. How could secondary school management be improved in line with democratic principles?

1.4 Significance of the study

Firstly, since there are few studies conducted on democratic school management, the study will help to widen knowledge base on which policy decisions on secondary school management could be made, especially in this democratic era.

Secondly, it will also contribute to literature on democratic school management. The findings from the study will also serve as a base for further research in the area of secondary school management and add existing literature in the area.

1.5 Limitations of the study

The study was conducted in the secondary schools of the South Eastern Education Division which is in southern Malawi and not the entire country. In this case, the results may not be necessarily generalised to the entire country. However, they may apply to other secondary schools with similar characteristics.

Secondly, lack of resources had a limitation on the number of schools to be involved in the study. Due to limited financial resources, only few secondary schools were involved in the study. This again had a limitation on generalising the results to the entire country let alone give a picture that may be true of the division, or indeed of the entire country, other than the six schools visited which all of them were in the southern region of Malawi. Besides, all the six schools visited were conveniently selected in terms of easiness of access in terms of transport.

In addition to just involving six secondary schools, limited time available meant that only a few participants from each of the stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) were involved. Not all the teachers at each of the six schools participated in the study and were limited to only those who had responsibilities. In addition, not all the students participated and were also limited to prefects only. The study had also the challenge of getting more parents to get involved. Therefore, a small number of participants might not give a clear picture of what is actually happening in the schools. More information would have come out had it been that the study had more participants taking part. However, the study reflects some of the issues that emerge involving secondary school management.

1.6 Outline of the dissertation

Having set the background to the problem, the statement of the problem itself and the purpose of the study, the next chapter presents a literature review related to the issues of school management, especially participatory management. The chapter begins with the conceptual framework of the study and then reviews literature regarding teacher, student and parent participation in school management. After the review of related literature, then comes a chapter on research design and methodology where issues of research methodology, sampling and research tools are discussed. This is then followed by a chapter on results and discussion where the findings from the study are presented and then discussed. Finally comes a chapter on conclusion and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature on stakeholder participation in school management. The stakeholders to be reviewed for the purpose of this study are teachers, students and the community (parents). The chapter begins by introducing the conceptual framework of the study and then reviews literature on the participation of teachers, students and the community in school management.

2.1 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study is that outlined by Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002: 52) that stakeholder participation is at the core of policy management and democratic governance. In terms of participation, Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) argue that participation is central to policy implementation. It could then be said that when participation has taken place, implementation of decisions would not be problematic. The two authors further add that participation and pluralist consultation are not simply features of effective policy processes, they are integral elements of democracy itself. It could again be said here that one of the important elements of democracy is participation.

Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002) also highlight the need for identifying stakeholders, especially who are going to be affected by a particular policy or decision in order to identify their interests. In addition to identifying the stakeholders, there is also the need to decide what type of participation should be undertaken and how should their participation be like. In summary, participation of stakeholders in a democracy is vital for it will amongst others, increase support, legitimacy, transparency and responsiveness to a particular policy or decision and more participation means more democracy.

A democratic school environment is one in which teachers and students, along with school administrators, engage in open and shared-decision making process in the teaching-learning enterprise where differences are minimised (Dworkin et al, 2003:110). Talking of a democratised school, Kendall (2000: 32) adds that (a) the school and the community would have clear well-used lines of communications, (b) the community would be actively involved in school management and organisation, (c) students would have a say in the management of the school, (d) there would be open communication between the school head and teachers, and (e) the community would be involved in the school through both formal and informal organisations (such as PTA, the school committee, etc).

As a framework for this study, the stakeholders of interest for the study are teachers, students and parents. The study tries to investigate how these stakeholders participate in secondary school management in order to find out whether or not the management practices in the schools are democratic. It is going to do this by examining the types of participation the stakeholders engage in.

2.1.1 Who stakeholders are

According to Reimers and McGinn (1997: 60), 'stakeholders are defined as persons or groups of persons with a common interest in a particular action, its consequences, and who is affected by it.' In education, this includes groups as diverse as parents, children, Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), teachers unions, education faculties, public service employees, public contractors, employers, professional organisations and others. In case of a school and for the purpose of this study, the stakeholders include head teachers, teachers, students and parents.

2.1.2 Why stakeholder participation

Stakeholder participation provides assurance and enhances the successful implementation of a policy and better delivery of services. Vincent (1993) and Apodaca-Tucker and Slate (2002) argue that it is generally an accepted belief that people who participate in the decisions that affect them are more likely to have a sense of ownership of organisations

previously perceived as alienating, and also commitment to the decisions that involve them. 'It also reduces opposition to a particular policy, and by increasing participation, decision-makers will be able to pre-empt or cope with the opposition during the implementation' (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002). Stakeholder participation, therefore, reduces discontentment among the concerned parties. Decisions that arise as a result of participation are usually binding among the members since everyone will be part of it. The more the people are involved in a decision, the more likely that decision will be implemented since less opposition will be encountered. In addition, each category of stakeholders has its own interests so that involving them in decision-making is the best way to understand their needs as well as promoting accountability.

2.1.3 Dimensions of participation

According to Brinkerhoff and Crosby (2002), participation has three dimensions, the “who,” the “what,” and the “how.” The “who” question looks at the various stakeholders – the constituencies who are affected by the policy and who have the power to help it or obstruct it. On the other hand, the “what” question addresses the kind of participation being undertaken. Finally, the “how” question clarifies the qualitative aspects of participation which range from relatively more passive to increasingly more active modes. School management could, therefore, be seen as determining who should be involved, what should be their optimum level of involvement and how.

2.1.4 Types of participation

There are five types of participation which are described below.

(a) Information-sharing

Information-sharing serves to keep actors informed, to provide transparency and to build legitimacy and is necessary for public agencies to elaborate and communicate the rationale behind policy decisions. It is a one-way information flow.

(b) Consultation

In this type of participation, stakeholders are invited to offer their views on a given policy and it is a two-way information flow and exchange of views. It involves sharing information and getting feedback and reaction. ‘When consultation takes place, it provides an opportunity to listen to people's perceptions of the problems and to get their reactions’ (Evans et al 1995: 25).

(c) Collaboration

This allocates policy designs, implementation, or monitoring responsibilities to external groups. This type of participation takes place through the formation of joint committees with stakeholder representatives, joint working groups and task forces.

(d) Joint decision-making

This entails collaboration where control over decisions is not held unilaterally by public officials, but is shared. This allows stakeholders not simply to develop policy options but to engage in choice of options and participate in carrying them out thereby reinforcing commitment and ownership.

(e) Empowerment

This is the transfer of control over decision-making, resources and activities from the initiator to the other stakeholders. Empowerment also means that public officials enable external stakeholders to achieve their own objectives by providing space for independent initiation and pursuit of actions, increasing capacity, and delegating decision-making authority.

It is within this framework, therefore, that this study is conceived. The study investigates management practices in secondary schools to find out the level to which stakeholders participate. It looked at the “who,” “what” and “how” dimensions of stakeholder participation.

2.2 Management and leadership

The terms management and leadership are sometimes used interchangeably but are slightly different from each other and are also connected in a way. Okumbe (1998: 2) defines management as the process of designing, developing and effecting organisational objectives and resources so as to achieve the predetermined organisational goals.' In short, management deals with systems and structures (Sarros and Santora, 2001: 392). On the other hand, leadership is defined as the behaviour that enables and assists others to achieve personal and organisational ambitions and goals (Whitaker, 1998: 82). Its key function is to help in the creating of conditions in which people feel motivated to work to the optimum levels of their energy, interest and commitment. The two, leadership and management are connected in a way that leadership is the personal side of management (Sarros and Santora, 2001: 392). Whitaker (1998: 23) summarises the difference between management and leadership as while management activity is necessary to keep the organisation functioning efficiently, so that plans come to function, procedures work and objectives are met, leadership is concerned with conditions in which all members of the organisation in which all members of the organisation can give off their best in a climate of commitment and challenge. Management enables organisations to function, leadership helps it to work well.' In this study, leadership and management have been used interchangeably.

2.3 Democracy and participation

Democracy as a form of management encourages the participation of stakeholders without the leader's dominance. The group decides its own objectives and policies through group discussion and it is therefore, referred to as participative management. Generally, 'in most definitions of democracy, the key element is people's rights or ability to participate in some meaningful way in the making of public decisions' (Vancouver 1994: 3). For example, Fielding (1999: 222) asserts that democracy has to do with participation, that is active involvement and its attendant responsibilities. Faiti et al (1999: 4), also add that 'the best term to describe the essence of democracy is participation and the democratic approach is, by nature, a participatory approach.' By encouraging participation, democracy encourages every citizen whatever background he

or she might have, to actively take part in the development of the society, in the solution of problems and in the creation of a common, and achievable vision. Therefore, according to Fatti et al (1999), 'democracy is a system that tries to tap the resources for self-organisation in a society as efficiently as possible, on individual as well as on social level.' Participatory approaches have increasingly been used to enable citizens to express their concerns more directly to those with the power to influence the policy process (Cornwall and Gaventa 2001: 16). Democratic secondary school management, therefore, implies bringing together the stakeholders such as parents, students, teachers and head teachers to come up with decisions that will affect the school.

2.3.1 Democratic leadership, shared decision-making and shared governance

Democratic leadership, just like democratic management, also ensures shared decision-making processes and shared governance. In case of school management, shared governance, according to Blasé and Blasé (1998: 481), means:

‘having the decision-making power shared among everybody who is in the school, not just people who are the legal authorities or the appointed administrators. That includes the teachers, the staff members like cafeteria workers and the custodians, the parents, all other stakeholders, including business people from the community. Ideally, it would be shared with the children too.’

Wallace (2001: 154) adds that ‘shared leadership is potentially more effective than head teachers acting alone. Staffs are interdependent and every member has a contribution to make as leadership tasks can be fulfilled only with and through others’. In addition, democracy also creates a sense of community in schools. Royal and Ross (1997) point out that ‘a strong sense of community in schools has benefits for both staff members and students and provides a necessary foundation for school improvement, and in a school community, communication is open, teamwork is prevalent, and diversity is prevalent.’

Democratic leadership also calls for collaboration in making decisions as already indicated, by involving different stakeholders. According to Day (2004: 429), ‘collaborative cultures enhance teacher participation and that distributed leadership in this

and across a wide range of stakeholders, including students, is likely to lead to and sustain teacher commitment.' Participation of stakeholders in decision-making, therefore, ensures commitment to what has been agreed upon amongst them.

As already indicated in the conceptual framework, the present study investigates management practices in secondary schools to find to what level the stakeholders (teachers, students and the community) participate in the management of a school. It will attempt to find out what form of participation exists in Malawi's secondary schools and also what needs to be done in order for them to be democratic.

Carey (2005: 3) observes that 'schools everywhere are being accountable for the achievement of their students. Because of this, it is important that an administrator possesses a leadership style that is conducive for teaching and learning.' Many contemporary writers advocate a democratic voice for students and teachers on school management and also various theories of management suggests that a democratic environment in a school context not only benefits the academic and socialisation experiences of students but also affects work productivity and well-being of teachers (Dworkin et al, 2003: 110). According to Begley and Zaretsky (2004) democratic leadership processes are desirable for schools not only because they reflect socially mandated ethical commitments to collective processes, but can also be professionally justified as a necessary approach to leading schools effectively in the increasingly culturally diverse communities and a world transformed by the effects of technology and the forces of globalisation.

'Democratically organised schools can also contribute in a direct manner to the alleviation of violence in schools. Where no participatory structures or democratic culture exists, students resort to violence to vent their frustration and disagreement' (Harber, 1997: 8). According to Zeichner (1991: 371), 'school democracy is the one that recognises the legitimate rights of all parties to have substantive inputs into decision making about significant school issues, and at the secondary level, this would include students.' This could be the case with what has happened to Malawi after the attainment of democracy. There had been incidences of riots in secondary schools. It could be said

that it was one way of expressing their frustrations due to being excluded from the decision-making process.

2.3.2 Teacher participation and school effectiveness

According to Bogler and Somech (2005: 421), 'teacher participation in decision making is the opportunity for teachers to take part in the decision-making processes on issues that influence their school life.' On the other hand, Taylor and Bogotch (1994: 307), define teacher participation in decision-making operationally as 'participation by teachers in making decisions about issues that affect their activities or job assignments.' Therefore, participation of teachers in managerial issues widens teachers' focus from the immediate outcomes within their own classrooms to the organisation as a whole. Barth (2001: 445) asserts that the more the educators who are part of the decision making, the higher their morale, and the greater their participation in carrying out the goals of the school.

Several studies have been conducted on participation of teachers in school management. Chanman-Tak et al (1997) in Hong Kong conducted an exploratory case study utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. Two secondary schools which joined School Management Initiative (SMI) three years earlier were sampled and a questionnaire survey was used to gather information about the level of teachers' actual and desired involvement in decision-making and managerial issues at individual, group and school levels. School observations and in-depth interviews were also conducted to supplement the findings of the study. They found that teachers' participation in a decision making as a particularly desirable activity to secure ownership of the school and have a greater voice in determining how the school should run. The study also found out that teachers believed that the more they were involved the better the decisions would be and they would strictly enforce the policies they made for students' interests. Teachers also commented that to some extent, their commitment and their sense of belonging rose with their participation. This helps to build a sense of community among the teachers and in a community, the members feel that the group is important to them and they are important to the group.

Dworkin et al (2003) conducted a study in Texas, America, to examine the links between the behaviours and perceptions associated with a democratic school and teacher burnout. Burnout, according to Freudenberger (1974), characterises a malady experienced by human service professionals who appear to 'wear out' or reach a stage where they are no longer able to perform their tasks effectively (Dworkin et al 2003: 108). A survey questionnaire was administered to 3600 teachers of which 2961 (81.8%) completed the survey.

The study found that democratic personnel policies and practices such as non-authoritarian and non-bureaucratic management by the principal, open communication of knowledge and information, shared decision-making regarding school matters and a sense of responsibility by staff and students for decision-making exerted the strongest effect in lowering the burnout scores for teachers. Therefore, democratic principles if introduced at a school, according to this study will likely provide the zeal for teachers to work effectively. As pointed out earlier democracy calls for participation and there are different types of participation. However, Dworkin et al's study has not been clear on what type of participation was involved in the democratic schools, especially for teachers. The present study will, therefore, attempt to gather views from different stakeholders such as students, parents, as well as teachers on their level of participation in school management.

Furthermore, the study by Dworkin et al (2003) found out that the reduction of burnout among teachers, even in an environment that is supportive of democratic personnel policies, will not automatically result in higher support for the democratic treatment of students (Dworkin et al 2003: 118). If students are not democratically treated, problems arising from the students become inevitable and as a result a school will not be effective. Harber and Trafford (1999: 53) argue that 'in this democratic dispensation, an effective school is officially seen as one that upholds the practice of democracy in the wide society by actively promoting democracy through its structures and cultures.' School structures in this case refer to management structures. Harber and Trafford (1999: 46) go on further to say that students in effective schools are treated with dignity and encouraged to participate in the organisation of the school and as a result they feel valued. Therefore,

the purpose of this study will be to find out the extent to which schools encourage students to participate in their organisation and what are the challenges that students face in participating in school management.

Another study was conducted by Gaziel (1992) in Israel. The purpose of the study was to increase knowledge about the composition of the management team and how this team relate to the issue of school effectiveness. The study attempted to answer the research questions how management teams are organised and how they solve problems in making decisions and how the operation of the management team influences school effectiveness. According to Gaziel (1992: 154), management team is a formal part of an organisational structure and is legitimised by some formal policy that establishes the team. In a school it may include the principal and the head of departments and is characterised by group processes in decision-making. Eighteen elementary schools were selected and the management teams were requested to fill a survey questionnaire. The study found that participative patterns of the management teams is related significantly to school effectiveness in aspects such as commitment to the school, feedback, adaptivity to pupils and teachers' and parents' demands.

