Ethiopian Journal of Education Studies
https://journals.hu.edu.et/hu-journals/index.php/ejes/

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

Contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as reforms) for school effectiveness in secondary schools of the Technology Village Woreda as of Hawassa University

Adinew Ontoro 1 (PhD) (Assistant Professor) and Samuel Assefa 2 (PhD) (Associate Professor)

Hawassa University College Of Education Department Of Educational Planning And Management

1. Email address: adinewontoro@yahoo.com

2. Email address: samuelassefa2014@gmail.com

Abstract

The main objective of this study was to investigate the contributions of educational reforms that embrace instructional leadership and school improvement program for school effectiveness in Secondary Schools of the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University. To attain this objective a descriptive survey method was employed for its relatively low cost and its suitability to show situations as they currently exist. It was conducted in a sample of six secondary schools with grades 9 to 12 that were selected with the help of a simple random sampling technique. The subjects of the study were 153 teachers, 23 school leaders, 12 Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) members, 12 students' council members, and six school improvement programs (SIP) coordinators from the sample schools of the study area. Questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis were employed to collect the data. Both inferential as well as descriptive statistics were employed to analyze the quantitative data. Qualitative data were being transcribed, coded, and analyzed alongside with the corresponding quantitative data. It was revealed that schools were considered very strong in setting clear goals and in developing a clear vision and defining mission and values. The findings of the study also shown the very positive perception awarded towards the instructional leadership and school improvement program by the major stakeholders of school (principals, vice-principals, teachers, supervisors, SIP coordinators, PTSA members, and learners). Further, the findings of the study revealed that the contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program in enhancing school effectiveness have been duly acknowledged by the major stakeholders of the schools. The commonly agreed barriers that negatively affect executing instructional leadership and implementing SIP in the schools were lack of adequate capacity building (lack of in-depth training) programs for the secondary school's major stakeholders; and lack of strong commitment on the part of school leaders to be engaged in tasks related to teaching and learning to which any reform effort of school focuses. Finally, creating opportunities for continuous professional development and capacity-building programs were recommended for the secondary school's major stakeholders on applying school reforms.

Keywords: Educational Reforms, Instructional Leadership, School Improvement Program School Effectiveness, Secondary Schools, Teachers, Principals.

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study was to investigate the contributions of educational reforms that mainly focus on instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential educational/school reforms for school effectiveness) in Secondary Schools of the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University. Attaining this aim requires conceptualizing how instructional leadership and school improvement program have been managed in secondary schools; and scrutinizing the extent to which secondary schools are applying instructional leadership and implementing school improvement program underway in those schools. Having this in mind the researcher has made endeavors to assess the general background of the study as follows.

I. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Education/learning has become a key topic, not only for professionals and students in the areas of psychology and education, but also in political and economic contexts (Santrock, 2008: 226). One reason for this is that the world has become highly globalized and competitive resulting in people equating education with jobs and wealth (Illeris, 2009: 1). Expectations are being placed on the education systems to add the new needed knowledge and to develop the necessary skills, attitudes and aptitudes that enhance collaboration, teamwork, problem solving and creativity. To realize this objective, continuous reform/change and innovation in the education system in general and in the way of managing change and reforms in educational institutions are essential.

Since long time ago policy makers of education have constantly and relentlessly put forth effort globally to enhance students' academic achievement through the help of different educational reforms/initiatives which have been implemented at the grass root level (that is at school level) of the education system (Day, Gu& Sammons, 2016: 222). Education reform comprises any planned changes in the way a school or school system functions, from teaching methodologies to administrative processes. The purpose of educational reforms is to transform school structures with the aim of raising the quality of education in a country. Educational reforms deserve a holistic examination of their reasons, objectives, application and results generated, by those within the school systems where they are implemented.

Ever since the beginning of the fourth quarter of the twentieth century, school effectiveness has been associated with school leaders and/or principal's leadership skills. Consequently, a new line of thinking with respect to the schools' leadership/management, which focuses on the teaching and learning process of schools, called instructional leadership has come into existence/reality as an important educational reform notion so as to enhance success of schools (Sisman, 2016: 1762). Education researcher DeBevoise (1984), as cited in Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) (2015: 3), defined instructional leadership as tasks and activities which are said to be grouped within the roles and responsibilities of school principals who have the mandate to either

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

perform/execute the tasks by themselves or delegate to others to advance students learning and development.

Latest researches on the effect of instructional leadership, which is designated by different scholars as learner-centered leadership and/or pedagogical leadership, as noted by LeFvre and Robinson (2015) citing (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; and Robinson, 2011), have contributed a lot by being the driving force that induces concerned bodies to give significant weight for instructional leadership as an important notion of managing educational institutions and/or schools. This shows the due emphasis given to instructional leadership so as to enhance quality of education and improve academic achievement of students. That is, school effectiveness is critically dependent on the management skills of stakeholders, essentially of school leaders' and/or principals' skills which include instructional leadership (Joshi and Verspoor, 2013: XXX).

School effectiveness, besides instructional leadership, calls for other additional initiatives/reforms of school. In view of that, General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP) (MOE, 2008: 2 - 3) has been introduced and been in the process of implementation in all the primary and secondary schools of Ethiopia. GEQIP has different components. Among the GEQIP constituents, School Improvement Program (SIP) has been given sound considerations and priority. An important priority was and still is, as clearly indicated in GTP I (MOFED, 2010: 86), to improve and ensure the quality and efficiency of education at all levels. To realize this priority, working for the successful implementation of School Improvement Program (SIP), which is the most important and more or less all-encompassing wing of the General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP), has been considered as a major strategy and tool as well.

