

# The Influence of Governance Systems on Students Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Karatu District, Tanzania

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**Abstract:** *The study sought to determine the influence of governance systems on students' performance in public secondary schools in Karatu District, Tanzania. The study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data. The respondents comprised of teachers, members of school boards and parents. Data was analyzed using descriptive and correlation analysis tools. The study revealed a strong positive correlation of  $r(97) = 0.760$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) between participatory leadership in decision making and academic performance. Further, results show a strong positive relationship between accountability and academic performance ( $r(97) = 0.714$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and significant but moderate positive correlation between transparency and academic performance  $r(97) = 0.512$ ;  $p < 0.01$ . The results imply that participatory governance, accountability, and transparency contribute significantly to student's academic performance. Moreover, the result indicates a strong relationship between governance and academic performance and the conclusion is that governance contributes positively towards academic performance of students. The study recommends that MoEVT and school administrators should allocate enough finances for training teachers, creates awareness to education stakeholders on the link between governance and academic performance; school board and administrators should nurture a good working relationship with the teaching staff as well to find out that, ways to communicating school motto, mission and vision to teachers, students and other stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** Participatory decision making, accountability, transparency, student academic performance.

## 1. Background

Educators, trainers, and researchers have long been interested in exploring variables contributing effectively for quality of performance of learners in secondary schools. They expressed concern over factors that influence student performance in secondary schools. Among most outstanding factor has to do with the organizational management of schools. It has been identified that effective governance on school performance has remarkable contributions on secondary schools' students' academic performance.

In Tanzania, public discussions frequently focus on educational standards. The public's unhappiness becomes more prominent following the release of o-level National Examination results of 2012, 2013 and 2014 in which more than a half of students in government schools who sat for the national examination failed while students in private schools performed well. Student outcomes in government schools do not match the government and parents' investment. The stakeholders are concerned about why the system is turning out graduates with poor results. It is argued that the place of effective governance on school performance has remarkable contributions on secondary schools students' academic achievements (Harry, 2007). In the same way Republic of Kenya (2011) contends that poor governance in secondary schools has led to a lot of ineffectiveness in school management especially in public schools. In Tanzania, lack of appropriate governance in schools has been mentioned as one of the factors which contribute to poor performance.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT 2011) contends that limited school management skills of some Heads of schools and inappropriately use of funds which is not according to government guidelines and procurement processes due to lack of accountability,

transparency and the failure to adhere to quality assurance mechanisms; affects daily running and academic performance of schools. In order to address students' poor performance in secondary schools, MoEVT highlighted the need to improve management efficiency and good governance at school level, focusing mainly on improved accountability of all actors in accordance with the public service framework; implementation of open performance review and appraisal system (OPRAS) at all levels; enhancement greater transparency and accountability which speed up the disbursement process and encourage schools to be more efficient and careful in their spending.

Participatory governance which involves collective participation of all key stakeholders in school management, accountability and transparency in school governance lays a solid foundation for the long-term development of the school as it is the cornerstone of quality education ensures that the use of public funds is appropriate and that it is in the best interest of students and the community; enhances the efficiency, effectiveness and overall performance of administrative management, which are crucial to the continuous development of the school; and boosts the confidence of parents and the public in the school. This is in line with Sethy (2006) who argues that broader civil society is a critical partner in development issues, especially in the social sectors where parents and community groups have a tradition of mobilizing financial and human resources to support education activities.

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of governance systems on students' performance in public secondary schools in Karatu District, Tanzania. Specifically, the study sought to determine the influence of participatory

decision making, the role of accountability and the contribution of transparency on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Karatu District, Tanzania.

### 3. Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey design covering a total population of 676 secondary school teachers, Head Masters and members of school boards in Karatu district. The study used a questionnaire to collect data. Before administration of the research instrument, it was pilot-tested and subjected to reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha which resulted in a coefficient of 0.719 which was above the minimum recommended of 0.7. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data. Data analysis involved the use of both descriptive and correlation analysis.

### 4. Results and Analysis

#### Response Rate

Response of 85.8% was obtained which was adequate for data analysis and results reporting. The presence of the researcher and research assistant during the time of filling the questionnaires contributed to the high response.