Tyala (2005) conducted a study in South Africa. The purpose of the study was to find out school management team members' perceptions of their roles in managing secondary schools. According to Tyala (2005), of the utmost importance in democratic management are the notions of consultation and communication and the cornerstone of team-management is participative management. Team management also provides opportunities for empowerment and staff development. Ten secondary schools participated in the study and questionnaires, interviews and observations were used as data collection tools. The study found that although the concept of team management is well received in schools, there are some significant obstacles to the acceptance of teamwork as an alternative form of management many of which were as a result of decades of disempowerment governance strategies, resulting in impoverished notions of school ownership and joint responsibility. The present study, as one of its objectives, is going to identify the challenges that inhibit participation in secondary school management in a democratic Malawi bearing in mind that democratic management entails participation and teamwork.

In this study challenges from teachers, students and parents will be sought and suggest way of improving their participation in line with democratic principles.

2.3.3 Community participation and school effectiveness

According to Bauch and Goldring (1998: 20), parent participation and empowerment are two possible ways in which parents can be involved in schools and can exercise influence. Participation refers to the involvement of parents in providing input or being consulted about school affairs or children's progress without exercising influence while empowerment refers to the parents' role in exercising influence within the school, typically through decision-making forums.

Several studies have been carried on the participation of parents in school. A study was conducted by Cranston (2001) in Australia to investigate the impact of school-based management on primary school. It sought to examine how and in what areas of the school parents and teachers are actually engaging in school level decision-making. A sample of six primary principals was selected. A series of semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used as the main data gathering strategies. The focus of the interview was the nature and level of community involvement in decision-making in the school, types of decisions in which the community tended to be involved, impact (positives, negatives) of such involvement and the role of principals and others in engaging the community in decision-making in the school. The study found that parents noted that by getting involved in the school, they were able to contribute significantly to a shared vision for the school, potentially leading to better educational opportunities for their children. It also found out that parents were not involved in curricular issues since parents thought teaching was what the teachers are paid to do. It is their responsibility. However, the level of parents' involvement increased over the years developing into a more collaborative orientation. According to Cranston (2001: 18), parents or community involvement in the school leads to, amongst others, wider and greater ownership of the school – its vision and priorities, greater diversity of views and expertise as inputs to decision making, development of more inclusive partnerships among teachers and parents, and enhanced professional culture among teachers.

As can be noted in the preceding paragraph, Cranston's study was conducted in primary schools, and only involved principals and not teachers or students or parents. This means that only views of the principals were heard. The present study will be carried out in secondary schools with the focus not only on principals (headteachers), but teachers, students and parents in order to find out their views on participatory management.

Another study by Ibetoh (2004) in Nigeria on effective school and parent collaboration found that once parents and schools interact on a regular basis around specific activities, mutual fears and reservations become transformed into positive results. The study aimed at understanding what people think effective collaboration means and developing a guide on collaborative activities between parents and schools in support of early childhood programs. Two schools based on location, rural and semi-urban were sampled for the study and thirty participants using purposive sampling techniques took part in the study. The thirty participants were slated for interviews of thirty minutes each and also participated in focus group discussions. In addition, observations and record reviews were used to gather data. The study results emphasized the importance of participatory processes by finding out the need and relevance of including parents. This study found that effective collaboration between staff and parents provided with an opportunity to increase their expertise, knowledge skills through sharing educational problems of children. On that note, the present study tries to investigate how parents participate in secondary school management by looking at the levels on which they participate, the challenges they encounter and suggest ways through which their participation could be improved in line with democratic principles.

Another study by Gershberg and Shatkin (2002) in Latin America on school-based councils showed that collaborative decision-making between parents and community members on one hand, and principals, teachers and school staff on the other may enhance school community relations which may lead to improved educational performance both because parents may become aware of their role in their children's education and educated about the influence of the home environment on student achievement and

because parents and community members may increase time and resources to schools. Therefore, parents' participation in school management leads to greater commitment of resources to schools. It also leads to providing encouragement to students thereby improving their educational performance. As one of its objectives, the present study tries to suggest ways through parents' participation could be increased in secondary schools

2.2.4 Student participation and school effectiveness

The participation of students in decision-making in school management faces some problems. According to Adams (1987: 177), the difficulties are obvious enough and they include their inexperience, lack of maturity, unawareness of the real nature of the problems and their transient membership of the school. Nevertheless, involvement of pupils in decision-making has two virtues according to Adams (1987). The first one is that they feel part of the school community and believe that their interests and wishes are not completely ignored. In addition, the setting up of decision-making groups for pupils give an insight into democratic processes and the difficulties of arousing interests in decision-making, canvassing views and reaching decisions at group meetings. It is elementary training for participation in public and group affairs (p. 177). The participation of students in decision-making could therefore be encouraged as a way of enhancing and consolidating democratic processes.

Several studies have been carried out as regards student participation in decision-making and management in schools. In terms of student participation, a study by Mulford and Johns (2004) in Australia found that student participation in decision-making and management resulted in a range of positive benefits, including greater connectedness and a sense of community within the school, reduced levels of vandalism, and an overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude. This study was conducted in five Tasmanian state government schools demonstrating successful leadership. To ensure diversity, rural and urban schools were selected. Data gathering involved interviews with a wide range of stakeholders. The students in all schools were consulted on a regular basis about decisions relevant to them, leading to student empowerment and further contributing to school capacity. The study found that success within each school was

related to the extent to which leadership is distributed throughout the school community, utilising the skills and expertise of school staff, students, parents and other community members into a variety of ways. It also found that successful school leaders promote a culture of collegiality, collaboration, support and trust, and that this culture is firmly rooted in their democratic and social justice values. Therefore, student and teacher participation in school management could be one of the strategies to reduce the occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools, especially from students, as supported by Mulford and Johns' (2004) study. It is to this effect that the present study is trying to investigate whether or not the escalation of indiscipline cases in secondary schools in Malawi could be as a result of lack of participation in school management by the various stakeholders. It will attempt to find out at what level do students participate in secondary school management, the challenges they encounter and suggest ways through which their participation could be improved especially in line with democratic principles.

According to Fletcher 2003: 7), research demonstrates that students' attitudes are most affected when students are engaged as significant contributors to learning communities. For example, a study by Baginsky and Hannam (1999) on school councils in Midlands and Wales showed that the main advantage identified by staff and students in schools with councils was that they gave students a voice, provided a link between staff and students and allowed students to have a role in the management of schools. According to Baginsky and Hannam (1999: 4), in the study some students commented that they would accept more responsibility and be more committed to their schools if they were involved. Whitehead and Clough (2004) conducted a study to explore what could be learned from pupils in Education Action Zones (EAZ) in England to inform practice and raise attainment. The Education Action Zones (EAZ) involving local partnerships were one of the government policies set up to help raise standards in pupils' performance and behaviour. The study used semi structured questionnaires and one-to-one interviews to capture the views of the students as well as to provide qualitative data to highlight measurable trends within the school as well as across the student body. Two secondary schools took part in the study. The researchers of this study speculated that the process of pupil consultation would among others improve behaviour management, increase interest in literacy and help teachers to create an environment more conducive to learning. The

study found that the majority of pupils responded positively to being consulted about their learning environment. The researchers then concluded that if the zone schools are to empower people and communities, decision makers need to listen to pupils' views and this would allow the possibility that policies can be informed by the pupils, owned by the pupils and supported by the pupils. The purpose of the present study is to find out what type of participation in school management is there for the students in secondary schools.

Osler (2000) also conducted a study in England. The aim of the study was to identify practices and principles which schools might adopt to promote good discipline and guarantee the rights and responsibilities of pupils. The study also explored their understandings of school discipline and the degree to which they felt they were consulted in school decision-making. Using mainly questionnaires and interviews, the study collected data from 108 secondary and 50 primary pupils in five of the six case study schools (three secondary and two primary). The study found that pupils' responses indicate that they see school discipline as related to teacher and pupil relationships and to school cultures that permit them to participate. The evidence also suggests that teachers intent on introducing greater democracy and participation at school would encounter considerable support from the pupils. In addition, pupils argued that their involvement in decision-making increased their motivation to achieve and made them feel part of the school. As one of its objective, therefore, the present study would like to identify the challenges that inhibit the participation of students in secondary school management and suggest ways through which their participation could be increased in line with democratic principles so that their motivation to achieve is increased.

Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) conducted a study in America which was about democratic participation and academic life. The study interviewed and observed local educators, policy makers and students from twenty-five districts in twenty-one states in America. On participation of students, the study interviewed elected student leaders. It found that the students felt that had very little influence over school operations and the sort of influence they enjoyed were organising homecoming events, designing a schedule of school-wide assemblies and the like. In general, the study found that students, although they were involved in many activities, had no power or influence. The study also found

no school in which the student council was a player in any aspect of school life, except social events and in most schools, the administrators told that the school councils was ineffective if not inoperative. Studies from other places have actually shown that students' participation in school management have greater returns. For example, Mulford and Johns (2004) study found that student participation in decision-making and management resulted in a range of positive benefits, including greater connectedness and a sense of community within the school, reduced levels of vandalism, and an overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude. It is on that note that the present study tries to suggest ways of improving their participation in a democratic Malawi, especially in line with democratic principles.

Nongubo (2005) conducted a study in South Africa. The study investigated secondary learners participation in the governance of their schools through representation by the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) and attempted to find out how learners participation is perceived by both the RCLs and the School Management Teams (SMT). Using a sample of five secondary schools, the study found that learner involvement in school governance was a problem and it revealed an indecisive and autocratic mindset among the educators regarding the issue of learner involvement in governance and management thereby undermining the democratic potential of learner participation. From the study, RCL members are referred to as 'children' and as not operating 'on the same level.' According to Nongubo (2005: 58), 'it is clearly difficult for adult educators to have young adult learners as management partners.' On the same note, the present study would like to investigate learner participation in secondary school management by looking at the levels to which they participate and also their challenges that they encounter as well as suggesting ways for their improvement especially in line with democratic principles.

2.3.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has reviewed related literature on stakeholder participation in school management. The stakeholders reviewed are teachers, students and parents. In summary, stakeholder participation in school management has been found to be useful as evidenced

from the literature review. For example, literature has shown that teacher participation in school management especially in decision-making would among other things provide the zeal for teachers to work effectively and secure ownership of the school and have a greater voice in determining how the school should run. It is also believed that the more they are involved the better the decisions would be and that they would strictly enforce the policies they made for students' interests (Chanman-Tak et al 1997).

On the part of student participation, literature has shown that involvement of students in school management results in a range of positive benefits, including greater connectedness and a sense of community within the school, reduced levels of vandalism, and an overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude (Mulford and Johns 2004). Finally, on the part of parent participation, it has been shown that they too have positive effects. For example, it has been shown that participation of parents would increase resources for the school (Gershberg and Shatkin 2002).

Therefore, all the three stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) should participate in secondary school management. Literature has it that teachers should participate in school management. The main reason being that their participation increases their morale and commitment to school duties (Barth 2001). This can be achieved by following democratic practices such as shared decision-making regarding school matters and consultation. Students too have to participate in school management. As literature has shown, their participation would lead to amongst others a sense of community within the school and an overall improvement of student behaviour in the school. This can be achieved by having students consulted in school decision-making. In case of parents, their participation is also encouraged. It is found that they would contribute significantly to a shared vision for the school. This can be done through effective collaboration between staff and parents.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the general approach that was taken to achieve the objectives of the study. It has described the methodology that was employed as well as the design of the study. It has also explained and described the sampling procedures that were used, the population for the study, the instrumentation used to get the solutions to the research objectives as well as the analysis procedures that were taken.

3.1 Research methodology

According to Silverman (1993: 2), 'a methodology is a general approach to studying a research topic and it establishes how one will go about studying any phenomena.' There are two main research methodologies, qualitative and quantitative. According to Merriam (1988: 17), 'qualitative research assumes that there are multiple realities - that the world is not an objective thing out there but a function of personal interaction and perception. It is a highly subjective phenomenon in need of interpreting rather than measuring. Beliefs rather than facts form the basis of perception.' Qualitative research, therefore, is grounded on the assumption that features of the social environment are constructed as interpretations by individuals and that these interpretations tend to be transitory and situational (Winegardener 1999: 1). Therefore, qualitative research is interpretive in that theories and concepts tend to arise from the inquiry and come after data collection than before it (Robson 1993: 19). In addition, qualitative research uses an inductive approach to knowledge generation because the research builds abstractions, concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than testing existing theories (Winegardener 1999: 2; and Merriam 1988:20). It is thus referred to as hypothesis generating research. According to Merriam (1988: 19);

'qualitative researchers are interested in meaning - how people make sense of their lives, what they experience, how they interpret these experiences, how they structure their social worlds by assuming that meaning is embedded in people's experiences and mediated through the investigators own perceptions.'

On the other hand, quantitative research assumes that the behaviour of humans, like that of matter, can be objectively measured through the construction of appropriate research instruments. Statements of cause and effects can be produced through the formulation of theories that can explain human behaviour (Wamahiu and Karugu 1995: 115). Quantitative researchers also believe that humans are passive objects, reacting to external stimuli in much the same way that objects in the natural world do. The job of the researcher is simply to explain this behaviour in terms of reaction to stimuli. In addition, quantitative researchers assume that it is possible to investigate social behaviour objectively. Being objective in this case, implies being emotionally detached from the matter under study and not allowing personal beliefs, values, prejudices or biases to colour the observations and for this reason, quantitative research is sometimes referred to as objectivistic (Wamahiu and Karugu 1995: 115).

This study mainly employed a qualitative approach in order to attempt to provide a detailed insight on secondary school management. The methods attempted to capture data on the perceptions, opinions or views of the respondents (head teachers, teachers, students and parents) about secondary school management. Specifically, the data to be captured was on their level of participation in school management, the problems that they face with their participation, how they respond to the problems that they face and how secondary school management could be improved in line with democracy in this democratic era. The qualitative approach, therefore, was trying to explore and explain the problems of secondary school management in a democratic Malawi. Since no hypothesis had been generated in this study the qualitative approach was more suitable than the quantitative one.

3.2 Research design

According to Pinsonneault and Kraemer (1993: 10), a research design is a strategy for answering the question or testing the hypothesis that stimulated the research in the first place. This study will employ a case study research design. According to Creswell (1998:61), a case study is an exploration of a “bounded system” or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of

information rich in context. This bounded system is bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied – a program, an event, an activity or individuals. According to Merriam (1988: 21), ‘case studies are particularistic in that they focus on a specific situation or phenomenon.’ Gall et al (2003: 436) define case study research as ‘the in-depth study of instances of a phenomenon in its natural context and from the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon.’ The phenomenon under investigation in this study is secondary school management in a democratic Malawi and the focus where data collection and analysis will concentrate is stakeholder participation in secondary school management and the stakeholders of interest are teachers, students and parents.

The case study was descriptive. A descriptive case study tries to present a detailed account of the phenomenon under study (Merriam 1988: 27). This is so because in a case study, a substantial amount of data is collected about the specific case (or cases) selected to represent the phenomenon (Gall et al 2003: 437). The case study design, therefore, tries to produce a rich and detailed account of the phenomenon under study by being descriptive as a result of gathering a substantial amount of data through engaging directly with the respondents. It does so since involves fieldwork in which the researcher interacts with study participants in their own natural settings whose goal is to learn about the phenomenon from the perspective of those in the field (Gall et al 2003: 438). A descriptive case study design was therefore, chosen so as to produce a detailed description of a phenomenon under study that is secondary school management in a democratic Malawi and also to develop an understanding of this phenomenon as experienced by the participants through interviews and probing in their natural settings, in this case, the secondary schools.