Currently, Ethiopia is driven by its vision to become a middle-income country by 2025 (MOE, 2015: 11). The most important input so as to attain this ambitious economic goal is civilized and educated human power of the nation. The secondary education reforms required to sustain this economic objective need to be carefully prepared, based on broad consultations with all stakeholders. This is why, as Joshi and Verspoor (2013: 41) indicate, the rationale behind expansion of secondary level education is primarily because of the expectation that secondary education significantly plays high role in materializing the forth effort of the country to attain the goal of alleviating poverty and enhancing economic development.

Secondary education is considered as a foundation for providing middle and high level skilled manpower as this level feeds students to technical and vocational institutions as well as to higher education program (SNNPRSEB [South Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State Education Bureau], 2016: 76). Furthermore, the increasing need for secondary education in today's world, as vividly indicated by Ministry of Education (MOE, 2018: 22), is justified by the fact that (i) secondary level education is considered as the basic necessity of human being and it is no longer a luxury asset. Secondary level education is believed to be complementary to primary level education because secondary education level is

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

the stage where the competence and skills necessary for the adoption of new production methods and technologies necessary to compete in a global economy is attained; (ii) when the opportunities for secondary education are limited, it is likely to reduce demand for primary education; and (iii) the appeal of the community for the successful expansion of secondary education so as to accommodate all the pupils/learners who complete primary level education.

This research is designed with the intention to conduct a type of study/research that made its focus on issues which are related to the instructional leadership and school improvement program in secondary schools as essential school reforms for school effectiveness. Consequently, how instructional leadership and school improvement program have been managed, and the contribution of school improvement program and instructional leadership for school effectiveness is an area which needs to be scrutinized constantly. Instructional leadership and school improvement program (SIP), the key concepts that this study regards as the focal-point of investigation, need to be considered as the earnestly introduced educational/school reform efforts in the Ethiopian education system to bring about school effectiveness. Hence, such state of affairs may demand frequent and further in-depth critical investigation.

Rationale for the Study

The two key concepts (Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program) of this study are intensely focused educational reform areas in schools both in the Ethiopian education system as a country and in the Sidama Region (the Region where this study has been undertaken) education system as one of the States of the country Ethiopia. Their main objectives are improving quality of education, and enhancing students' academic achievement. That is, the purpose of the school improvement program and the assumption behind instructional leadership is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the school and ensure continuous progress of students learning. One complements as well as supplements the other.

Obviously, reforms may bring about role changes and significant expansion of duties and responsibilities on the part of the major stakeholders of schools (principals, vice principals, department heads, teachers, PTSA members, students, and supervisors). So, in the vortex of such reforms that may add considerable values as far as the holistic growth and development of the education system is concerned, describing how instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school effectiveness inputs) have been managed in secondary schools; scrutinizing the contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program in improving school effectiveness; examining as to what constitutes the instructional leadership role of secondary school principals; and exploring how instructional leadership dimensions interrelated with the school improvement program domains need to be the common agenda of the educational stakeholders and collaborators.

Moreover, as an attempt to realize the effectiveness of schools, analyzing expectations and understanding of secondary school's major stakeholders (principals,

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

department heads, supervisors, PTSA members, teachers, and students) about instructional leadership and school improvement program need to become the area under discussion and the topic that require frequent consideration and critical inquiry on the part of educators like the researcher of this study who have been serving the education system of the country (Ethiopia) at different tiers of the education for a number of years. All the experiences have made the researchers realize the importance of school leadership in general and instructional leadership in particular and understand the significance of school improvement program/SIP in attaining the expected standard quality of education and ultimately in improving the academic achievement of learners in the schools. Therefore, this is the main rationale that motivates the researchers of this study to come up with an idea to undertake research on the topic entitled as "Contributions of Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program (as Reforms) for School Effectiveness in Secondary Schools of the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University".

Statement of the Problem

Among the core educational problems that have been raised by different Ethiopian governments in the past and still today are the problems pertaining to quality, access, equity, and relevance of education which are intricately associated/connected with school effectiveness and students' academic performance. Quality, access, equity, relevance of curriculum, and efficiency has always been the preoccupations of policy makers and researchers in the field of education. These are core educational issues that require due consideration while investigating or researching any problem associated with the education and its system of a certain country. That is why Amare (2000: 32) has categorized the major educational issues into classes as: quality, equity, access, efficiency, and relevance of the curriculum. Thus, these factors have defined the framework of educational research and policy making (Amare and Temechegn, 2002: 101). The delivery of quality education has always been at the top of educational agenda, although the way to make it work has, however, been rather difficult to achieve (Amare and Temechegn, 2002: 104).

In Ethiopia since the change of government in 1991, a number of efforts have been made to reform the inherited education system which was characterized by irrelevance, poor quality and unemployable graduates. Moreover, in addition to absence of clearly articulated policy, the pre-1991 education system suffered from problems of access, equity, and quality (MOE, 2018: 22).

An inquiry into the reasons for the low academic achievement of learners in Grades at which regional as well as national exams (grade 8, and grades 10 and 12 respectively) were administered indicated the main causes behind low students' academic achievement as inadequacy of the necessary inputs, problems related to learners and teachers work ethics / work discipline, low morale, problems associated with putting the educational policies/reforms into practice (that is, lack of effectiveness, as well as inefficiency with respect to the implementation of the education policies/reforms such as instructional leadership and school improvement program), lack of adequate participation

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

on the part of parents, and lack of adequate learner support system (Adinew and Dawit, 2018: 32). These problems may possibly have both direct as well as indirect association with school leadership. Thus, in minimizing the prevalence of such problems, which negatively affects the quality of education in general as well as the academic achievement of the learners in particular, school leaders and/or principals are expected as to shoulder a huge responsibility that may encourage applying instructional leadership and implementing school improvement program, as essential educational reforms for school effectiveness.