#### The Influence of Participatory Decision Making and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools.

Results in Table 1 show that 82.4% of respondents strongly agreed that participatory decision making contributes to the improvement of academic performance in secondary school while 14.4% agreed with the statement.

The findings indicates that participatory decision making system influence students' performance as the teachers, students and other stakeholders provide a number of inputs that leads to academic improvement. The involvement of teachers is very significant as they are the ones who are conduct everyday teaching and instructing students in the classroom and who are responsible for their learning directly. The findings are in line with Smylie and Tuermer, (1992) who argues that teachers' participation in decision making would encourage them to understand how school academic and extra-curriculum activities were planned and designed. However, Johnson & Boles (1994) contend that teacher participation in decision making enables them to present crucial information closest to the sources of problems of schooling, improving the quality of decisions effectively. Furthermore, results observed through correlation analysis ( $r(97) = 0.760$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) show that there is a strong positive correlation of 0.760 between participatory governance in decision making and academic performance whereby the relationship is significant because  $p$  value is less than the level of significance of 0.01.

**Table 1:** Participatory Decision Making Improves Academic Performance (Teachers)

Teachers	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	80	82.5
Agree	14	14.4
Somehow Agree	2	2
Disagree	1	1.1
Total	97	100

The findings in Table 2 are in line also with finding from school board members who strongly agreed (81.6%) that participatory decision making is helpful in school governance whereas 15.4% agreed also with the statement and 3% indicated that participatory decision is somehow helpful in school governance.

**Table 1:** Participatory Decision Making Improves Academic Performance (Board Members)

Board Members		
Strongly Agree	58	81.6
Agree	11	15.4
Somehow Agree	2	3
Total	71	100

To establish the relationship between participatory leadership and academic performance, the study used Pearson correlation coefficient because the nature of data obtained was parametric and fell within the limit of interval and ratio scale. Results in Table 3 below show correlation between participatory decision making and academic performance. The result observed was:  $r(97) = 0.760$ ;  $p < 0.01$ . The findings indicate that, there is a strong correlation of 0.760 between participatory governance in decision making and academic performance. The relationship is significant because  $p$  value is less than the level of significance of 0.01.

**Table 3:** Correlation Analysis between Participatory Leadership and Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

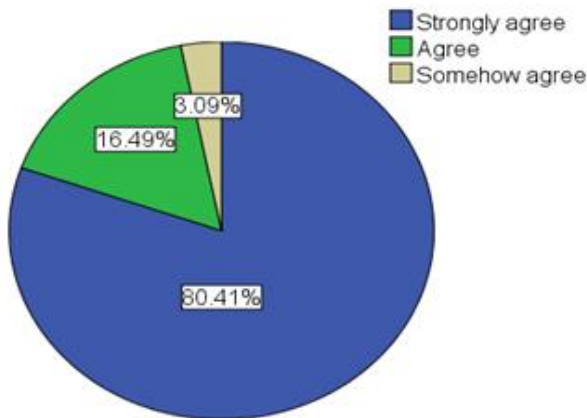
		Participatory Decision Making	Academic Performance
Participatory Decision Making	Pearson Correlation	1	.760**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.005
	N	97	97
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.760**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.005	
	N	97	97

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

#### Role of Accountability in Students' Academic Performance

The study sought to establish the role of accountability on students' academic performance in Karatu District. The findings (Figure 1) indicate that 80.4% of teacher respondents strongly agreed that accountability in management of school had an influence on students' performance whereas 16.49% of respondents agreed to the statement; and 3.09% somehow agreed with the statement. The findings indicates that because of accountability of stakeholders such as the government, parents, school boards and administrators on various matters has enabled the establishment of a number of programs that have been implemented including the construction of classrooms, laboratories for science subjects and students desks in each school in Tanzania including Karatu District. Results corroborate with Hanushek and Raymond (2004) as well as Moreover, Figlio and Loeb (2011) who contend that school accountability systems have the potential benefits of aligning effort with stakeholders' goals and providing information for improvement and district level

accountability enables districts with many schools to have benefit of allowing the reallocation of resources across schools in response to accountability incentives. Achievement growth as measured by the National Assessment of Educational progress shows that accountability systems introduced during the 1990s had a clear positive impact on student achievement.