3.3 Sampling

Malawi has six educational divisions, which are Northern Education Division, Central West Education Division, Central Eastern Education Division, South Eastern Education Division, Shire Highlands Education Division, and South Western Education Division. In this study, South Eastern Education Division had been selected as a case study since the researcher works in the same division. The study was therefore conducted in the South

Eastern Education Division. ‘Convenience sampling is based on a selection of cases which are easily accessible to the researcher for the expenditure of relatively little effort’ (Aldridge and Levine 2001: 79).

In the South-Eastern Education Division, secondary schools were grouped into conventional secondary schools, community day secondary schools (CDSS), and private secondary schools. From each group, two schools, making a total of six, were similarly conveniently sampled for reasons of accessibility. This was to obtain as much data as possible and thereby increasing reliability of the study.

The table below shows the characteristics of the schools that participated in the study.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of the secondary schools visited

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6
Status	Private	Private	Government conventional	CDSS	Government conventional	CDSS
Number of teachers	Female: 1 Male: 14	Female: Male:	Female: 3 Male: 24	Female: 3 Male: 4	Female: 4 Male: 19	Female: 0 Male: 8
Number of students	403	568	527	174	542	168
Composition of students	Boys: 134 Girls: 269	Boys: 292 Girls: 276	Boys: 353 Girls: 174	Boys: 118 Girls: 56	Boys: 379 Girls: 163	Boys: 111 Girls: 57

3.4 Population

The target population in this study were head teachers, teachers, and school prefects and also parents, especially those who were executive members of the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA). Cluster sampling was used to select the respondents. 'Cluster sampling is used when it is difficult or impossible to select a random sample of individuals' (Frankel and Wallen 2000: 110). It is also used when it is difficult to list all members of a target population and select a sample from among them (Ary et al 1979: 134). In cluster sampling, the unit chosen is not an individual but a group of individuals who are naturally together and these individuals constitutes a cluster (Ary et al p.134). In this method, the population of teachers, students and parents each constitute a cluster that was found at each selected school. From these clusters, not all individuals were selected for the study but participants were purposively selected. 'Purposive sampling is the procedure by which researchers select a subject or subjects based on the predetermined criteria about the extent to which the selected subjects could contribute to the research study' (Vaughn et al 1996: 58). In case of teachers some of the criteria were that he/she should be a deputy head teacher, head of department, form teacher and where there was boarding facility, a boarding master/mistress. In the case of students, the criterion was that they should be prefects while for parents they should be executive members of the Parents-Teachers Association (PTA). Based on the researcher's knowledge about the population, a judgement was made about which cases should be selected to provide the best information to address the purpose of the research (McMillan, 1992: 76). Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the target population was purposively selected so that the best information could be obtained from the respondents.

The table below shows the number of each category of participants that took part in the study per school.

Table 3.2: Number of participants per school under each category

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	Totals
Head teacher	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Deputy Head teacher		2	1		1	1	5
Head of Department	2	1	1		3		7
Boarding master	1		1		1		3
Form teacher	1	1	2	3			7
Sports master						2	2
School secretary				1			1
No responsibility				1			1
Students	8	14	6	8	7	9	52
Parents		1			1		2
Totals	13	20	12	14	14	13	86

A total of thirty-two teachers were involved in this study as respondents from the six schools (Table 3.2). Most of these teachers had a responsibility of some kind at their school such as head teachers, deputy head teachers, heads of department and others as indicated. Fifty-two students, who were prefects, were involved. These were interviewed in groups of six to eight per group at their schools. It was not easy to get parents especially those who are members of the PTA executive as required by the study. Most of them were assumed to be busy with other things and also living far away from the school. As a result, only two parents one from a private secondary school and the other from a conventional secondary school were interviewed. The parents interviewed were living

near the schools. It was expected to have at least twenty respondents (parents) in this study, three to four of them from each school depending on availability. Inability to access many parents meant lack of first hand information about the participation of parents in secondary school management. However, most information as regards parents was obtained from teachers.

3.5 Instrumentation

The study employed two main methods of collecting data. These were one-to-one interviews and focus group discussions. ‘Interviews involve collection of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals and they permit the researcher to follow-up leads and thus obtain more data and greater clarity’ (Borg and Gall, 1983: 436). In addition, ‘the process of interviewing provides a way of generating empirical data about the social world by asking people to talk about their lives’ (Holstein and Gubrium, 2002: 112). Interviews were used to obtain from respondents accounts of their personal experience. The interview also allowed ‘the investigator to observe both what the respondent has to say and the way in which it is said and it is useful in collecting personal information, attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs by probing for additional information and inconsistent or vague replies can be questioned’ (Sax, 1979: 233). In addition, issues pertaining to management might be either sensitive or confidential and interviewees might be reluctant to be truthful. Therefore, a confidential one-to one interview was meant to help find out information that interviewees might feel reluctant to provide. In this study, headteachers and teachers and parents who were PTA executive members were involved in one-to-one interview.

In the case of the students, group interviews were conducted. This involved four to six students, who were school prefects. Group interviews were conducted in order to obtain a wide range of responses. This is useful where a group of people have been working together for some time or where it is seen as important that everyone concerned is aware of what others in the group are saying. Focus group interviews were also used ‘to elicit a greater, more in-depth understanding of perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and experiences from multiple points of view and to document the context from which those

understandings were derived thereby helping to gather qualitative data regarding perceptions and opinions of purposively selected individuals' (Vaughn et al 1996: 16). Focus group interviews were meant to help to 'diminish the tendency to give socially desirable answers to impress the interviewer' (Vaughn et al 1996: 19). During the focus group interviews, only students were involved. Focus group interviews with students tried to gather information on students' perceptions about school management, especially how and also why they thought they should participate in school management. In all cases, the interviews were tape recorded upon getting consent from the respondent(s) to do so. The recorded interviews were afterwards transcribed.

Structured and semi-structured interviews were used in this study. 'Structured and semi-structured interviews are verbal questionnaires consisting of a series of questions designed to elicit specific answers on the part of the respondents and are used to obtain information that can later be compared and contrasted' (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2000: 509). In a structured interview, questions and question order are pre-set. Questions and question order are decided and arranged before the actual interview. 'The interview schedule is like a questionnaire except that it is read out and filled by the interviewer' (Aldridge and Levine 2001: 6), and in addition, 'the content and procedures are organised in advance which means that the sequence and wording of the questions are organised in advance' (Cohen and Manion 1994: 273). Structured interview were used to gather general information about the respondents, such as their work experience in case of teachers and head teachers, the problems they encountered and how they tried to solve them. An interview guide was therefore used. 'The interview guide will provide a framework within which the interview would develop questions, sequence those questions and make decisions about which information to pursue in greater depth' (Patton 1990: 284). In other words, the interview guide will lead to semi-structured interview. According to Merriam (1988: 74), 'semi-structured interviews are guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored, but neither the exact wording nor the order of the questions is determined ahead of time and this format allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic.' The list of questions guiding the semi-structured interview in this case were on the interview guide and began with general questions about their roles in school

management and the problems they faced and pinning down gradually to specific questions about participation in school management. Semi-structured interviews were therefore, used as an in-depth interview to probe more on the respondents, especially in trying to make them clarify on issues which are not clear to the researcher. During the semi-structured interview, probing questions were used to find out more from the respondents.

3.6 Validity of the instruments

After drafting the research instruments, copies were given to supervisors and other experienced researchers as well as classmates for scrutiny and comments. In addition, the instruments were piloted on another school which was not included in the sample. After the piloting some necessary adjustments were made to the instruments. For instance, there was a question that demanded from the respondents how secondary school management could be improved in this democratic era, it was discovered that it was not capturing the last objective of the study that was looking for ways of improving secondary school management in line with democracy. It was therefore adjusted to ask about all the stakeholders like, if we are to involve (students, parents, etc) how should they be involved? What role should they take?

3.7 Ethical considerations

Letters seeking permission to go to schools to carry out research were sent to both the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology headquarters in Lilongwe as well as to the South Eastern Education Division (SEED) headquarters in Zomba. The Education Division Manager (EDM) of the SEED gave the permission letter that also served as an introduction letter to the schools in addition to the letter from the Education Foundations (EDF) Department of Chancellor College that showed that I am a student from the college.

Upon reaching the school, the researcher introduced himself to the head teacher of the school, explaining to him the purpose of the visit and give supporting documents from both the EDF Department and the SEED headquarters. The head teacher in turn

introduced the researcher to the members of the staff and explained to them also the purpose of the visit.

During the actual interviews, again the researcher introduced himself to the respondents and explaining to them the purpose of the visit to the school as well as the research being conducted. Respondents were assured that the research was academic and the results found were not going to be revealed to anyone. In order to increase their confidence and trust, respondents were not encouraged to give their names so that they can be free in answering the questions posed to them. Consent was also sought first from the respondents on whether to have the interview tape recorded or not. For those who refused to be tape recorded, notes were taken during the interviewing process. During the interviewing process, probes were used to ask for more information and to ask for clarifications where the responses were not clearly understood. As Wood (1978: 101) puts it, ‘probes are used to draw out all relevant responses from the respondents, to ensure that inarticulate or shy respondents have as much chance to give their opinions as articulate or talkative ones by being neutral, interested and persuasive.’ In doing the probing, more information was coming out from the respondents.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis was mainly qualitative, since the study used only qualitative methods. In a qualitative study, data collection and analysis go hand-in-hand to promote the emergence of substantive theory grounded in empirical data and analysis completed when critical categories had been defined, relationships among them established and integrated into a grounded theory Marshall and Rossman (1995: 112). In the study, data analysis was being done during the data collection process and was an on-going exercise till the final analysis. This is because as a case study research design, data collection is emergent which means that the researcher learns from the data collected at one point in time to determine subsequent data collection activities (Gall et al 2003: 449). After collecting data from one secondary school, the data was carefully read to find what themes and patterns are emerging from the data. This helped to identify missing information from the data that can eventually be searched from the subsequent schools.

Qualitative analysis in this study followed the five analytic modes by (Marshall and Rossman, 1995: 113). These were organising the data; generating categories, themes and patterns; testing the emergent hypotheses against the data; searching for alternative explanations of the data and writing the report.

In the analysis, data was organised through continuous reading to become familiar with it so that regularities in the setting or people chosen for study are noted. Data familiarisation helped to identify the big ideas that represented the findings from the interviews, in addition to unitising the data. Unitising data refers to the process of identifying those units of information that will later become the basis for defining categories (Vaughn et al 1996: 105). Thereafter, categories, themes and patterns were generated from the data. ‘Categories are superordinate headings that provide an organisational theme for the units of data, and categorising will bring together those information units that are related to the same content’ (Vaughn et al 1996: 107). As categories and patterns emerged and became apparent, then the process of evaluating the plausibility of the developing hypotheses and testing them was done in addition to searching for other alternative explanations. Finally, a report was written.

3.9 Chapter summary

In general, the study was a qualitative case study which was mainly descriptive. The study was conducted in six secondary schools in the South East Education Division. The schools were of categories private, community day secondary schools and conventional secondary schools. The main sources of data collection were interviews. Both structured and semi-structured interviews were used in the study. In the case of teachers and parents, one-to-one interviews were conducted while for students, focus group interviews were conducted. Most of the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The transcribed data was read for familiarisation and analysis and finally a report was written.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the study in relation to each specific research question and discuss them. The study was set to answer the following research questions:

1. To what level do teachers, students and members of the local community (PTA) participate in the management of a school?
2. What are the challenges that inhibit teachers', students' and local community member's (PTA) participation in the management of a school?
3. How do teachers, students and local community (PTA) members respond to these challenges?
4. How could secondary school management be improved in line with democratic principles?

4.1 Levels of participation of teachers, students and parents in school management

As its first objective, the study sought to find out the level of participation of teachers, students and local community (PTA) in school management and leadership. The following sections are going to present the findings on how teachers, students and parents participate in the management and leadership of a school.

4.1.2 Participation of teachers in school management

The study found that collaboration among the teachers was the main level of participation that is being practised in the secondary schools visited and was found to be practised in all the three categories of the secondary schools (CDSS, private and conventional). There were also some form of joint decision-making, information-sharing, empowerment and consultation. These levels of participation are discussed in detail below.

(a) Collaboration of teachers

The study found that in all the three categories of secondary schools (CDSS, private and conventional), the participation of teachers in the management of the schools is mainly through collaboration which is mainly in the form of delegation and that they work through their committees such as discipline committee, sanitation committee, timetable committee and others that are set at school. Teachers are either put in committee or assigned different roles at a school. For instance, if the problem involves discipline, then the discipline committee meets to handle the issue. Those who are not in any of the committee have difficulties in participating.

When asked about his or her role in school management, each teacher described his/her role as per assigned. The collaborative practices include form master/mistress, head of department, sports master/mistress, boarding master/mistress and others. For example, a head of department (HOD) in his 20s and less than ten years teaching experience when asked what his role in school management was, responded as follows:

As a head of department I do coordinate the teachers in my department with the head of academics [Deputy head teacher]. At the same time if there are problems in my department, that is maybe teaching materials and the like, I have to take them to the responsible persons who can provide us with the teaching materials. At the same time I have to supervise the type of work that is being done in my department on behalf of the head of academics (HOD, private secondary school).

Similarly, when asked whether other people are involved in resolving problems that he had cited, the headmaster of a CDSS with over ten years experience as a headmaster replied that, ‘we have a discipline committee that helps when things are out of hand’ (headmaster, CDSS). A teacher from another CDSS who said had no any responsibility other than the teaching itself expressed similarly, ‘we have different types of committees, maybe discipline committee, sanitation committee. So those who are in that committee are involved’ (teacher, CDSS). Likewise, the deputy headmaster of a private secondary school who was in the late 20s and less than ten years of teaching experience added that:

You know problems have got many faces. For example if you talk of these discipline cases, we have the discipline committee which looks into this. Again if it is administration we have heads of department, the headmaster himself and again the dean of studies who look into these problems concerning academics (deputy headmaster, private secondary school).

Collaboration is well established in schools. One teacher recognized this and explained clearly that ‘that is why each and every institution is supposed to have the ladder of responsibilities. What is that ladder for? I think it is for administration’ (HOD, private, secondary school). This implies that the teachers actually know what their responsibilities are at school and have to perform according to what they have been assigned.

As pointed out earlier, collaboration actually allocates responsibilities to the individuals. If no role has been assigned to an individual, there will be no meaningful participation by the individual. In case of a teacher, if no role has been assigned to him/her, he/she will not be involved in the management of the school. He/she leaves the work to others. This was evident when a form teacher who was in the early 30s and less than five years of teaching experience was asked what type of problems he experiences from his colleagues, he explained as follows:

Only that something which they can do, they will always say, no we have to wait for the form master. So you are at the helm of everything. Nothing can be done involving that class without coming or passing through you while yet some are things everyone can handle so well. For example, they may have some latecomers, they have spotted latecomers, instead of punishing them directly, and they will say no let’s go to the form master. ‘The form master, these boys, these girls are late so you have to punish them’ (form master, CDSS).

This could be one of the major shortcomings in school management if it takes place at a school and is not a good practice in a democracy. Certain individuals will be overburdened in this process. This implies there is non-cooperation amongst the members of staff in some aspects of school management. Like in the above example, it implies that some teachers do not bother to discipline the students when they have been caught misbehaving. Democratic practices ensure that there is shared governance as well as

shared responsibility. This implies that there should be group commitment and not merely an individual responsibility.

(b) Information-sharing for teachers

There was also an indication of information-sharing on the part of teachers. This keeps teachers aware of what is happening or is going to happen to them. ‘Problems from teachers, I call the teacher immediately he does, he commits the offence and discuss and talk to him so that he understands the situation. So I discuss with him to understand his position that he hasn’t come here to loaf but to work.’ (Headmaster, private secondary school). Here a teacher is probably warned of the consequences of his/her actions so that he/she is not taken by surprise. Approximately 20% of the deputy head teachers and also 33% of the head teachers did indicate some information-sharing, most of them from private secondary school as well as CDSS.