Therefore, to alleviate these just above mentioned instructional as well as educational problems at schools, this study made an attempt to assess the contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program, as essential educational reforms for school effectiveness. School Improvement Program (SIP) initially focuses on evaluating the currently existing situations of schools. This is so because evaluating the currently existing situations of the school focuses not only on attempting to recognize its strengths so as to use them as a springboard initially while putting forth effort to the direction that the school aspires to get-up-and-go as well as attain, and not only on trying to find out the opportunities that need to be exploited exhaustively for the wellbeing of the school, but also centers its assessment primarily on identifying weaknesses and threats/challenges/problems of schools. Evaluating the currently existing situations of schools could also be considered as a prerequisite while designing/preparing SIP plan so as to help schools set appealing and rational/reasonable targets that could be achieved within the overarching goal of SIP which aims at improving quality of education and enhancing students' academic achievement in the schools.

After the inception of the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia in 1994, the Ethiopian government has taken different measures to alleviate those educational problems. The efforts being made to strengthen the professional skills of school principals and to implement and assess the outcome/effect of the school improvement program which has been in place since 1999 E.C. (MOE, 2010: 1) is also part of the endeavor. In spite of the efforts made, the question of quality education is still the major concern of the country today. Surely, educational quality needs to be the prime focus of educational managers or instructional leaders because schools are places where young generations lay foundations that enable them to be ready to shoulder the responsibilities that would be given to them by tomorrow. Particularly, serious assignment is given to secondary schools as they prepare youngsters for university education as well as partly for the world of work (especially as a workforce to a country/Ethiopia which aspires to attain the vision of middle income economy).

The national as well as the regional gross enrollment rate (GER) for all secondary grades (9 - 12) was considered as very low (MOE, 2017: 52). This indicates that both at national and regional levels there are many children who are not completing primary education and proceeding to secondary education. There are of course wide regional variations. However, the gross enrollment rate (GER) for grades

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

9-10 has more than doubled since 2000. Yet key challenges remain in secondary education: (1) a low primary education completion rate constraints the growth of secondary enrollments; (2) access to secondary education remains inequitable; and (3) levels of student learning are disappointing (Joshi, &Verspoor, 2013: XII). As a result, since GTP II period, all efforts have been exerted to increase expansion of secondary schools and quality of its education (NPC, 2016: 188).

School improvement program implementation has been critically dependent on the school's management skills of the major stakeholders particularly of school leaders and/or principals. The starting point here, as indicated by Joshi and Verspoor (2013: XXX), must be a sustained effort to enhance the effectiveness of school leaders. The same authorities went on saying that skills of these leaders include primarily instructional leadership, and other skills such as financial and human resources management, forging effective working relationship with the line staff of educational agencies, and winning the confidence of parents and School Management Committees. Therefore, it is the right point in time so as to examine the impacts/contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program, as essential educational/school reform inputs, for school effectiveness.

As it is clearly indicated in the GTP II document, the government of Ethiopia continues to be committed to put all the necessary efforts on increasing expansion of secondary schools (NPC, 2016: 188). Hence, comprehensive strategies need to be established to enhance the functionality of the school improvement program and application of instructional leadership in secondary schools. Besides, efforts need to be exerted to improve school leaders' and/or principals' skills in terms of applying instructional leadership and implementing SIP. Therefore, this is the main reason that motivates/triggers me to come up with an idea to conduct research on the topic "Contributions of Educational Reforms that contain Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program for School Effectiveness in Secondary Schools of the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University".

Eventually, on the basis of the above problem description of the study, this research made its focus on answering the following basic research questions.

Research Questions

1. How Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program (SIP) are currently managed in secondary schools of the Technology Village Woredas?
2. What are the contributions of instructional leadership and SIP to improving school effectiveness in these schools?
3. How do major school stakeholders perceive the implementation of SIP and impact of instructional leadership?
4. To what extent do school principals perform core instructional leadership functions?
5. To what extent is the School Improvement Program (SIP) being implemented in the schools?
6. What possible strategies can be implemented to enhance the implementation of SIP and

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

instructional leadership in secondary schools?

Objectives of the Study

The overarching aim of this study was to explore contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential educational/school reforms for school effectiveness) in Secondary Schools of the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University. To this end, the study made its focus on examining how instructional leadership and school improvement program have been managed in secondary schools, and scrutinizing the contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program in improving school effectiveness.

Specifically, the objectives of this study are to:-

1. Assess how school improvement program and instructional leadership have been managed in secondary schools.
2. Analyze the contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program in enhancing school effectiveness?
3. Find-out the perceptions of secondary school's major stakeholders towards instructional leadership and school improvement program.
4. Examine the extent that principals of secondary school perform instructional leadership roles in their respective schools.
5. Assess the magnitude that secondary schools implement school improvement program.
6. Identify strategies to enhance the implementation of SIP and instructional leadership in secondary schools.