**Figure 1:** Accountability in management of school and academic performance of secondary school students

The study sought to find out if there is a correlation between accountability and students academic performance. The results in table 3 below indicates a strong correlation at  $r(97) = 0.714$ ;  $p < 0.01$ . It means that accountability has a significant contribution towards academic performance.

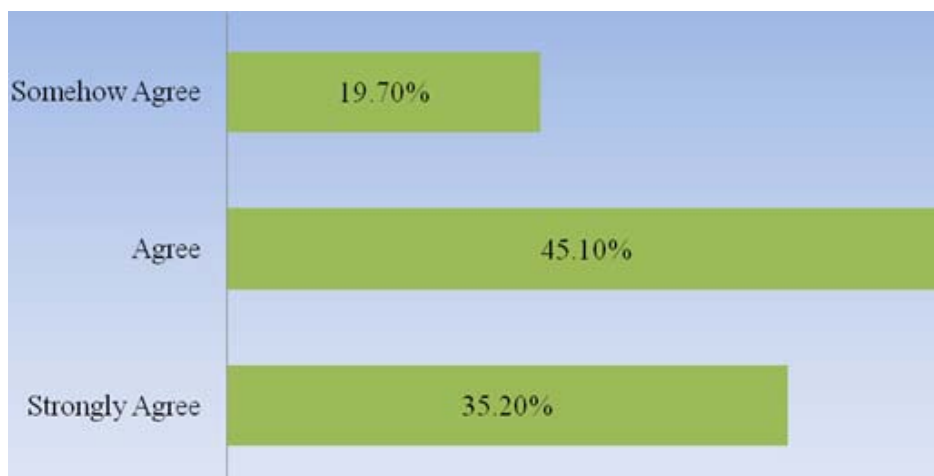
**Table 3:** Correlation between Accountability and Students Academic Performance

		Accountability	Academic Performance
Accountability	Pearson Correlation	1	.714**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.014
	N	97	97
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.714**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.014	
	N	97	97

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

### Contribution of Transparency on Students' Academic Performance in Secondary Schools

The research was also interested in determining how transparency in procurement process at schools motivates teachers, parents and other stakeholders. The findings in Figure 2 show that 45.1% of respondents agreed with the statement that with the existence of transparency in procurement process at their schools level motivates stakeholders which also brings trust towards school management and eventually school performance while 35.2% respondents strongly agreed with the statement and 19.70% indicated that they somehow agreed with impact of the practice of transparency in procurement process towards motivation of stakeholders.



**Figure 2:** Transparency in Procurement in Education Sector Motivates Stakeholders

### Relationship between Transparency and Academic Performance

The study intended also to determine if there is a correlation between transparency and academic performance. The study established a moderate but positive positive correlation between transparency and academic performance  $r(97) = 0.512$ ;  $p < 0.01$ .

**Table 4:** Correlations between Transparency and Academic Performance

		Transparency	Academic Performance
Transparency	Pearson Correlation	1	.512**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.001
	N	97	97
Academic	Pearson Correlation	.512**	1

Performance	Sig. (1-tailed)	.001	
	N	97	97

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

### 5. Conclusions

A number of conclusions can be drawn from this study. A strong positive relationship was established between participatory decision making and the academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Tanzania. Further, the study established a moderate and positive correlation between transparency and academic performance and the test between accountability and academic performance had a strong positive correlation. Generally, basing on the study findings, all the governance systems covered in the study

had positive influence on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Tanzania.

## 6. Recommendations

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

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) should allocate funds for training teachers with diploma in order to increase level of accountability, transparency and participation at school level. This would help in creating more awareness to teachers, parents, students and the society as a whole to sensitize the importance of good governance in the long run of school institutions.

The school board of management should nurture good working relationships with the teaching staff and students in order to create a conducive working environment for the teachers for this will enable them to have a high spirit of working. The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) should introduce and maintain attributes such as remunerations, environment and strategic good school governance since they seemed to be the strong motivation that attracted may attract teachers to work hard towards student's academic performance. School boards should also find ways and means of communicating education school motto, mission and vision, objectives, goals and strategies to their teachers, students and other stakeholders in order to achieve the organizational goals.

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