(c) Joint decision-making for teachers

The study found that joint decision-making on the part of teachers takes place especially on departmental levels. ‘We call each other and have some sort of departmental meeting where we have at least to share these particular problems at least among all the teachers in the department and find the way forward. So it is just a matter of sitting down with the teachers and then find the solution’ (HOD, conventional secondary school). Approximately 29% of the HODs mostly from conventional secondary schools indicated that they involve their staff in their departments in the form of joint decision-making. However, no single head teacher interviewed indicated that they involve staff members in joint decision-making. They did not point out that they hold staff meetings in order to resolve the problems they cited.

(d) Empowerment and decision-making for teachers

In addition to collaboration, the study also found that decision making on the part of the teachers is minimally practiced. However, there is a hierarchy of authority that is followed at a school implying that there is less empowerment for teachers. For example, when asked how he goes about resolving the problems he had cited, a form teacher said ‘for example, if it is involving a particular subject, you start with the head of department,

you may even take it further to the deputy and even then to the head. Now that hierarchy goes like that in resolving the problem' (form teacher, conventional secondary school). This implies that there is a hierarchy that is followed in school. Teachers may not make decisions on their own but have to refer to the responsible persons for them to be made. They actually follow the ladder of responsibilities that is there at school. This was found to be common in all the schools whether CDSS, private or conventional.

The study, however, found that teachers are empowered especially over the students so that they are disciplined. 'Of course one of the major part of it is just to discipline the students. That is to up bring them in the way that they can be good citizens in any community that they are going and even where they are coming from (teacher, CDSS). This was also found to be practised in all the secondary schools whether CDSS, private or conventional.

(e) Consultation of teachers

The study, as already said, found that not all teachers participate in school management, especially if he/she does not belong to any committee set at a school. In most cases, a head teacher handles everything. Consultation of teachers too seems to be a problem in all the schools whether CDSS, private or conventional.

You know in most schools, the school is run maybe solely by the headmaster. Teachers are not concerned especially in the management of the school. So if maybe these responsible officers they do a lot of consultation with their teachers on how to run the school so much the better (HOD, conventional secondary school).

The teacher here felt that teachers are not normally involved in school management by way of consultation. The headmaster alone does everything. In a school setting this might not prove to work somehow especially when it comes to handling discipline issues at the school. Teachers need to be consulted.

In summary, the study found that the participation of teachers in school management is mainly through collaboration. Under collaboration, teachers work through their assigned roles and also committees such as discipline committee, sanitation, timetable committee,

entertainment committee as per established at school. The study also found that as roles are assigned to teachers, the ones who happen to have no roles or do not belong to any of the committees tend not to participate in the management of the school. It has also been found that there are some forms of joint decision-making and information-sharing and to a lesser degree, consultation and empowerment. Participation of teachers in form of empowerment and decision-making at school happens mostly through the hierarchy such as form teacher, head of department, deputy head teacher and head teacher in that ascending order.

Schools, however, have to be encouraged to involve every teacher in their running, especially in decision making. This could take place mainly in the form of consultation and joint decision-making where different views are sought and finally a decision is reached. From example, Chanman-Tak et al (1997) showed from empirical evidence that teacher participation in decision-making secures ownership of the school. The more the teachers are involved in decision-making, the more they enforce the policies made for students' interests. Discipline in a school could improve if teachers are fully involved in the management of the school. At the same time, if the teachers develop ownership of the school, their commitment to the school would increase

4.1.3 Participation of students in school management

The study further sought to find out how students participate in the management of a school. It found that students do participate in school management as well as in maintaining school discipline but to a lesser degree than the teachers. School prefects are the ones who, on behalf of their fellow students as well as on their own behalf, carry out their assigned roles and responsibilities prescribed to them. In addition to their assigned roles, it was found that collaboration and information-sharing are the main levels of participation undertaken by the students in all the schools whether CDSS, private or conventional. Some empowerment is there in some of the schools. Consultation and joint decision-making seem to be lacking in all the schools as well whether CDSS, private or conventional.

(a) Collaboration of prefects

The type of participation that was common for the prefects in all the secondary schools visited is collaboration. Mostly, they are implementers of the decisions made by the teachers. They cited two main collaborative roles, a 'bridge' between teachers and the students and 'eyes' of the administration.

(i) Prefects as a 'bridge' between teachers and the students

School prefects regarded themselves as a 'bridge.' 'We as prefects are not representing, maybe we are not on the side of the students or on the side of teachers. We are in between just to make as a 'bridge.'" School prefects, therefore, have a role of gathering complaints from their fellow students and channelling them to teachers. At the same time they get information from the teachers to their fellow students. This role was described by the prefects themselves as follows:

The major role we play is to represent the students to the teachers that maybe there are some problems; we take those problems to the teachers so that they should be sorted out. As well as maybe the teachers have a concern, maybe have got something to present to the students, we do on their behalf (prefect, conventional secondary school).

School prefects, therefore, act as a link between their fellow students and the school administration. They act as a mouthpiece for both their fellow students and the school administration. They carry information from the students to the school administration and back.

(ii) Prefects as 'eyes' of the administration

School prefects also regarded themselves as 'eyes' of administration.

We as prefects we do act as 'eyes' of the administration. To look into the problems like maybe the administration cannot manage to look into. So we do work hand-in-hand with the administration in helping to run the school in terms of discipline and others (prefect, private girls' secondary school).

On that point, cited as one of their roles and responsibility was as follows, 'we also have a responsibility, we report to the staff members about the students who are troublemakers

at this school and are doing unnecessary things' (prefect, CDSS). School prefects, therefore, also play a role in the discipline of the school by actually reporting offenders to members of the staff and administration.

(b) Empowerment of prefects

When it comes to empowerment, few schools have their prefects empowered. At one girls' private secondary school visited, when the prefects were asked how they go about resolving the problems they cited, the following response was obtained, 'sometimes we can resolve these problems by giving out punishments to those who have misbehaved so that next time they do correctly. So we can give out punishments to correct where somebody has done wrong' (prefect). Similarly at one government co-education secondary school prefects said that

'we as prefects we are empowered to do something. If something is wrong to our fellow students, for example let's say we are supervising prep and there are some other people who are making some kind of noise, we do give them some punishments so that they should not do that again' (prefect).

In these schools, prefects are not only implementers of decisions made by the teachers. They are also somehow empowered as seen by being able to give out punishments to their fellow students who have committed an offence against the school rules and regulations. This sort of empowerment does not take place in all the schools. For example, in the six schools visited, only four have empowered their prefects in some respects. Of the four schools, two were private (one girls only and the other boys and girls) and the other two were government co-education conventional schools. All of them had boarding facilities. However, they do report to their teachers in some cases for final decisions. The teachers of the school do make main decisions. CDSSs have not empowered their prefects yet.

(c) Joint decision-making on part of prefects

Prefects do not participate in joint decision-making together with the members of staff. This was found to be in all the schools whether CDSS, private or conventional. The

reason for this is that they are regarded to be incapable of making good decisions. One teacher elaborated this as follows:

‘As students somehow they are not capable of making good decisions which can be or can improve the running of the school. Most of them maybe I can say they are shallow minded. They are not mature enough to give a good decision’ (teacher, CDSS).

The headmaster of one private secondary school who was over 45 and over twenty years of experience both as a teacher and as a headmaster also held a similar view.

‘The students should just be made aware of what they should expect. But they should not be partakers of all those, like rule making and what, not playing or taking the role of decision-making. But they should be listening, understanding why they are there, why their parents have sent them there and what is their future’ (headmaster, private secondary school).

(d) Information-sharing

In some cases information-sharing is being practiced for the prefects where information flows from the teachers or administration to them. Here the prefects are simply made aware of what is happening or is going to happen. They are not involved in decision-making as explained by the following headmaster who was in the early 40s and had more than twenty years of teaching experience and less than five years experience as a headmaster.

‘We have involved the prefects, have sat down with them and then try to at least to know more especially on the part of boarding, how we purchase food, how we do all sorts of things in the boarding so that they are conversant with that and then they can pass the message to their colleagues’ (headmaster, conventional secondary school).

This serves to make the students aware of what is happening or what they should expect at a school. Their views are not normally heard in this case. This also takes place in all the schools whether CDSS, private or conventional.

(e) Consultation

The study found that students, let alone the prefects, are not normally consulted. The main reason could be the one given under joint decision-making. The students are taken not to be mature enough so as to give good ideas. There is therefore, very little consultation of the students if any in all the schools whether private, CDSS or conventional.

In summary, the study, has found that prefects participate in school management mainly through collaboration and information-sharing with less of empowerment, joint decision-making or consultation. In case of collaboration, prefects mainly act as ‘eyes’ of the administration and as a ‘bridge’ between the teachers and their fellow students. They are also implementers of decisions made by the teachers or school administration. This agrees with what Schmuck and Schmuck (1990) found in America that students, although they were involved in many activities, had no power or influence. They were not able to decide on their own and were not involved in decision-making.

In case of decision-making, the study found that prefects do not participate at all. The finding agrees with what Adams (1987) pointed out. Lack of maturity and inexperience are some of the problems that the students face in participating in decision-making in school management. It could also be observed that the age range of the students at a secondary school is 14 – 17 years old. Someone in this age range could be said to be not mature enough at all to make sound decisions since he/she is not adult but is still a child.

Nevertheless, it is important to take note of the benefits of student participation in decision-making and management as revealed by some of the studies conducted in other areas. For example, a study by Mulford and Johns (2004) showed that student participation in decision-making and management resulted in greater connectedness and a sense of community within the school, reduced levels of vandalism and an overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude. Other studies such as Whitehead and Clough (2004) also found similar results.

On the other hand, information-sharing as a means of participation makes students aware of what is happening or is going to happen at school. They are not involved in decision-

making. They are not even consulted to seek their views. Studies from other places have shown the importance of consulting students and involving them in decision-making in maintaining school discipline. For example, a study by Mulford and Johns (2004) found that students in all schools were consulted on regular basis about decisions relevant to them, leading to student empowerment and further contributing to school capacity. Similarly, from this study, the teachers and prefects interviewed argued that the students could be consulted on matters that affect them directly. Likewise, Whitehead and Clough (2004) study concluded that decision makers need to listen to pupils' views and this would allow the possibility that policies can be informed by the pupils, owned by the pupils and supported by the pupils.

In short, participation of students in school management could be an important step in reducing discipline cases in schools. Their participation would result in greater connectedness and a sense of community within the school, reduced levels of vandalism and an overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude as found from other studies. This could be achieved through either consultation or joint decision-making. The students may be consulted on matters that affect them directly. So students might be consulted on discipline matters, managing utilities at school and to some extent but not always, financial matters. In these areas, they are somehow directly involved. They may give their views on these matters. Otherwise, collaboration and information-sharing could be said to be suitable types of participation for students. Actually, mostly they practice collaboration.

4.1.3 Parents' participation in school management

The study sought to find out how parents participate in the management of a school. It found that the participation of parents in school management is very minimal as compared to both the teachers as well as the students. The types of participation for parents are mainly information-sharing, which is the major one and some form of joint decision-making as well as consultation. Parents are mainly kept aware of what is happening at the school. In that case, it implies that there is little involvement of parents

in schools. Empowerment and collaboration are not there except, maybe where they are involved in development projects taking place at a school.

(a) Information-sharing

This is the main level parents participate in school management. This usually takes place during the PTA meetings. During the meetings, parents and teachers engage in some discussions over the issues affecting the welfare of their students as well as the school as a whole and may sometimes lead to new school rules and regulations. Parents, during the meetings are told what problems the school faces and they also contribute to the solutions towards them. However, in most cases as already shown, they assent to suggestions made by the teachers. For example, when one head of department at a boarding school, in his late 30s and with over sixteen years of teaching experience was asked what is the role of parents in school management, the following response was obtained:

‘They also play a part in increasing of boarding fees and development fund. So we may see that the fees their students are paying especially boarding fees is not enough to buy essential commodities to feed them properly. So we give them the budget. So they find that it is difficult. We suggest why can’t we raise the fees to so much? So fees, especially the boarding fees and development fund are raised by the PTA and not the school management’ (HOD, conventional secondary school).

This explanation shows that they are mainly made aware of what problems the school faces and endorse the suggestions made by the teachers. The PTA meetings only try to build legitimacy for actions to be undertaken at the school such as the raising of fees as cited above in addition to promoting transparency. The meetings may not be said to be avenues of joint decision-making and consultation as such since teachers normally tend to dominate the deliberations and simply ask for the parents’ consent.

(b) Collaboration

The study found that there was some form of collaboration in the participation of parents in school management. The collaboration is mainly in development projects taking place at a school. These include building projects such as fences and also maintenance of desks

and other utilities at the school. 'Here we have problems. Like this school lacks many things as of now. For example we are constructing a fence. This fence we are building on our own. At this school desks and other utilities are also a problem. We are repairing them,' a PTA executive member explained. Provision of resources for the school is one of the major contributions of parents in school management.

(c) Joint decision-making

Parents sometimes get involved in joint decision-making with the teachers during the PTA meetings. They do this mainly in the formulation of school rules and regulations as explained by the following head of department who was in the late 30s and more than sixteen years of teaching experience:

'We involve them. Every year almost we have a PTA meeting. The role of these people play basically is formulating rules of a school. They assist so much. We give them, we are having such problems so what should we do? They say what about if we can have a rule forbidding students to do so and so. So that rule is put on paper' (HOD, conventional secondary school).

Parents therefore, can be said to participate in discipline matters by assisting in the formulation of additional rules and regulations for the school. They jointly do this with the teachers during the PTA meetings. They as well sensitize their wards on school rules and regulations.

(d) Consultation

As explained above, consultation could be said to take place amongst the parents in the management of a school. However, this rarely happens and it is only during the PTA meetings. For example, during the formulation of additional rules and regulations, parents' views are sought during the PTA meetings.

In summary, the study has found that parents' participation in school management tends to be very minimal. It is mainly in the form of information-sharing and to a lesser degree, joint decision-making and consultation. Parents are normally informed about what is

happening or is going to happen at school and to a lesser degree they are involved in making some decisions for the school, particularly during the PTA meetings.

The study also found that parents play a greater role in development activities at a school. They are involved in building projects and maintenance of utilities at a school thereby increasing resources for the school. Studies from other places have also shown that the participation of parents increases resources for the school such as the Gershberg and Shatkin (2002) study in Latin America.

In terms of maintaining discipline at school, this study has found that to a much lesser degree parents are involved. They do this by getting involved in formulation of additional rules and regulations for the school. They are also involved in offering advice and guidance and counseling to the students. In this case participation of parents tends to be vital for a school.

4.2 Challenges that inhibit participation in secondary school management

The study again sought to find out the challenges associated with participation of different stakeholders (teachers, prefects and parents) in school management as well as school discipline. This section will provide the findings of the problems associated with the participation of each of the stakeholders in school management and school discipline.

4.2.1 Challenges of teacher participation in school management

The study found that the major challenge of teacher participation in school management concerns collective participation. This is as a result of non-cooperation by the members concerned, lack of seriousness by the participants, leakage of information by the participants, sidelining other participants and also wastage of time as well as fear of loss of respect if you involve others. Mainly the teachers are the victims of non-cooperation from fellow teachers and sidelining from the head teachers whereas the head teachers are the victims of lack of seriousness and non-cooperation from the teachers in addition to leakage of information by the teachers.

(a) Non-cooperation

When asked what problems he experiences when involving others, a deputy headmaster of a private secondary school who was in the late 20s and less than five years of teaching experience said ‘in case of teachers, some of the teachers are uncooperative. They don’t want to cooperate at all. So sometimes we humble ourselves to them so that they must cooperate’ (deputy headmaster, private secondary school). In such a case, this may lead to too much of the work done by few individuals at a school. The result of such actions may make students realize that the teachers are divided. This could be a loophole on the part of the students which may lead them to become unruly to other teachers. This problem was common in private secondary schools.