Significance of the Research

The significance of a study/research has been described as a substantial contribution of something that is valuable and will have an effect in offering a non-trivial to a very important breakthrough at the empirical, conceptual, theoretical, or policy level; is useful and will have an impact; causes those inside and possibly those outside or the community to see things differently; influences the discourse, research, and teaching; has implications for and advances in the field, the discipline, other disciplines, or society (Lovitts and Wert, 2009: 5). Moreover, the significance and contribution of an inquiry/investigation displays an association with the importance of conducting research as anticipated by Creswell (2012: 3 - 6) that: research adds to knowledge; research improves practice; and research helps to improve policy (i.e. research informs policy debates).

Concerning how research adds to our knowledge, educational authorities or educators should strive for continual improvement and effectiveness of educational institutions/organizations and/or schools. This requires addressing educational problems or issues and searching for potential solutions. Adding to knowledge means that educators undertake research to contribute to existing information about issues. A research report might provide a study that has not been conducted and thereby fill a void in existing knowledge. It can also provide additional results to

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

confirm or disconfirm results of prior studies. It can help add to the literature about practices that work or advance better practices that educators might try in their educational setting. It can provide information about people and places that have not been previously studied (Creswell, 2012: 4). Accordingly, this study may contribute in adding the knowledge base and understanding of the major stakeholders of secondary schools concerning the topic under investigation. Thus, in this regard, this study may possibly have a moderate contribution.

With regards to improving practice, research is also considered very essential because it suggests improvements for practice. From reading research studies, educators can learn about new practices that have been tried in other settings or situations. Besides, at a broader level, research helps the practicing educator build connections with other educators who are trying out similar ideas in different locations (Creswell, 2012: 4 - 6). Consequently, this research/study may perhaps help in improving application of instructional leadership and implementation of school improvement program, as essential educational/school reforms that add positive values for the quality of education and learning in the schools, so as to attain school effectiveness.

In terms of improving policy, when policy makers read research on different issues in general and on educational matters in particular, they are informed about current debates and stances taken by other public officials. To be useful, research needs to have clear results, be summarized in a concise fashion, and include data-based evidence (Creswell, 2012: 6). In such aspect, this study may contribute positively in reviewing and appraising how instructional leadership and school improvement program (SIP), as reforms in the schools, be managed and enhanced in order to achieve its anticipated objectives.

Moreover, this study may give insight into the problem and serve as a reference for those educators and other professionals who may intend to carryout research in similar and related issues of education in other Regions as well as at different educational tiers in the Ethiopian education system. By making some suggestions, the study may also contribute in directing /showing the ways on how to redress the educational problems that may play hindrance role in terms of both realizing quality of education and enhancing students' academic achievement which are the ultimate goals behind applying instructional leadership and implementing school improvement program in secondary schools.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Subject

The subjects of this research were secondary schools' leaders (i.e., principals, supervisors, vice principals), teachers (include department heads or curriculum committee members of each department and stream), parent-teachers-students association (PSTA) members, students' council members, and school improvement program (SIP) coordinators.

Study Design

The study design is the overall plan of the research that makes the research process easier; it constructs the steps in the research process, from the beginning to the end which the researchers follow to accomplish

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

their aim, very clear; and it articulates the different aspects of the study as its main framework (Murnane& Willett, 2011: 48; Scott, 2012: 107; Mitchell and Jolley, 2010: 9; and Jones, Torres and Arminio, 2006: 37). Study/research design involves identifying the problem, setting the questions to be answered, designing the approaches and the data collection tools and executing the research (Bickman and Rog, 2009: 5). In brief, research design must, at least, contain a clear statement of the research problem; procedures and techniques to be used for gathering information; the population to be studied; and methods to be used in processing and analyzing data. So, this study employs descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approach.

The population for this study comprises secondary schools with grades 9 to 12 in the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University. Most of the Technology Village Woredas of Hawassa University are within the Sidama National Regional State. According to data from Sidama National Region Education Bureau (SNREB) (2014 E. C.), there are 97 public secondary schools with grades 9 to 12 within the whole region. Out of these secondary schools, 6 secondary schools were selected as sample schools by using simple random sampling technique. They were Alamura Secondary School, Chuko Secondary School, Kebado Secondary School, Leku Secondary School, Tabor Secondary School, and Yirgalem Secondary School. The subjects of the study (i.e., secondary schools' principals, supervisors, vice principals, teachers, parent-teachers-students association (PSTA) members, students' council members, and school improvement program (SIP) coordinators) were also been selected from the sample secondary schools by using simple random sampling, comprehensive sampling, and purposive sampling techniques as depicted in the following table (Table 1) below.

Concerning sample size, samples should be as large as a researcher can obtain with a reasonable expenditure of time, energy, human power and money. As vividly indicated by Fraenkel and Wallen (2009: 106), a recommended minimum number of subjects are 100 for a descriptive study, 50 for a correlational study, and 30 in each group for experimental and causal comparative studies. As a result, in this study, as being a descriptive survey study, 153 teachers, 5 principals, 12 vice principals, 6 cluster supervisors, 6 SIP coordinators, 12 PTSA members, and 12 student council members that sum summed 206 were considered to be participants of the study as indicated in the Table 1 below.

Ethiopian Journal of Education Studies
https://journals.hu.edu.et/hu-journals/index.php/ejes/
ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

Table 1: Subjects of the Study, Sample Secondary Schools & Corresponding Sample Size, Sampling Techniques, and Data Gathering Tools Used

Subjects of the Study	List of Sample Secondary Schools & Corresponding Sample Size							Sampling Techniques Employed	Data Gathering Tools Used
	Alamura	Chuko	Kebado	Leku	Tabor	Yirgalem	Total		
Teachers	26	26	26	25	25	25	153	Simple Random	Questionnaire
Principals	1	1	-	1	1	1	5	Comprehensive	Questionnaire & Interview
Vice Principals	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	Comprehensive	Questionnaire & Interview
Supervisors	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	Comprehensive	Questionnaire & Interview
SIP Coordinators	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	Comprehensive	Focus Group Discussions
PTSA Members	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	purposive	Focus Group Discussions
Student Council Members	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	purposive	Focus Group Discussions
sample size in each school	35	35	34	34	34	34	206		

Study Methodology

The methodology section of a research describes how the study was conducted and the methods used to

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

collect and analyze the data (Dejene, 2013: 46). The research methodology includes a specific design to assist the collection of the data needed to answer the research questions raised in the study. The choice of a research design for the study has been based on the nature of the problem under study as well as purpose of the study (Seid & Serawit, 2018: 2). Mainly, the problem under focus in this study pertains to examining how educational reforms that include school improvement program and instructional leadership have been managed in secondary schools. To attain this objective, a descriptive survey method was employed. The method is also chosen for its relatively low cost and its suitability to show situations as they currently exist. That means the study determines and describes the way things are (Gay, 2006: 275). Similarly, Seid & Serawit (2018: 2), citing Best & Kahan (2004), noted that descriptive research design helps to describe and interpret the current condition (practices, existing challenges & opportunities). That is why, the major purpose of descriptive research, as vividly indicated by Kothari (2004: 2), is description of the state of affairs as it exists at present.

This study also contains both quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the research. In this respect, the approach employed by this study involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches (that is, mixed method). The intention of using the two approaches in combination comes out of a pragmatic concern for making-up the limitation of one approach by the strength of the other (Belay and Abdinasir, 2015: 97). Moreover, a basic rationale for this design is that one data collection form supplies strengths to offset the weaknesses of the other form, and that a more complete understanding of a research problem results from collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2012: 540). So, in this study, the descriptive survey method makes use of a convergent (or parallel or concurrent) mixed methods design approach.

Instruments of Data Collection

There are several data collection instruments that could have been used while conducting research. However, some of the different data collection instruments were selected for this research. Accordingly, this research employed questionnaires, one-on-one semi-structured interviews, observations and document analysis as main tools of data collection. The use of multiple data collection tools, which could help in extracting data from different sources (from both primary as well as secondary sources), aided to construct a richer, bigger and meaningful picture of how instructional leadership and school improvement program managed in secondary schools under study.

Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a data collection instrument that helps to obtain information about the thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values, perceptions and behavioral intentions of research participants (Cohen & Morrison, 2007:370-371). Accordingly, questionnaire in this study was used so as to assess the views of principals, vice principals, supervisors, and teachers towards instructional leadership and school improvement program (SIP) in secondary schools.

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

Interview

Interview was another important data collection tool that helps in gathering qualitative data from primary sources. The participants of the interview in this study were principals, vice principals, supervisors, and SIP coordinators. Moreover, conducting an interview, according to Creswell (2008), entails preparation on the part of the researcher in determining the number of participants, in designing question types and items, and in devising mechanisms of recording responses of participants.

Observation

Observation helps to collect data on real life settings. It also provides a chance for the researcher to check reality through noting and comparing what people do with what they say (Cohen, and Morrison, 2011; and Robson, 2002). Observation enabled the researcher to look afresh at everyday behavior of secondary schools as organizations and to look at a school how it functions as a system so as to enhance its effectiveness. Moreover, Observation as data collection tool also help in having real information about what is actually going on in the schools as main instructional activities and as functions/tasks that support overall teaching and learning activities of the schools.

Document Analysis

Researchers can possibly use documents as important sources of information while conducting studies (Tobin 2010: 288). Accordingly, in this study, document analysis was become another important data gathering tool of the study. The documents that were analyzed include annual reports of education at different levels (Schools, Woredas/Districts, Zones, Regions, and Federal levels), policy documents, Education Statistics Annual Abstracts (ESAA), legislations of education, school improvement framework, school improvement program implementation manuals, school improvement program guidelines, different educational circulars, secondary schools' curriculum committee minutes, minutes of teachers and staff meetings in the schools, strategic plans and SIP plans in the schools, and other relevant documents that describe roles and responsibilities of major stakeholders of secondary schools (principals, supervisors, teachers, parent-students-teachers association (PSTA) members, and students). Besides, documents related to school improvement program (SIP) planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation as well as its achievement records of schools with respect to SIP were also be used as document sources of data.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In any research study, validity and reliability are aspects of research that need to be addressed to ensure that the collected data is trustworthy and reliable. Validity and reliability can be maximized by using multiple sources of data and data-collection instruments (Guest, MacQueen, & Namey, 2012: 85). The subsequent sections deal with the issues related to ensuring validity and reliability of quantitative data, as well as the trustworthiness and transferability of the data to ensure validity and reliability of the qualitative data in this study.

VALIDITY

Validity is checked by reviewing data collection instruments in terms of clarity, wording, and sequences of questions. Accordingly, the questionnaire

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

in this study was pilot tested using subjects who were not part of the final sample. These respondent subjects were teachers, principals, vice principals, and supervisors of secondary school in Hawassa City Administration called Millennium Secondary school.