(b) Lack of support

Non-cooperation may also mean lack of support in some cases. For example, when asked what type of problems he experiences with his colleagues, the boarding master of a government conventional secondary school who was in his early 30s and less than five years of teaching experience said:

‘From the teachers’ side of view, we also have some problems, one of which is support. There is not a lot of support from the other teachers who have, say no any other responsibility. So you find that it is a weekend, nobody is around. They just leave everything to say the headmaster or the boarding master. They might have seen things going wrong but they wait because they say that is not my responsibility. They go out, they note a student out of bounds, they cannot take that to task because they say it is not my responsibility. I am not the boarding master. So there is not enough support from the colleagues’ (Boarding master, conventional secondary school).

Participatory management cannot work properly if there is no support from your fellow colleagues. This also provides another loophole to the students. In the example cited above, it seems it is only the boarding master and the headmaster who do a lot of work or who can be said to be strict with the school rules. Therefore, if students happen to learn that other teachers are not serious, indiscipline at school will likely prevail.

(c) Lack of seriousness

Lack of seriousness by some teachers was found to be one of the problems. When asked what problems they experience when they get others involved in resolving the problems just cited, a form teacher said,

‘the only problem I see is that sometimes of course some of the people involved, they cannot take the matter seriously. And that being the case you do have problems to come up with what a verdict to be passed because there are actually some who even favour the students because maybe they know them, they are friends somehow’ (form master, private secondary school).

Similarly the deputy headmaster of the same school pointed out that ‘some people may be biased to favour certain students so that they can give them lighter punishments because you have involved them’ (deputy headmaster, private secondary school). The problem highlighted by these teachers, lack of interest or lack of seriousness in handling issues could be a serious one which could also be a loophole on the part of the students. Students need to know that their teachers are serious in handling issues arising at the school. Similarly each and every teacher at a school has to be seen to be serious, especially in handling discipline at a school. Lack of seriousness was also common in private secondary schools.

(d) Leakage of information

Another serious problem highlighted from participation in management is leakage of information. When asked what problems he experiences when he gets other people involved in resolving the problems, the headmaster of a CDSS whose school happened to have less than ten teachers and over two hundred students said, ‘usually they leak information. They can leak information which is not supposed to be fabricated. That is the only problem’ (Headmaster, CDSS). This headmaster here feels that if teachers are involved in school management, there may be no confidentiality in the process. They may not act professionally. They may leak confidential information to either the students

or outsiders. If that happens, chaos may likely breed in the school and may also lead to sidelining of other members in management of the school. Similarly, a form teacher of another conventional secondary school expressed a similar concern as follows,

‘Sometimes I as a form teacher would wish an issue to be at least private or I would wish an issue not to concern others, to be publicised. But when I involve other teachers, some may not act professionally enough to keep things to themselves. They may go about telling other teachers or even their wives’ (form teacher, conventional secondary school).

Likewise, a female form teacher from a CDSS expressed a similar concern, ‘sometimes maybe there are some teachers who try to expose whatever has been or what would have been confidential. There are some problems that may come because of that’ (female form teacher, CDSS). This problem was common in CDSS and conventional secondary schools.

It could be possible that sometimes teachers are denied participation or even sidelined in some management issues because of the factor of leaking information. It is imperative, therefore, that teachers act professionally. They should treat confidential issues as they are. For participatory management to work effectively members should act professionally by not leaking information to either the students or outsiders. Some problems may arise as a result of leaking confidential information or pre-empting information to the students.

(e) Fear of loss of respect

In some cases, participatory management is not possible for fear of loss of respect. When asked whether other people are involved in resolving the problems he had cited, a form teacher in his early 30s and with less than five years of teaching experience, explained as follows:

‘In managerial issues, if the headmaster has trusted powers in somebody, you will be the form teacher and if you fail to resolve some of the things on your own, to some extent it takes away the respect, the command you have on the students. That is another problem. It is better for a person to solve the problem by oneself rather than each and every problem you invite someone. If you can manage to resolve problems yourself, well instead of involving some other people’ (form teacher, conventional secondary school).

Although this fear came from a form teacher, it might as well be true for some other people such as head teachers or heads of department or anyone in authority despite not being expressed by anyone of them. Sometimes they would not like to involve other people or colleagues for fear of loss of respect if for each and every problem they get others involved. Hence they would like to act alone. This tendency becomes a problem when the issue backfires as explained by the following teacher, ‘but now there is a problem now at the end where there are now big reactions from the students where now the discipline issue is becoming open where now they will need to involve other teachers. It is when now like it backfires’ (HOD, conventional secondary school). Therefore, it is important that other people or colleagues have to be involved in every aspect of management at the school, no matter how small to avoid these results.

(f) Time constraints

When asked what problems do you experience when other people are involved, there was also a concern from the different teachers interviewed over wastage of time or time consumption when they try to get other people involved in resolving the problems as well as in decision-making. ‘Sometimes if you involve other people in decision-making the whole thing is lengthened. Instead of solving that particular issue on the same day, sometimes you are bound to jump into the other day and in the process disturbing your class activities and other duties’ (deputy headmaster, private secondary school). ‘Most of the time it is time consuming because you need to call your colleagues and sit down with them and find what way we need to do. Instead of doing it right a way there, you take time’ (form teacher, conventional secondary school).

As seen from the results, teacher participation in school management faces some problems. They include non-cooperation, sidelining, lack of seriousness, leakage of information fear of loss of respect and time constraints. These problems might likely lead to staff resentment and eventually, escalated cases of indiscipline among the staff members as well as the students. However, a lot of advantages have been cited from studies from other lands on participation of teachers which could as well lead to improvement of discipline in schools. It has also been found from the study the positive

side of teachers' participation. Normally, the teachers have shared responsibility if they participate in school management.

For example, a study by Dworkin et al (2003) found that democratic personnel practices such as non-authoritarian and non-bureaucratic management by the principal, open communication of knowledge and information and sharing decision-making regarding school matters lower teacher burnout. Teachers work effectively if they participate in school management and in doing so, teacher indiscipline may likely get reduced. Their commitment to work would also result in lower levels of indiscipline among the students.

Similarly, in a study by Chanman-Tak et al (1997) in Hong Kong, teachers commented that their commitment and their source of belonging rose with their participation. Teachers' commitment to their job, which implies high morale, may have an effect both on teacher and student discipline. Therefore, teachers' participation in school management need to be encouraged more especially participation in the form of decision-making and consultation. Participation by consultation could be said to be an ideal practice in school management unlike collaboration and other form of participation. Consultation brings together every stakeholder and share views over a subject. For teachers to work effectively, especially in discipline and academic matters, they have to be consulted. As explained by the teachers interviewed in this study, they are the ones who are closer to the students and hence, may be in a better position to provide first hand information and possible solutions to the problem.

Participatory management really consumes a lot of time. You need to call your colleagues and sit down with them and discuss over an issue. Sometimes you may not reach a consensus quickly as a result of different opinions or views over a subject. This may lengthen the discussion and eventually taking a lot of time. Despite this problem, the outcomes are far reaching than if it were done alone. In addition, it is important to note that democracy is a participatory approach of management. Despite the limitations it has to be encouraged in secondary institutions.

4.2.2 Challenges of students' participation in school management

As pointed out earlier, students do participate in the management of the schools. Mainly they look after their fellow students, for example, supervising manual work around the school so that the surroundings are clean. This is one of the major roles assigned to them. However, the participation of the students (prefects), mainly through collaboration as well as information-sharing faces some problems as found by this study. Mostly, they complained of hostilities from their fellow students and lack of support on the part of their teachers.

(a) Hostilities from their fellow students

When asked about the problems they experience when discharging their duties, prefects complained that their fellow students tend to be hostile towards them sometimes. This problem was common to all schools visited. 'The problem we are experiencing is that maybe some of we prefects are younger than those who are the commoners. So by the time we want to rule them they might again be harsh to us because we are younger than them' (prefect, private boys secondary school). Similarly on the part of the girls, 'when working with our fellow students, the response of the students sometimes it is very difficult to handle maybe you are a bit younger. So sometimes it is difficult to handle somebody who is above your age' (prefect, private girls secondary school).

Their fellow students sometimes are hostile to them. Even where they are empowered to give punishments, the problem exists. 'Who are you to give me a punishment? If you are a prefect do you think who can pay you.' These are some of the responses given to prefects from their fellow students. Such statements demoralise the prefects from carrying out their duties. Sometimes they even fail to report cases to teachers.

'No we are not reporting. In fact we are not reporting the problem because our friends may start despising you, maybe saying you are stupid, why are you informing the head teacher or the teacher? So we are not reporting the problem' (female prefect, conventional secondary school).

From this observation, it seems prefects fail to discharge their duties effectively as a result of fear of their fellow students' hostilities. Therefore, they sometimes do not report any misbehaviour by students to their teachers. This could be a serious problem in schools because some of the misbehaviour might go unreported. Hostilities from their fellow students as a challenge was common to both private and conventional secondary schools where they have their prefects empowered.

(b) Lack of support from teachers

Another problem on the part of the prefects' participation comes from the teachers themselves. That is they do not give support to the prefects. Lack of teachers' support was a common problem in all types of secondary schools visited but is serious in CDSS where the prefects are not empowered. At one co-education secondary, when asked about the problems that come from the teachers, the prefects expressed the following concern: 'on the part of teachers, teachers do not support us so that we should work as much as we can. They don't give us an impression that we should work extra hard' (prefect). Similarly at a private secondary school, 'they do respond differently. Some teachers respond immediately while others say I will punish them but they don't punish them' (prefect). The same was at a community day secondary school, 'also it happens that when we report them to teachers, they don't punish them. So it is like wasting time. For example, in sports, you could write names there, bring them here to teachers but nothing happens' (female prefect, CDSS).

These prefects know very well that there are other problems which they cannot handle or manage. Such being the case they report to teachers for assistance.

'There are some cases whereby we as prefects we cannot handle. So we report such cases to teachers who can give a punishment on those cases. For example, as we are prefects we don't have the power to tell a student to go back home but it is a teacher who can tell him/her to go back home. We report it to the teacher' (prefect, CDSS).

If that takes place, it is important that teachers should take action immediately. Delay in action or no action at all may demoralise the prefects and in the end, they may resort to not reporting such cases to their teachers sometimes. In that case, teachers may find that the students are becoming unmanageable. It is important and necessary to treat such reports with seriousness since it might help reduce some misbehaviour in schools. It may show that prefects and teachers are working hand in hand in trying to curb misbehaviour at school.

In summary, the results of the study have shown that prefects' participation in school management faces two main problems, fear of the hostility from their fellow students and lack of teachers' support when carrying out their duties. Since the prefects are the ones who stay with their fellow students and more often longer than the teachers, a way needs to be found to make them work in a less hostile environment. As evidenced from this study, some indiscipline cases especially those involving students go unreported. This is so because the prefects, who have regarded themselves as the 'eyes' of the administration and they have to report to the administration trouble-shooters, fear their fellow students' hostilities. As pointed out in studies from other places, participation of students in school management would improve behaviour management especially the students' one (Whitehead and Clough, 2004).

At the same time, the study found that in addition to prefects' fear of their fellow students' hostilities, indiscipline cases in schools sometimes go unreported as a result of lack of teachers' support for the prefects. Lack of teachers' support as explained by the prefects, comes in form of lack of proper action when cases have been brought to them. This actually demoralises the prefects from carrying out their duties effectively as the 'eyes' of the administration. Teachers' proper action when indiscipline cases have been brought to them motivates prefects to carry out their duties effectively as the 'eyes' of the administration. As evidenced from this study, the participation of prefects in school management would help to curb misbehaviour at school. In fact, the general consensus of the teachers interviewed in the study was that students have to be involved in matters that somehow concern them directly. It was hoped that in those matters since they are the

ones taking a greater role in their daily activities at school, they should be able to understand them.

4.2.3 Challenges of the participation of parents in school management

Parents' participation in school management is minimal and faces a number of challenges as revealed by the teachers and the parents themselves. The problems include illiteracy, lack of interest, distance from the school, the seemingly voluntary membership of the PTA and financial constraints as regards the running of PTA organisations.

(a) Illiteracy

When asked what prevents parents from active participation in school management, the deputy headmaster of a conventional secondary school cited illiteracy as one of the problems.

‘The problem – some maybe because they are illiterate. They don’t know what contribution they can make to school management. Others feel that it is not our duty to get involved in the running of the school and sometimes if they are involved in some other management issues, members [of staff] will say why are they getting involved more in our job? These are the things that prevent parents from active participation’ (deputy headmaster, conventional secondary school).

On the question of illiteracy, it might be true that some parents do not know how they can participate in the running of the school. For example, when asked whether he/she would like to take part in the running of the school, one parent answered:

‘It is not easy that we parents should take part in the running of the school. Why I say that is because the teacher stays some years learning how to stay with the children, understanding them. So to have an arrangement that we have to run together the school, there might be some problems’ (parent).

(b) Lack of interest

Parents' attitude is that they should not be involved in the running of the school. They think that it is not their duty to run a school but the teachers.

‘I think the attitude of saying as long as the student is at school, then that is the job of the teachers or that is the responsibility of the teachers. That attitude is what makes parents not actively involved. So there is lack of interest in the running of the school’ (boarding master, conventional secondary school).

The attitude that it is the teachers’ job to run a school and lack of interest make parents not actively get involved in school management as observed by the teachers above. Another parent pointed out that they do not wish to interfere with the teacher’s job. ‘Parents would wish to see that the job of teachers should not be interfered with by the parents but we should see to it how do the teachers work with our children’ (parent, private secondary school). If this attitude is allowed to grow, schools will not benefit from the participation of parents. As pointed out earlier, these parents contribute a lot in terms of the resources required at a school hence their participation has to be encouraged. In fact they are the owners of the students so they have to know how their children are faring at school.

(c) Distance from the school

Another important factor, probably the most serious one, especially at a boarding secondary school, is distance.

‘The issue I have seen is distance. Most of the students we have here come from far. Those who are within are very few. When we try to involve them, it will then be those who are around, the very few. So distance is a factor that prevents active participation of parents in school management’ (HOD, conventional boarding secondary school).

Another teacher expressed similar sentiments as follows:

‘Some of the problems is that of location because some of the parents who could come and effectively assist the school they stay far away from here (name of school). So there could be some transport constraints on part of them to come and maybe assist in some of the problems in the school’ (HOD, conventional boarding secondary school).

Due to the problem of distance especially in schools that have boarding facilities, most parents do not participate in the running of the school. This is also another big problem

when it comes to participation of parents in school management. From this observation, only very few parents are involved, especially those who are within or near the school. Those who are far away from the school normally do not fully participate in the running of a school.

(d) Membership of PTA

There seems to be a problem with the membership of these PTAs as observed by this teacher:

‘I think it is like this PTA membership looks like voluntary. Now at the end you will discover that people who are somehow literate and knowledgeable about certain things, they will be also the ones found busy in the working places. At the end these PTAs are mostly comprised of the people who did not go further with education and those who do not know much about how things are operating today. Now at the end it is like they do not even give much attention to this responsibility. That is why what they find it easy most is to supervise these school projects and not trying to analyse the problems that are there at a school and them as parents they are the owners of the children to sort out some of the strategies that the school can use’ (HOD, conventional secondary school).

This view was also expressed by the headmaster of a private secondary school in a similar manner that most of the times parents are busy doing other things. ‘Another problem is that the outside people [parents] are busy doing other things. So when we want them they are busy somewhere. So you have to delay giving your decisions’ (headmaster, private secondary school). Therefore, we see that in addition to the busy nature of the parents, there is also an element of time. The implication here is that since most of them are busy, in addition to staying away from the school, the other problem will be that a long time will be taken to resolve arising issues at school. You have to wait for them till they are free from other duties and in the process taking a lot of time. Probably in some cases, the matter may not be resolved at all sometimes if it may require them to resolve it.