RELIABILITY

To check the reliability, Cronbach's alpha was used to analyze the internal consistency of the items of the questionnaire which was considered to be the major tool to gather quantitative data from respondents (i.e. principals, vice principals, teachers, and supervisors) of this study. Internal reliability of scaled items in a questionnaire can be demonstrated statistically by a correlation coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or above is generally regarded as acceptable. Therefore, as depicted in Table 2, acceptable scores were obtained as calculated Cronbach's Alpha value equals 0.875 (the correlation coefficient value that is very close to 1). Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.875 computed here is an indication of greater reliability. Hence, the high alpha reliability of each scale leads to the conclusion that the survey designed for the current study was a very reliable measure.

Table 2: Reliability Test Result of the Scaled Questionnaire Items

Sections of Questionnaire	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha Coefficient
II. Tasks related to instructional leadership and school improvement program (as school/educational reform functions) for school effectiveness	12	0.87
III. Contributions of Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program (As Essential Educational Reforms) in Enhancing School Effectiveness.		
a) Contributions of Instructional Leadership (as Essential Educational Reform) in Enhancing School Effectiveness.	9	0.79
b) Contributions of School Improvement Program (as Essential Educational Reform) in Enhancing School Effectiveness.	5	0.86
IV. Perception of major stakeholders of schools towards school reforms that include instructional leadership and school improvement program	7	0.98
Whole Scale	33	0.875

Data Management and Analysis

In this study, descriptive statistics was considered as an essential tool that was used to analyze the respondents' demographic characteristics and to compare teachers and school leaders responses on how instructional leadership and school improvement program are managed in secondary schools. In addition, inferential statistical techniques were employed to analyze the data. Accordingly, Pearson coefficient of correlation was used to see the association of each dimension of instructional leadership with school improvement domains. Likewise, the significant mean differences among the respondents' response on different issues of instructional leadership dimensions and school improvement program domains were tested using one-way ANOVA.

The qualitative data obtained through interview, observation, focus group discussions (FGDs) method, and some of the data that was collected through document sources were transcribed, coded, categorized into themes, and analyzed simultaneously with the quantitative data by relating the responses in relation to the research questions.

Ethiopian Journal of Education Studies
https://journals.hu.edu.et/hu-journals/index.php/ejes/
ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

RESULTS/DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 3 presents the demographic profile of the respondents. Accordingly, Table 3 presents the gender and age distribution of the respondents. Moreover, Table 3 illustrates the background information of the respondents in terms of the current position in the school, academic qualification, the field of specialization, teaching experience in the school, and years of experience as a school leader respectively.

Table 3: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

No.	Items	Categories	Frequency	Percent
1	Sex/Gender	Male	144	81.8
		Female	32	18.2
		Total	176	100
2	Age	Below 30 years	29	16.5
		30 - 39 years	77	43.8
		40 - 49 years	47	26.7
		50 years and above	23	13.0
		Total	176	100
3	Current position in the school	Supervisor	6	3.4
		Principal	5	2.8
		Vice Principal	12	6.8
		Teacher	153	87.0
		Total	176	100
4	Currently your highest academic qualification	Diploma in teaching	5	2.8
		BA/BEd/BSc	64	36.4
		BA/BEd/BSc+PGDSL/PGDT	52	29.5
		MA/MSc	55	31.3
		Total	176	100
5	Field of specialization	Academic subject	149	84.7
		Vocational/Technical	1	0.5
		Educational Leadership & Management	26	14.8
		Total	176	100
6	Years of teaching experience	Below 5 years	9	5.1
		5 - 10 years	47	26.7
		11 - 15 years	40	22.7
		16 years and above	80	45.5
		Total	176	100
7	Years of experience as a school leader	Below 5 years	31	34.4
		5 - 10 years	30	33.3
		11 - 15 years	14	15.6
		16 years and above	15	16.7
		Total	90	100

Table 3, item one indicates that more than four-fifths of the respondents (81.8 percent) were males while only less than one-fifth of the respondents (18.2 percent) were females. Such male-female disparity may be attributed to the low proportion of females in the teaching profession and the education system in general and at secondary level education of the nation (Ethiopia) in particular.

Table 3 item two is about the age of the respondents. Accordingly, item two Table 3 shows that 16.5 percent of the respondents were in their age range of the twenties. On the other hand, 43.8 percent and 26.7 percent of the respondents that in sum make up a few more than seventy percent of the respondents (71.5%) were within the age range of the thirties and forties respectively. The rest of the respondents (13 %) were with ages of 50 and above. Therefore, the respondents of the study were composed of different ages that range from the young age to late adult age which was close to the retirement age of the respondents. Thus, age by itself may have been considered as a school of learning that helps somebody to have a different experience based on practical knowledge and wisdom in the area of his/her profession. Such diverse composition in terms of the age of the respondents may help to have reliable data and to draw a valid conclusion about the problem under consideration.

Table 3 item 3 indicates the current position of the respondents in the school. Accordingly, 13 percent (23 in number) of the respondents were school leaders (principals, vice principals, and supervisors). The remaining 153 (87 percent) of the respondents were

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

teachers in sample secondary schools. However, as to their previous experience as school leader, a bit more than 51 percent (90 in number) of the respondents, as clearly depicted in Table 3 item 7, have indicated as they had served as school leader. Such experiences at various levels in the school or at any position in the education system of the nation (Ethiopia) may be considered as an opportunity to implement new reforms (such as implementing the school-improvement program and applying instructional leadership as management approach) in the schools effectively and efficiently.