(e) Financial constraints

There was also raised the issue of financial constraints as regards to the participation of parents in school management. ‘When carrying out our duties, the problem we face is the money we have for PTA. It is not enough (parent). He went on further to say that ‘the little money we have is meant to cater for the visitors when we meet. So it ends there.’ This parent was a PTA executive member of a conventional boarding secondary school where most of the students come from far and hence, the parents too. In such cases when they are invited they need to be provided for and hence, finances are necessary. Coupled with the seemingly voluntary membership of PTAs, normally they have a low financial base. This makes PTAs less effective in their operations.

Similarly on that note, a headmaster of a private secondary school with boarding facilities expressed the same concern, ‘the problem is that they would like to have money. They don’t want just to help. They want each time they give their help they would like to come and of course see that you give them at least something. When they go, you say well, here it is a tablet of soap or so’ (headmaster, private secondary school). Actually, one teacher observed that membership of these PTAs seems to be voluntary. Most people will be encouraged to work where there are rewards and would not want to work voluntarily. In this case most parents would not wish to take part in the management of a school. That may also imply why the attitude of saying it is the teachers’ job to run the school might be inherent among the parents since they are of the view that teachers get paid for managing the school and not them. In this case, the problem of lack of financial incentives also seems to make parents less active in school management.

In short, this study has identified a number of problems as regards the participation of parents in school management. These include illiteracy in a sense that they do not know what contribution they can make to school management, the attitude that it is the teachers’ job to manage the school, distance to the schools, the membership of PTA which seems to be voluntary and financial constraints as regards the running of the PTAs.

Studies from other places, for example Cranston (2001) have also shown that parents do not participate in curricular issues. Likewise, this study has also found that parents do not participate in curricular issues as they think that it is the job of the teachers to do that.

Participation of parents in school management has been found from other studies to be very vital for the school. For example, parents have been seen as playing a vital role in development projects at a school (Gershberg and Shatkin, 2002). This study has also found that parents can play a greater role in maintaining discipline at school. Therefore, the participation of parents in school management has to be encouraged.

4.3 How teachers, students and parents respond to their challenges in participation in school management

The study also sought to find out how the teachers and students respond to the problems they encounter in school management especially the problem with their participation. The study found that there are problems with participation in school management to all: teachers, students as well as the parents and found that there were differences in how they respond to this problem. However, it had not been easy to interview enough parents so as to come up with their views on how they respond to the problems they face while participating in school management.

4.3.1 How teachers respond to their challenges in participation

It was found that teachers participate in school management mainly through collaboration. However, there were some indications that they themselves needed to be consulted on matters of school management, implying that they are normally not consulted. As pointed out earlier, teachers' participation in school management faces problems such as non-cooperation, lack of seriousness, leakage of information and others. Above all, there was less consultation and joint decision-making. Teachers' response to these problems tend to be a negative one because they bow out of management duties and possibly leave out everything to the head teachers as this teacher explained when he was asked what he thought needed to be done in order to improve the management of a secondary school in this democratic era:

‘For example, the most common problem when we talk of school management, the one that is most talked when you talk of school management is this one, indiscipline cases among students. Now this one has been a problem in most schools because of lack of involvement of

other teachers. Because it is like teachers they could come to a certain point where they say oh I think my work is just teaching and I am paid because of teaching. So it is better I go there and teach and do my own things. So there is the head, such a person, such a person to run the school' (HOD, conventional secondary school).

Another teacher explained in a similar manner also when he was asked what he thinks needs to be done in order to improve the management of a secondary school in this democratic era:

'In most times if the head is running the school on his own, then the teachers will say ok fine. They will pull back and it will only be the head running the school. You know these teachers will not be able to try and assist in bringing down bad behaviour. They will just be looking. They are not involved in the management of the school. So I think the headmasters, they need to actually incorporate his or her teachers and also parents because the parents also play a bigger role in school management' (HOD, conventional secondary school).

However, this teacher was asked about the disciplinary committee because it does involve teachers as well in most cases. He had the following view:

'You see in most cases, the disciplinary committee, it involves the deputy headmaster and maybe the headmaster and maybe only one boarding master leaving out the teachers. So if you talk of the disciplinary committee fine there might be the disciplinary committee but who are the members of that committee? It could be the deputy headmaster or the headmaster or the boarding master leaving out teachers. So what I am trying to say is that those headmasters they need to entirely involve all the teachers in the disciplinary committee.'

What has been observed here is that teachers tend to bow out of other management duties if they feel sidelined or not consulted. As pointed out earlier, the normal and usual form of participation of teachers in schools is collaboration and this actually assigns roles to the teachers. If one happens to have no role or responsibility, then he/she tends to bow out. It may be necessary however to consult every teacher as explained above so that nobody should feel sidelined or not part of management.

In summary, the study has found that teachers respond negatively when they are not participating in the running of a school, more especially if they are not consulted or do not participate in decision making. They choose to bow out of management duties thereby leaving out everything to either the head teachers or few teachers to manage the school. This is a negative development in school management.

Barth (2001) puts it that the more the educators [teachers] who are part of the decision making, the higher their morale, and the greater their participation in carrying out the goals of the school. Head teachers, therefore, are supposed to involve all their members of staff in school management. Similarly, Roper (2004) points out that higher morale by teachers and pupils and lower levels of disorders are found in schools where teachers, administrators and management communicate and work together. This implies that indiscipline cases in schools could be reduced where head teachers and teachers work together as a team by actually involving every member of staff. Just like what Chanman-Tak et al (1997) in Hong Kong found that the more teachers involved the better the decisions would be and teachers would strictly enforce the policies they made for the students' interests. In short therefore, head teachers should be encouraged to involve their teachers in school management. It should not be a one man's show. They could do this by consulting them and also involving them in joint decision-making.

4.3.2 How prefects respond to their challenges in participation

The main challenges of prefects as regards participation in school management, as already indicated, come from their fellow students and the teachers. They had complained of hostilities from their fellow students and also lack of support from the teachers. As regards hostilities from their fellow students when they are trying to discharge their duties, it was found that the prefects discuss with them in trying to resolve the problems. When asked how do you go about resolving the problems, a prefect said, 'actually we first discuss with the offender so maybe in trying to discuss with him, he may know that he is transgressing the school rules' (prefect, CDSS). Similarly another prefect from another school said, 'sometimes we call our friends and reason with them' (prefect, boys' private secondary school). As indicated earlier, the main problem from their fellow students is that of being overlooked upon as prefects maybe because they are younger as

already explained. Sometimes a better way of handling such cases is to sit down and reason with their fellow students as they have indicated above. Where they are empowered, they do give punishments to such offenders and if they do not do it they report the matter to the administration.

Students' response to lack of support from the teachers tends to be a negative one since they become frustrated and in the long run, bow out. For example, when they were asked what problems they experience when discharging their duties, they did mention frustration from teachers which makes them to bow out sometimes.

‘If we can go to our teachers, if you can tell them that there is such and such a student that we are not in the same boat, they don't understand. There is no response to take with that issue so we are let down and we pull out’ (prefect, CDSS).

Teachers' support on the part of prefects is very vital for them to work properly and effectively. As pointed out earlier, lack of support from teachers frustrates the prefects and consequently, they are likely to choose not to report some discipline cases to the school administration. This may result in the escalation of indiscipline cases at a school.

In general, the study found that prefects face two major problems as regards their participation in school management. These are hostilities from their fellow students and lack of teachers' support.

As regards fear of their fellow students' hostilities, it has been found that sometimes the prefects sit down with their fellow students and try to reason with them. As already said, sometimes they do not report to higher authorities like teachers because of that fear. However, where they are empowered, they do give some punishments to the offenders and if they do not do it they report the matter to the administration.

On the other hand as regards lack of teachers' support, it has been found that a negative response takes place. The prefects become frustrated and normally bow out from their

duties. As already said, such response would lead to having indiscipline cases especially those committed in absence of teachers go unreported.

It could be important for school management if these problems get addressed since the prefects are the ones who stay longer with their fellow students than the teachers. They have already described themselves as the ‘eyes’ of the administration. If they would be made to work effectively, maybe by addressing these problems cases of indiscipline in schools might be reduced since they will be reporting such cases to school authorities without any fear or hindrance. Furthermore, Whitehead and Clough (2004) pointed out that participation of students in school management would improve behaviour management on the part of the students.

4.3.3 How parents respond to their challenges in participation

Most of the problems that affect the participation of parents in school management came from the teachers. These included illiteracy, lack of interest, distance from the school and membership of PTA which was assumed to be voluntary. The only problem that arose from the parents in this study was financial constraints as regards the running of PTAs. Parents respond to this problem by asking for contributions in form of money from their fellow parents. ‘We ask for money so that we should assist in the school and it is not enough. The amount we get is K100 per parent’ (parent, conventional secondary school). This amount is obtained only from parents who have their wards at a school.

As already indicated, there had been problems to get enough parents to take part in the study. There were assumed to be busy with their private activities. Therefore, only few parents participated. As a result, the study has failed to come up with enough number of problems from the parents themselves which they actually face.

4.4 How secondary school management could be improved in line with democratic principles

Democracy entails participation. The study therefore, sought views from the respondents mainly teachers on how the teachers, students and parents should participate in secondary

school management and what roles should these three groups of stakeholders take so that secondary school management could be improved in line with democratic principles.

4.4.1 How teachers should participate in school management

As pointed out earlier, teachers' main form of participation in the secondary schools visited was collaboration. It was also found that there was less empowerment, consultation and joint decision-making. The table below shows some of the matters where teachers would like to be consulted.

Table 4.1. Matters where teachers would like to be consulted

Matters where teachers would like to be consulted	Frequency of response N = 32
Academic matters	6
Students' welfare	1
Behaviour of the students	9
Financial issues	4
Welfare of the school	3
New policy for the school	4
Staff welfare	1

Most teachers interviewed (100%) had shown that they would like to be consulted. When asked on what matters they would like to be consulted, most of them especially from private and conventional secondary schools expressed that they would like to be consulted on matters pertaining to school management mostly regarding discipline ($\approx 28\%$) as Table 4.1 shows.

'I as a teacher am the one who experiences problems with the students. So I need to be consulted for the management to know what is happening. I am closer as a teacher; I am the one who is always together with the students. So I can be a very good person to take the real grievances from the students to the management' (form teacher, private secondary school).

Likewise, another form teacher from a conventional secondary school had this to say,

‘In most cases I would like to be consulted on all issues. You know there are issues about discipline in schools; we cannot say that the headmaster alone can solve such issues. I can also be consulted on financial issues, how the funds should be run, but in most cases teachers are sidelined on these issues’ (form teacher, conventional secondary school).

Consulting teachers on discipline matters might likely reduce the occurrence of indiscipline cases in schools. As explained by one of the teachers, teachers are the ones who interact with the students most of the times. They are therefore better placed to solve some of the discipline problems. In addition to the ones above, teachers also expressed that they need to be consulted on matters such as financial issues, making new policies for the school, general welfare of the school and also student and staff welfare in general.

Teachers ($\approx 19\%$), again mostly from private and conventional secondary schools also said they would like to be consulted on academic matters in addition to discipline issues (see Table 4.1). ‘I need to be consulted whenever they are maybe buying books. Management would like to buy books for the students’ (form teacher, conventional secondary school). Likewise, a head of department said, ‘maybe like on purchasing of materials. I think as a head of department (science) I am more conversant with what materials have to be purchased in the laboratory. So definitely I need to be consulted’ (HOD, conventional secondary school).

In addition, teachers had expressed why consultation is important on their part. When asked what benefit would consultation bring in school management, a form teacher said:

‘Consultations are in most cases ensure one of the most important aspects of management, teamwork. You need to work as a group. If the management does not consult, then management becomes difficult because there is no teamwork’ (Form teacher, conventional secondary school).

Others, mostly from the CDSS were of the view that they would like to be consulted especially on financial matters and the welfare of the school and the students.

In summary, as earlier indicated, teachers' main level of participation in school management is collaboration. They do this through their assigned roles and different committees set at a school. Schools should, however, involve the teachers through consultation and joint decision-making. The study found that 100% of the teachers interviewed would like to be consulted on school management.

Consultation and joint decision-making would likely improve secondary school management in line with democracy. Every member of staff would participate and contribute his/her views before decisions are made. Barth (2001) asserted that the more the educators who are part of the decision making, the higher the morale and the greater their participation in carrying out the goals of the school. Similarly, in a study by Chanman-Tak et al (1997), it was found that teachers believed that the more the teachers were involved the better the decisions would be and teachers would strictly enforce the policies they made for students' interests. In short, in order to improve secondary school management in line with democracy, there is need for a lot of consultations and joint decision-making among the teachers in the schools.

4.4.2 How students should participate in school management

The study sought views from both the teachers and the students themselves on how they should participate in school management and what role they could take. This section describes the results in detail.

(a) Teachers' views

The study also sought views from teachers on how the students should participate in school management. When asked what role students could take in the management of a school and on what matters, teachers interviewed gave different views on how they

should be involved as well as on what matters could they be involved as the table below shows.

Table 4.2: Teachers' views on areas where prefects could participate

Area of participation	Frequency of response N = 32
Financial matters	5
Formulation of rules	2
Extracurricular activities	4
Consultation	3
Gathering complaints from students	6
Curbing misbehaviour	2
Decision making	2
Menu	2

Some teachers ($\approx 16\%$), especially from both the CDSS and conventional secondary schools were of the view that students could be involved in financial matters for the school as expressed by some of them (see Table 4.2). ‘They should be able to understand though to some extent how some funds are used, for example the boarding fees. They should be able to understand why we are eating beans today, why we eating rice today, how much are we contributing financially’ (form teacher, conventional secondary school). Likewise, in terms of finances, the headmaster of a CDSS also said students should be involved. ‘Students should be involved in matters of finance. For example, we have the general-purpose fund. Students should also benefit from the general-purpose fund apart from other things they do. I think that could be better enough (headmaster, CDSS).

There was also some suggestions amongst the teachers ($\approx 0.06\%$) mostly from conventional secondary schools were of the view that prefects could be involved in curbing misbehaviour when asked on what matters would the students be involved (see Table 4.2).

‘Maybe they can be involved maybe in trying to curb maybe misbehaviour. Because these prefects are the ones that are directly linked with the students. So they can come up with good ideas whereby maybe some students go out and the like. So these students can bring good ideas whereby they can bring these things to an end because they are the ones who are very close to their fellow students. They may be able to give us good ideas to curb up this kind of misbehaviour’ (HOD, conventional secondary school).

From this teacher’s point of view, prefects as already explained by themselves above, they are the ones who are closer to their fellow students than the teachers. Therefore, consulting prefects on behaviour matters may sometimes reduce the occurrence of bad behaviour in schools. The idea came from a teacher from a boarding secondary school.

Other teachers, particularly from CDSS and conventional secondary schools had the view that students can only be involved on matters that do concern them directly. ‘If we think we should involve students, of course there are some areas where they can be involved maybe like sports, they can be involved because the major part of it will be participated by them. Even in choosing of prefects because students are the ones who know the behaviour of their friends’ (teacher, CDSS). The deputy headmaster of a conventional secondary school also had a similar view that students could be involved in areas that concern them and even planning them.

‘When we involve the students in the management of the school, they should take, like if we are in a boarding school, they must be involved in planning, say for a term, try to develop the school calendar. What is it that we must have in terms of extracurricular activities. They must also know the financial stand of the school because it is from that they will be able to understand we don’t have our menu like this because our financial status is that’ (deputy headmaster, conventional secondary school).

The headmaster of a CDSS also had the view that ‘the students should be consulted on certain issues that affect them. Don’t just dictate to tell them always but we should also listen to their problems and find a way forward by even conducting meetings with them (prefects) because the prefects, they represent the other students’ (headmaster, CDSS).