Concerning academic qualification of the respondents, as indicated in Table 3 item four, 64 respondents (36.4 percent) of the total sample population, for quantitative data where n = 176, were first degree holders. A good share of respondents, 52 in number that consists 29.5 percent of the total respondents, have reported as they had received Post Graduate Diploma in Teaching and Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership (PGDSL) besides having a first degree (Bachelor of Arts or sciences/BA/BSc). Having training in PGDT and PGDSL become mandatory for those teachers who begin their teaching profession as a novice/beginner and for those principals who begin to assume the school leadership position respectively. Unusually, very few respondents, 5 in number that consists only 2.8 percent of the total respondents have reported as they were Diploma holders. The remaining 55 respondents that make up 31.3 percent of the respondents have reported as they had received a second degree (Master of Arts or sciences/MA/MSc). Teachers, principals, vice principals, and supervisors who have been working at secondary schools are required to have at least first degree (BA/BSc or BED that is Bachelor of Education) as their minimum qualification in one of the academic subjects, which are among the curriculum of secondary school level education. However, since long the government of Ethiopia has planned to upgrade the qualification of secondary school teachers with BA/BSc degree to MA/MSc level. As clearly depicted in the above table (Table 3), it is indicated that the share of MA/MSc among the total respondents (where, n = 176) was much less than 50 percent (that is, 31.3 percent). Hence, this pinpoints the area where the government and policy formulators should give due emphasis so as to upgrade the qualification of teachers in secondary schools.

Table 3 item five shows a field of specialization of the respondents. The respondents were asked to indicate their specialization area in terms of the subject matter they have studied. According to the data shown in Table 3 item five, the significant majority of the respondents (84.7 percent that is 149 in number) had specialized in academic subjects that are among the core curriculum of secondary school level education in Ethiopia. Twenty-six respondents (14.8 percent of the total sample respondents where n = 176) had specialized in educational leadership and management. On the other hand, only one respondent teacher (0.5 percent of the total respondent teachers) was reported as specialized in Vocational/Technical subjects.

Of the total respondents that include principals, vice principals, supervisors, and teachers (n = 176) of this study, as clearly shown in Table 3 item six, 47 of them

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

(26.7 percent) had service years that range from five to ten, 40 of them that make up nearly twenty-three percent (22.7 %) of the total respondents had served as a teacher in schools for 11 to 15 years, while 80 respondents (45.5 percent of the total respondents) had served as a teacher for more than 15 years. Among the teacher respondents, 9 of them (5.1 percent of the total respondents) had reported as they have served as a teacher for less than five years. Thus, the composition of the subjects as sources of data of the study was wide-ranging in terms of the service years in the teaching job (as a teacher).

Analysis of Main Data

This section comprises analysis of respondents' responses on different tasks/functions related to instructional leadership and school improvement program/SIP (as school/ educational reform activities) that need to be executed by schools to bring about school effectiveness; contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program; and perception of major stakeholders of schools towards educational/school reforms that include instructional leadership and school improvement program. The mean scores of scaled questionnaire items, as indicated in different tables that were presented throughout the text for the data analysis, were interpreted as follows: 1 - 1.79 very low, 1.80 - 2.59 low, 2.60 - 3.39 medium, 3.40 - 4.19 high, and 4.20 - 5.00 very high.

Respondents' Responses on Tasks related to instructional leadership and school improvement program for school effectiveness

This section comprises different tasks/functions related to instructional leadership and school improvement program/SIP (as school/ educational reform activities) that need to be executed by schools to bring about school effectiveness.

Table 4: Tasks related to instructional leadership and school improvement program

Tasks related to instructional leadership and school improvement program (as school/educational reform functions) for school effectiveness	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation
School promotes the advantages of schooling in terms of benefiting the school environment	176	1	5	3.81	7	.897
School encourages teachers to conduct action research.	176	1	5	3.38	12	1.154
School ensures that parents actively participate in parents-teachers-students association (PTSA) activities	176	1	5	3.79	8	1.023

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

School facilitates experience sharing visits to other schools.	176	1	5	3.47	11	1.146
The school has identified its priorities.	176	1	5	3.93	5	.869
School motivates hardworking teachers based on the extent of effort they exert so as to realize measurable improvements in student results.	176	1	5	3.71	9	1.037
School organizes and facilitates courses and workshops as mechanisms of professional development.	176	1	5	3.52	10	1.058
The school has prepared school improvement plan by involving the major stakeholders of the school	176	1	5	4.01	3	.935
School provides information to parents and the community about students' learning, financial utilization and other issues and receives feedback.	176	1	5	3.94	4	.886
School provides high achieving students with rewards (incentives) as a means of motivating all students to achieve better.	176	1	5	3.87	6	1.025
The school has set/defined its goal and designed its vision, mission, values, and plans.	176	1	5	4.20	1	.857
School sets clear targets to be attained by the major stakeholders of the school	176	1	33	4.02	2	2.376

AS clearly indicated in Table 4, respondents have vividly acknowledged that the school has set/defined its goal and designed its vision, mission, values, and plans (Mean = 4.20); school sets clear targets to be

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

attained by the major stakeholders of the school (Mean = 4.02); and the school has prepared school improvement plan by involving the major stakeholders of the school (Mean = 4.01). The respondents, as depicted in Table 4, have also reported a modest effort made by the schools in terms of performing/executing other tasks related to instructional leadership and school improvement program (as school/educational reform functions) for school effectiveness.

Principal from secondary school one had the following to say about the importance of executing school reforms such as instructional leadership and school improvement program (as school/educational reform functions) for school effectiveness,

"In the school, our roles as principal and instructional leader, who are notably expected to coordinate overall functions of the school in general and perform mainly instruction-related tasks in the school in particular, begin by sketching comprehensive plan that specifies detailed instructional activities or functions as part of the school reform activities for school effectiveness, and in due course, to be endorsed by the major stakeholders of the school. The functions comprise setting/defining school's goal and designing its vision, mission, values, and plans; setting clear targets to be attained by the major stakeholders of the school; preparing strategic and school improvement plans that embrace all instructional and administrative tasks by involving the major stakeholders of the school. All these activities included as plan of the school are thought to be part of the educational reform functions of the school and need to be executed properly for school effectiveness."