(b) Prefects’ views

The study also sought views from the prefects on how they should participate in the running of a school. Some of them had the view that they would like to be consulted on school management when they were asked if they would like to while others did not think so as the table below indicates.

Table 4.3 Matters where prefects would like to be consulted

N = 21

Matters to be consulted	Yes	No	Not always
Decision making	1	3	2
Formation of rules	1	4	1
Dining (meals)	5	-	-
Resources for the school	2	-	-
Misbehaviour	2	-	-
Totals	11	7	3

In agreement with the teachers interviewed, the prefects too wished that they would be consulted on matters that affect them directly. When asked on what matters they would like to be consulted, prefects indicated that they would like to be consulted on matters that concern them. ‘If the matter concerns students at this school, it is necessary that they should consult us because we [prefects] are the ones who are closer to the students than the teachers who meet them only in class’ (prefect, CDSS). Likewise, a prefect at a private boarding school had this to say, ‘in changing the diet, we also have to be consulted that we are changing the diet. Even raising the amount of fees to be paid we

have to be consulted before the actual date of raising the fees' (prefect, private secondary school). Another prefect said, 'yes, especially if they concern us we would be happy that they should consult us on how they can do them and how we should learn' (female prefect, CDSS). There seemed to be a general consensus among the prefects interviewed that they have to be consulted more especially on matters that concern them very much. For example, they had the view that they need to be consulted on matters like misbehaviour and diet.

There were also different views on matters in which the students could be involved in school management from the prefects even from the same school. Major differences, however, arose when it came to decision-making or formulation of rules and regulations for the school. The majority of the students ($\approx 50\%$) at least from all categories of secondary schools (private, CDSS and conventional) were of the view that they should not be involved while some students ($\approx 17\%$) were of the view that they should be consulted (see Table 4.3). For example, when they were asked whether they would like to take part in decision-making or they should, together with the teachers, make decisions for the school, some had positive views. 'It is necessary because we are students and anything that can be planned at the administration, it is planned for us. So we can be in a better position to know what is going to happen because we will be very responsible. It is very, very important for us to be consulted' (prefect, conventional secondary school). Others and the majority of them had a negative view. 'There it is difficult that we should make decisions together with the teachers. However, if they have made the decision, it is necessary if they consult us whether we can support it or not' (prefect, CDSS). Others ($\approx 33\%$) of course showed some doubts (see Table 4.3). 'Of course yes but the problem is that we students are always losers. We may make our decisions and present the issue before them [teachers], we are always losers' (prefect, private secondary school).

Similarly, when it came to whether they should take part in the formulation of rules and regulations for the school, mixed reactions were obtained. Some ($\approx 17\%$) had a positive view (see Table 4.3). 'When formulating school rules, they can consult us because not all the rules come from government. Some are made here at school' (prefect, CDSS). Similarly, another prefect added that, 'when we are consulted on school rules and

regulations, we are able to be living according to the rules' (female prefect, private secondary school). But others and the majority of them ($\approx 67\%$) had a negative view (see Table 4.3). 'I don't think it is necessary to consult the students on the formulation of rules because every student will have his/her own mind, what he/she would like things to be. So whenever you are consulting on the rules, each student should contribute to rule formulation, again it can't be modified. Everyone will have his/her ideas. So I don't think it is necessary' (female prefect, private secondary school). Similarly, another prefect said that, 'I don't think it is necessary because the administration is the one which is capable of bringing out the rules and regulations. So I don't think it is necessary to tell the students' (female prefect, conventional secondary school). Other prefects ($\approx 17\%$) showed some doubts about being consulted (see Table 4.3). 'Not always but sometimes if the issues are concerning the students, I think they first have to consult the students and hear their views about the issue' (female prefect, private secondary school). Furthermore, one prefect explained in detail as follows:

'But we are students. So if they want to make rules and they want to consult us, we are going to do which favour us and in terms of schooling we are going to forget it. Here we are of different types of students. So if they ask us we want to make this rule, we are going to reject (most of us). So when it comes to making rules they should make them on their own which are going to help the school not that they should be listening to we students' (prefect, private secondary school).

From this study, students being one of the key players in school management, somehow they have to be consulted despite the negative and sceptical remarks made by them above. Nevertheless, consultation should be on matters that affect them somehow directly. They may not be consulted on matters pertaining to formulation of school rules and regulations of the school since they may not be capable of coming up with good rules and regulations that would help them though some prefects indicated they would like to. Most students at secondary school are not mature enough to make sound decisions. They have to be guided. On that point, one of the prefects had to explain as follows, 'for example, if they say we should not go for prep, we are then going to stay instead of giving punishments. And if they do not do anything we are going to be sleeping since we

know they don't do anything which may help us yet we all know that studying is necessary' (prefect, private secondary school).

As already indicated earlier, the study has found out that prefects' main levels of participation in school management are collaboration and information-sharing. Some empowerment is also there in some schools. For school management to be improved in line with democratic principles, there is need to enhance the participation of students in school management, especially in the form of consultation so that their views are heard. In a study by Whitehead and Clough (2004) it was concluded that if schools are to empower people and communities, decision makers need to listen to students' views and this would allow the possibility that policies can be informed by the pupils, owned by the pupils and supported by the pupils. Similarly, in Osler (2000) study, pupils argued that their involvement in decision-making increased their motivation to achieve and made them feel part of the school. The study also found that pupils' responses indicated that they see school discipline as related to teacher and pupil relationships and to school cultures which permit them to participate. Therefore, consultation of students especially in matters that affect them directly could improve management of secondary schools in line with democracy and in so doing as found in Osler's study, school discipline would likely improve.

4.4.3 How parents should participate in school management

The study also sought views mainly from the teachers on how parents should participate in the management of a school and what should be their role. Most of them were of the view that parents should take part especially in discipline matters ($\approx 63\%$) and also in development projects that are being undertaken at the school (see Table 4.4).

Table 4.4 Teachers views on participation of parents

Area of involvement	Frequency of response N = 32
Discipline matters	15
Development projects	9

When asked what should be the role of parents in school management, the boarding master of a conventional secondary school indicated that they should be somewhere between the students and the teachers:

‘I think the parents should be somewhere between the students and the teachers. It is like when the students are here they are with us. So what I would want here is these parents should be able to come to us and may be discuss the real nature of the students when they are at home. What kinds of things do they like doing? Are they good people, maybe behave badly at home? So they should give us a good picture of a student when they are at home and then we also give a picture of the students while here. So in the end parents and teachers can come up with decisions or policy which will help in the management of the school’ (boarding master, conventional secondary school).

This implies that for students to behave or learn properly, there should be cooperation between the parents and the teachers. They should work hand in hand with each other in disciplining the students.

There was a view held by the teachers interviewed that parents could be involved in the formulation of additional rules and regulations. When teachers were asked what could be the role of parents in school management if they can be involved, approximately 21% of them from almost all the schools held the view that parents could be involved in the formulation of additional rules and regulations.

‘Specifically, they should be involved in making additional rules that will govern their pupils. In terms of making rules and regulations for the school, they should be involved because when the students or Form Is come into the school they have to know the rules. There are rules created by the Ministry and there are rules they are made by the school’ (headmaster, CDSS).

Formulation of rules and regulations together with parents might be vital in school management. Parents actually may be made aware of the rules and regulations for the school. They as such assist in sensitising the students while they are at home about the rules and regulations and the consequences of breaking them. This too might reduce misbehaviour at school.

The majority of the teachers ($\approx 47\%$) from all the schools were of the view that parents should be involved on discipline matters (see Table 4.4).

‘Parents can play a bigger role especially on the misbehaviour of the students. Because the students stay with us here but also when they go home they stay with the parents. Surely they will assist in combating these kinds of misbehaviour which is in the students nowadays. So if we can involve them maybe we can try to sort out this problem of misbehaving’ (HOD, conventional secondary school).

A similar response also came from another conventional secondary school,

‘These parents can be involved in ensuring discipline in the schools by possibly advising their pupils, their wards before they come that they have to possibly come here for learning only. Because some of the parents they normally cause problems because once we report the discipline issue to them they rise against the administration, why did you do to my ward? Yet they are the ones to be part of, to be sympathetic with the problems of their pupil and come here and resolve the issue together’ (HOD, conventional secondary school).

The major role of parents in discipline matters as suggested by these teachers might mainly in areas such as offering advice to their wards as well as counselling as far as discipline is concerned. They are supposed to advise their wards on the importance of school and to behave well while at school. They also have to actually sensitise them on school rules and the consequences of breaking them. This might reduce bad behaviour in schools as suggested by these teachers. However, it might be seen that some parents maybe because of ignorance of the rules and regulations of the school, they tend to rise against the school administration once the rules have been executed on their wards as explained by one teacher above. Therefore, parents have to be made aware of the rules and regulations and should also sensitise the students while at home with them.

In addition to the above roles, some teachers ($\approx 28\%$), mainly from CDSS and conventional secondary schools were of the view that parents can play a major role in development projects at school (see Table 4.4). ‘As a community school, parents have to

be involved mainly in the development activities taking place at the school because like this school most of the buildings were built from the development activities of the parents' (teacher, CDSS). Five schools visited indicated that they involve these parents in development projects at the school as explained by this head teacher, 'we also involve them on the physical development of the school. It is not good to say sometimes raise up fees because we want to build this and that. Parents have to be consulted' (headmaster, private secondary school). Actually, many teachers held this view that parents are participating in development projects in schools more than in discipline matters despite majority of teachers wished that parents could play a greater role in school discipline (see Table 4.4.4). Despite the problem of distance in some schools, parents do participate by contributing finances towards the projects.

In summary, the study has found that parents can play a bigger role in school management. For example, they can play a role in maintaining school discipline, formulation of school rules and regulations and also development projects taking place at a school.

However, it has been found that parents' main level of participation as far as school management is concerned is information-sharing. Their views are rarely heard. It is necessary, however, that parents' views on school management are heard. In that case, school management could be improved in line with democracy. In a study by Cranston (2001), parents noted that by getting involved in the school, they were able to contribute significantly to a shared vision for the school, potentially leading to better educational opportunities for their students. This requires that their views have to be heard and calls for consultation and joint decision-making as ideal levels of participation.

4.5 Chapter summary

The study found that there are some varying degrees to which the stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) participate in secondary school management. Of the three stakeholders, teachers play a greater role followed by the students and the parents have the least role.

Teachers' levels of participation are limited to collaboration, information-sharing and to some extent, empowerment. In most of the schools visited, committee participation was common. Some of the committees included the discipline committee, the sanitation committee, timetable committee and others as set per school. This was common to almost all the schools visited regardless of their categories (CDSS, Private or Conventional). It could be said, therefore, that most schools delegate some of the responsibilities to their members of staff. This is a form of collaboration. The other important finding from the study was that consultation and joint decision-making were not seriously practiced in the schools. As pointed out earlier, teachers complained that in most cases head teachers handle everything without consulting them. From this study, no single head teacher interviewed indicated that they involve staff members in joint decision-making by holding staff meetings to resolve some of the problems that may arise. Teachers also had a lot of challenges that inhibit them in participating in school management. A lot of similarities appeared from the study between the three categories of secondary schools (CDSS, Private or Conventional). For example, there was a concern of leakage of information and lack of support from both the CDSS and the conventional secondary schools. In private secondary schools, however, lack seriousness and non-cooperation were the main challenges.

In the case of students, the study found that their main levels of participation are also collaboration and information-sharing. Not all secondary schools have empowered their prefects. Of the six schools visited, only four have their prefects empowered and mostly were private and conventional ones. In general, there are no consultation and joint decision-making for the students. In all the schools visited, students face two main challenges and these are hostilities from their fellow students and lack of support from their teachers. The two stakeholders (students and teachers), both respond in a similar manner whenever they become frustrated in school management. They both bow out.

On the part of parents, the study found that their participation in school management is very minimal as compared to both the teachers and the students. They participate mainly on the level of information-sharing. But when they hold PTA meetings, some form of

consultation and joint decision-making seem to take place. Collaboration and empowerment take place only when there are some development projects at the school. The study also found that parents face a lot of challenges when it comes to participating in school management. For example, most of them do not know what they can contribute to school management and lack interest on the same. It is again assumed that most of them are busy with other things and live in far away places from the school. The other main challenges are financial constraints membership of PTA. Most PTA organisation run without a financial base and its membership seem not to be mandatory but voluntary. These challenges are common to all the three categories of secondary schools which were visited.

Finally, in order to improve secondary school management in line with democratic principles, the study found that all of the three stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) saw it necessary that they have to be consulted in matters pertaining to school management so that their views are heard. For example, 100% of the teachers interviewed and approximately 17% of the students interviewed were of the view that they have to be consulted in school management. On the same note, teachers also held the view that parents too have to be consulted for example, when it comes to formulation of school rules and regulations and for students, where the matter will affect them directly or where they will do the greater part of an activity themselves. These actions are necessary for the improvement of secondary school management in line with democratic principles.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Chapter introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the management practices in Malawi secondary schools and to find out the levels to which stakeholders participate in the management of secondary schools in a bid to address the problem of discipline. Specifically, the study sought to find out the levels to which teachers, students and parents (PTA executive members) participate in the management of a secondary school, to find out the challenges which teachers, students and parents (PTA) face in participating in school management, to find out how teachers, students and parents (PTA) respond to these challenges and to find out ways through which secondary school management could be improved in line with democratic principles. This chapter is going to present a summary of the findings of the study and some recommendations.

5.1 Conclusion

As regards the levels to which these stakeholders (teachers, prefects and parents) participate in the management of a school, the study found that teachers are the key players in the management of the school. They participate in school management mainly through collaboration whereby they work through committees such as discipline committee, entertainment committee, sports committee, timetable committee and other committees set at an individual school. In addition, they also have assigned roles such as form master/mistress, head of department, boarding master/mistress, sports masters/mistresses and others. It was further found that teachers who happen not to

belong to any of the committee or do not have any assigned roles sometimes do not participate in the running of the school. Usually, they tend to bow out of management duties leaving others who have roles to perform management duties. In terms of empowerment and decision-making, the study found that teachers follow a hierarchy of authority which is at school implying that empowerment and decision-making by teachers is minimal in schools. The study also found that there is less consultation of teachers in secondary schools and that joint decision-making is minimally practiced as no single head teacher had indicated that he/she involves members of staff in resolving problems. However, there was some indication of information-sharing for teachers in the schools.

In case of students (prefects), the study found that they participate in school management and discipline, but to a lesser degree than the teachers. It was found that prefects' participation is mainly through collaboration where their main duty is supervising their fellow students when doing manual work around the school while trying to keep the school surroundings clean. In addition, they have a duty of gathering complaints from their fellow students and channelling them to teachers and then also channelling the feedback from the teachers to their fellow students. They, therefore, described themselves as a 'bridge' linking the teachers and their fellow students. They also have a duty of reporting student offenders to teachers and hence described themselves as 'eyes' of the administration. It was also found that there was more of information-sharing with less of consultation and empowerment. They are not involved in decision-making.

On the other hand, parents were also found to participate in school management and school discipline but to a much lesser degree than the teachers and the students. Parents' participation is mainly through information-sharing and to a lesser degree, consultation and joint decision-making. Parents are mainly made aware of what is happening or is going to happen at a school. During the PTA meetings, they are involved in some consultation and joint decision-making with the teachers by actually assisting in the formulation of additional rules and regulations for the school as well as looking at the general welfare of the school. It was also found that parents play a bigger role in development projects at school.

Secondly, the study sought to find out the challenges teachers, parents and prefects face when participating in school management and school discipline. As for teachers, the study identified non-cooperation among the teachers, lack of support among the teachers, lack of seriousness, fear of leakage of information, fear of loss of respect and time constraints as the main challenges that affect their effective participation in school management. On the other hand, prefects had only two main challenges and these were fear of their fellow students' hostilities and lack of teachers support when carrying out their duties. The challenges parents faced in trying to participate in the management of a school included illiteracy, lack of interest, distance from the school, seemingly voluntary membership of the PTA organisation and financial constraints as regards the running of the PTAs. The challenges as regards parents' participation, except financial constraints, were mainly given by the teachers since it was not easy to get enough parents to take part in the study.

Thirdly, the study investigated how the stakeholders (teachers and students and parents) respond to the challenges they face in trying to participate in the management of a school. The study found that teachers tend to bow out from school management whenever they feel they are having problems with participation. If teachers feel that they are not involved in the management of the school then they leave everything to the head teachers and to those who are usually involved. This is a negative response on the part of the teachers. On the part of the prefects' fear of their fellow students' hostilities, the prefects respond by either reporting the offenders to teachers or sometimes they do not report at all as teachers sometimes do not take action on the offenders. As regards the problem of lack of teachers' support when they are carrying out their duties, prefects respond to this by again bowing out from their duties. This is a negative response from the prefects. Parents cited financial constraints as one of the problems as regards the running of the PTA organisation. They respond to this problem by asking for contributions from their fellow parents.

Lastly, the study sought to find ways through which secondary school management could be improved in line with democratic principles. Specifically, it sought to find out how the

teachers, students and parents (PTA) should participate and what role they should take in school management. On part of the teachers, they suggested a lot of consultation with the teachers by the head teachers. Most teachers (100%) thought that they have to be consulted on matters of school management. This would increase their participation and as a result there would be more commitment to the school.

There was also a suggestion that prefects may be consulted whenever decisions are being made at school in order to hear their views since they represent their fellow students. Both the teachers and the prefects agreed that prefects could be consulted on matters that affect the students directly or where the greater part of it will be done by them. For example, it was suggested that they could be consulted in extracurricular activities, nomination of prefects, sanitation, and the menu amongst others. It was also suggested by some teachers and head teachers that students, especially the prefects, should be involved to some extent in financial matters as well as curbing misbehaviour in school. From this study, it was not entirely agreed that the prefects should be always consulted let alone joint decision-making. Even the prefects themselves had some reservations about being always consulted or involved in joint decision-making with the teachers. In this case, participation of prefects in school management would be limited to collaboration, information-sharing and some form of empowerment. However, consultation of prefects as already pointed out, could be limited to matters where most of the work will be done by the students themselves.

As regards parents, there was a general view from the teachers interviewed that they can also play a greater role in school management. For example, approximately 47% of the teachers were of the view that parents can take part in discipline matters at school. They can actually do this by assisting in the formulation of rules and regulations for a school. Hence, parents can be consulted on school management when it comes to discipline.

In general, all the three stakeholders in question (teachers, students and parents) need to participate in secondary school management for a variety of reasons. For example, from the literature review, studies have shown that teachers' participation increases their morale (Barth 2001), they would strictly enforce policies made for students interests

(Chanman-Tak et al 1997) and also increase their commitment to the school (Gaziel 1992). In order to achieve the above results and others, democratic participation of teachers in school management could be made more effective through consultation and joint decision-making. The results from this study have also shown the teachers' interest on their need to be consulted in school management.

In case of students, studies have also shown that their participation in school management would result in a sense of community within the school, reduced levels of vandalism and an overall improvement in student behaviour and attitude (Mulford and Johns 2004), would also improve behaviour management (Whitehead and Clough 2004 and motivate them to achieve and feel part of the school (Osler 2000). Therefore, it is as well imperative for students to participate in school management. In order to achieve the above results and others, their participation in school management should be encouraged in the schools. This study has also shown the students' desire to be consulted whenever decisions are being made at school especially when matters do affect them.

Finally, parents too need to participate in school management. It has been shown that their participation would result into amongst others, a shared vision for the school and potentially lead to better educational opportunities for their children (Cranston 2001), increase knowledge skills through sharing educational problems of children (Ibetoh 2004) and increased resources to the school (Gershberg and Shatkin 2002). This can be achieved through consultation and working in collaboration with the teachers.

5.2 Recommendations

In order for the secondary schools to be democratic, their management should be democratic. There must be participation by different stakeholders and in the case of this study, teachers, students and parents. The study, therefore, recommends that in the first place there should be an in-service training in democratic school management for the teachers who are the main actors in school management. The in-service training would likely reduce the problems such as lack of seriousness, non-cooperation, lack of support and leakage of information amongst the teachers. The importance of shared responsibility

and shared governance would be made clear to them through the in-service training. There should also be sensitisation through the staff meetings on the importance shared responsibility and shared governance as regards to school management.

In order to minimise the problem of teachers bowing out from management duties as a result of feeling sidelined, the head teachers should be advised to involve their members of staff in the management of their schools. The involvement should put emphasis not only on collaboration and information-sharing, but also through consultation and joint decision-making. Staff meetings should not be avenues of information-sharing only but also consultation and joint decision-making as most teachers interviewed in this study showed that they would like to be consulted on school management. Consultation and joint decision-making would likely reduce problems such as non-cooperation, lack of support and probably, fear of loss of respect as well as the tendency of bowing out from management duties by the teachers. The study, therefore recommends that there should be a lot of consultation and joint decision-making among the teachers.

In order to improve the participation of students (prefects) in school management, the study recommends that schools should improve the working environment for the prefects by making it less hostile especially from their fellow students. One of the problems highlighted by the prefects is that their fellow students are looking down upon some of them since they are younger and hence they are not respected. The study therefore suggests that age of the students should also be considered when electing the prefects. Older students should be considered since they are going to command respect from their fellow students and eventually reduce the problems of hostilities from other students. This could be one way that would make prefects participate effectively in school management for they would have nothing to fear. In addition to that, in order to prevent prefects from bowing out of their duties as a result of lack of teachers' support, the study recommends that teachers should give their prefects a lot of support. Teachers should be sensitised especially through the staff meetings on the importance of supporting the prefects as they carry out their duties.

Finally, in order to enhance the participation of parents in school management, the study recommends that there should be a sensitisation campaign on the importance of PTA as regards to its participation in secondary school management. This would try to reduce problems of parents' participation in school management such as lack of interest, illiteracy, financial constraints and membership of PTA. As this study has found from the views of some of the teachers who were interviewed, these parents can actually play a bigger role in maintaining discipline at school and therefore, their participation has to be encouraged. Their participation should not be limited to development projects only. In addition, the study recommends that PTA meetings should be regularly conducted where views of parents would be heard. In order to enhance their participation through regular PTA meetings, activities or agenda for the meetings should involve different levels of participation. They should not be limited to information-sharing only which was found to be the common one. Further studies have to be conducted in order to find ways through which parents' participation in secondary schools could be improved.

Since the study was conducted mainly in the South East Education Division and only few secondary schools were involved, similar studies have to be conducted in other divisions as well. This would ensure generalisation of the findings and the situation at hand.

In general, the study recommends greater participation of the three stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) in school management as a way of consolidating democratic principles in schools. The levels of participation the study recommends are consultation and joint decision-making whereby views from different stakeholders will be heard before a common decision is taken. This will likely improve democratic principles in schools since democracy has to do with participation (Fielding 1999) and more participation means more democracy and reduces opposition to a particular policy or decision (Brinkerhoff and Crosby 2002).

As a way of improving discipline in schools, especially on the part of the students, the study recommends an increased participation of students in school management. As shown from the literature as well as from this study increased participation of students would likely to lead to amongst others reduced levels of vandalism and an overall

improvement in student behaviour and attitude (Mulford and Johns 2004). Students in this study also showed interest in participating in school management especially in matters that directly affect them.

The participation of parents in school management, especially in secondary schools faces a lot problems and challenges as observed from this study. Further research in this area of participation of parents in secondary school management has to be done so as to suggest ways of improving and increasing their participation. Results from this study greatly support the involvement of parents in certain aspects of school management.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE HEAD TEACHER

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of secondary school management in a democratic Malawi. This study is for academic purposes only and the results will be treated with confidentiality. Hence, no names will be mentioned in process. Thank you for taking part.

PART I: PERSONAL INFORMATION *(Tick what is applicable)*

1. Sex

Male ☐

Female ☐

2. Age

30 years and below ☐ 31 – 35 years ☐ 36 – 40 years ☐

41 – 45 years ☐ more than 45 years ☐

PART II: ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE *(Tick what is applicable)*

3. Highest qualification

Dip. Ed ☐ BED ☐ Other degree with UCE (specify) ☐

MED ☐ Other degree without UCE (specify) ☐

4. How long have you been teaching?

5 years and below ☐ 6 - 10 years ☐ 11 – 15 years ☐

16 – 20 years ☐ more than 20 years ☐

5. How long have you been a head teacher?

5 years and below	☐	6 – 10 years	☐	11 – 15 years	☐
16 – 20 years	☐	more than 20 years	☐		

PART III: SCHOOL CHARACTERISTICS (*Tick what is applicable*)

6. School population

Less than 200	☐	200 – 499	☐
500 – 799	☐	Over 800	☐

7. Teacher population

10 and below	☐	11 – 20	☐
21 – 30	☐	Greater than 30	☐

8. Teacher composition

(a). Number of female staff including the head teacher

10 and below	☐	11 – 20	☐
21 – 30	☐	Greater than 30	☐

(b) Number of male staff including the head teacher

10 and below	☐	10 – 19	☐
20 – 30	☐	Greater than 30	☐

END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE - THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of secondary school management in a democratic Malawi. This study is for academic purposes only and the results will be treated with confidentiality. Hence, no names will be mentioned in process. Thank you for taking part.

PART I: PERSONAL INFORMATION (*Tick what is applicable*)

1. Sex

Male

☐

Female

☐

2. Age

30 years and below

☐

31 – 35 years

☐

36 – 40 years

☐

41 – 45 years

☐

more than 45 years

☐

PART II: ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE (*Tick what is applicable*)

3. Highest qualification

Dip. Ed

☐

BED

☐

Other degree with UCE (specify)

☐

MED

☐

Other degree without UCE (specify)

☐

4. How long have you being teaching?

5 years and below

☐

6 – 10 years

☐

11 – 15 years

☐

16 – 20 years

☐

more than 20 years

☐

5. What position do you hold at this school?

Deputy Head Teacher

☐

Form Teacher

☐

Head of Department

☐

Boarding Master/Mistress

☐

Others (specify)

☐

END OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE - THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE HEAD TEACHER

1. What sort of problems do you experience with people (for example, teachers, students or parents) on school management?
2. How do you go about resolving these problems?
3. Are other people involved in resolving these problems?

If *yes*, which people are they? What is their role in resolving these problems?
How are they involved?

4. If *no*, then what would be the advantage of involving other people to help in resolving these problems?
5. What specific problems do you expect to be there in involving other people in school management?
6. In your opinion, who should be involved in resolving these problems? How should they be involved? What role should they take?
7. In your opinion, what do you think need to be done in order to improve school management in this democratic era?

If we are to involve (parents or students) in school management, what role could they take? How should they be involved?

APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. As a (Boarding master, form teacher or head of department), what is your role in school management?
2. What problems do you experience when discharging your duties in school management?
3. How do you go about resolving these problems?
4. Are other people involved in resolving these problems?

If *yes*, who are they? What is their role in resolving these problems? How are they involved?

If *no*, then what would be the advantage of involving other people to help in resolving these problems?

5. What problems do you think could arise if these people get involved in school management?
6. As teachers, would you like to be consulted on matters pertaining to school management? If *yes*, on what matters would you like to be consulted? What benefit would this have on school management?
7. In your opinion, what do you think need to be done in order to improve the management of a school in this democratic era?
8. If we are to involve (parents or students) in school management, what role could they take? How should they be involved?

APPENDIX V

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS (PREFECTS)

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of secondary school management in a democratic Malawi. This study is for academic purposes only and the results will be treated with confidentiality. Hence, no names will be mentioned in process. Thank you for taking part.

1. What is your role or responsibility as prefects of the school?
2. What problems do you experience when carrying out your duties?
3. How do you go about resolving these problems?
4. As students, would you like to be consulted on matters pertaining to the running of the school?

If *yes*, on what matters do you think it is necessary for you to be consulted?

Why do you think you should be consulted?

If *no*, on what matters do you think you should not be consulted?

Why do you think you should not be consulted on these matters?

5. As students, what do you think needs to be done in order to improve the running of a secondary school? How would you like to participate in school management?

APPENDIX VI

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS (PTA MEMBERS)

The purpose of this study is to investigate the problems of secondary school management in a democratic Malawi. This study is for academic purposes only and the results will be treated with confidentiality. Hence, no names will be mentioned in process. Thank you for taking part.

1. What is your role or responsibility at school as an executive member of PTA?
2. What problems do you experience when carrying out your duties?
3. How do you go about resolving these problems?
4. As parents, would you like to be involved in the running of the school?

If *yes*, why do you think it is necessary to be involved?

If *no*, why do you think it is not necessary for you to get involved?

5. How would you like to participate in the running of the school?
6. As parents, what do you think needs to be done in order to improve the running of a school in this democratic era?

APPENDIX VII

REQUEST LETTER TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
Department of Education Foundation
P.O. Box 280
Zomba.
April 11, 2006.

The Secretary for Education
Ministry of Education
P/B 328
Lilongwe 3

Through: The Head of Foundation Studies
Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Dear Sir,

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION OFFICES

I write to request if I can conduct an academic research in some selected schools in the South-East Education Division (SEED) and education offices including Ministry of Education Headquarters. The research is on **stakeholder participation in secondary school management in a democratic Malawi** and is scheduled for the months of July and August 2006.

I am currently pursuing a Master of Education degree in Policy, Planning and Leadership at the above constituent college of the University of Malawi.

The research is for academic purposes only and any information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Ethically, no names will be required or used unless seriously required and consent from the owner sought.

I will be grateful if my request will be considered.

Yours faithfully,

Baldwin W. Kayira

APPENDIX VIII
REQUEST LETTER TO THE SOUTH EAST EDUCATION
DIVISION

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
Department of Education Foundation
P.O. Box 280
Zomba.
April 11, 2006.

The Education Division Manager (SEED)
P/ Bag 48
Zomba

Through: The Head of Foundation Studies
Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Dear Sir,

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN SOME SCHOOLS IN THE
SOUTH-EASTERN EDUCATION DIVISION

I write to request if I can conduct an academic research in some schools in the South-Eastern Education Division. The research is on **stakeholder participation in secondary school management in a democratic Malawi** and is scheduled for the months of July and August 2006. The participants in this research will be head teachers, teachers, students and also PTA members.

I am currently pursuing a Master of Education degree in Policy, Planning and Leadership at the above constituent college of the University of Malawi.

The research is purely for academic purposes and any information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Ethically, no names will be required or used unless seriously required and consent from the owner sought.

I will be grateful if my request will be considered.

Yours faithfully,

Boldwin W. Kayira

APPENDIX IX
INTRODUCTION LETTER TO SCHOOL FROM EDF
DEPARTMENT

University of Malawi
Chancellor College
Department of Education Foundation
P.O. Box 280
Zomba.
June 19, 2006.

The Director/Headteacher,

Through: The Head of Foundation Studies
Chancellor College
P.O. Box 280
Zomba

Dear Sir,

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I write to request if I can conduct an academic research at your school. The research is on **stakeholder participation in secondary school management in a democratic Malawi** and is scheduled for the months of July and August 2006. The participants in research will be head teachers, teachers, students and parents belonging to PTA executive.

I am a student currently pursuing a Master of Education degree programme in Policy, Planning and Leadership at the above constituent college of the University of Malawi.

The research is purely for academic purposes and any information will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Ethically, no names will be required or used unless seriously required and consent from the owner sought.

I will be grateful if my request will be considered.

Yours faithfully,

Baldwin W. Kayira