One can clearly infer from the above analysis that executing educational/school reforms such as instructional leadership and school improvement program (as school/educational reform functions) is become vital for school effectiveness. Accordingly, it is confirmed that schools have been making forth effort to implement educational/school reforms that include instructional leadership and school improvement program to enhance their effectiveness.

Contributions of Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program (As Essential Educational Reforms) in Enhancing School Effectiveness

The following section, as indicated in Table 5, contains contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) in enhancing school effectiveness.

Table 5: Contributions of Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program in Enhancing School Effectiveness

Contributions of Instructional Leadership and School Improvement Program in Enhancing School Effectiveness	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Mean Rank	Std. Deviation
Coordinating curriculum in the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.88	8	.964
Defining & communicating a school's goal contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.95	5	.918

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

Maintaining the high visibility of the principal in the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.96	4	.903
Monitoring students' progress in the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	4.07	2	.804
Promoting the professional development of teachers and other stakeholders in the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.99	3	.988
Protecting the instructional time/period of the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	4.15	1	.831
Providing Incentives for learners' learning in the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.82	9	1.130
Providing incentives for teachers contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.93	6	.992
Supervising and evaluating instructions in the school contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school.	176	1	5	3.93	6	.888

As indicated in Table, respondents of the study have given high regard about the contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) in enhancing school effectiveness in terms of protecting the instructional time/period of the school (Mean = 4.15); Monitoring students' progress in the school (Mean = 4.07); and promoting the professional development of teachers and other stakeholders in the school (Mean = 3.99). Moreover, respondents of the study awarded modest contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) in enhancing school effectiveness with regard to defining & communicating a school's goal; maintaining the high visibility of the principal in the school; providing incentives for teachers; and supervising and evaluating instructions in the school.

The importance of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) in enhancing school effectiveness and improvement had been expressed by the words of one of the senior teachers from Secondary School two, who was the coordinator of SIP in the school, as follows,

Instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) could contribute for school effectiveness with regard to coordinating curriculum in the school, and providing Incentives for learners and teachers who were important pillars in the school as learning organization.

This shows the positive perception given to

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) for school effectiveness by the major stakeholders of the school.

Regarding the contributions of instructional leadership and SIP for school effectiveness and improvement, the supervisor of Secondary School one also said,

"Principals, as top executives and coordinators of the school, require being successful in their work in the school, aspire to get promotion in their career ladder at the right time, need to enhance the possibility of professional growth to be able to work at the higher echelons (i.e., Woreda/District Offices, Zone Education Departments, Region Education Bureaus, and Centrally at the Ministry Education level as experts as well as heads) of the education system of the nation/Ethiopia, and want to achieve a favorable recognition. To attain such aspirations that motivate principals to exert forth effort in day-to-day activities in the school, here in our/Ethiopian education system, principals should focus on the tasks of instruction (teaching and learning related functions) while managing and coordinating their respective schools. Thus, the only strategy that authorizes school principals to focus on the teaching and learning functions of the school is applying new reforms that embrace the instructional leadership approach and implementing SIP in the school. Moreover, successfully applying instructional leadership and implementing SIP in the school, in turn, helps principals to see the outcomes of their own work and to find ways of dealing with problems in the school. As a result, applying instructional leadership and implementing SIP as school reforms become a source of satisfaction on the part of principals in the school because executing instructional leadership roles of principals effectively in the school by itself is a transformation that addresses every aspect of the learning/education in the school that include SIP implementation."

These consecutive explanations, about the contribution of instructional leadership, imply sound understanding and expectations that secondary school's major stakeholders (vice-principals, teachers, and supervisors) have about the importance of instructional leadership for school effectiveness and improvement. It also clearly indicates the positive perception that the major stakeholders of the school (supervisors, vice principals, and teachers) have towards instructional leadership roles of principals in the school.

However, there are challenges as barriers of executing education/school reforms such as instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential school/educational reforms) for school effectiveness. The main challenges, particularly with instructional leadership, were related to instruction/teaching-learning processes in the school because the mission of the school is conducting teaching and learning-related tasks in the school. The challenges of instructional leadership may manifest themselves in the school while evaluating instruction, and promoting change. Moreover, one important challenge frequently cited by the participants and respondents (responses for open-ended items of the questionnaire) of this study, as barriers of applying

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

instructional leadership and implementing SIP as school reforms, is the existence of dissatisfaction as well as the absence of satisfaction among the major stakeholders (including principals) of school.

Regarding the absence of satisfaction as well as the presence of dissatisfaction on the part of school leaders, Supervisor from Secondary School three pointed out,

"The possible sources for the lack of satisfaction and the existence of dissatisfaction among the school leaders and/or principals in the schools are because of:- lack of recognition; lack of personal acknowledgment by the management of the school; lack of reward; lack of ability to find ways of dealing with problems; the inability of school leaders and/or principals to see the outcomes of one's (their own) work; the routine nature of the tasks themselves that do not require creativity; non-existence of autonomy in accomplishing task assignments; decline in the authority of school leaders/principals when compared to others; critical accountability of school leaders/principals for job performance; lack of expected promotion as well as the existence of demotion on the part of principals related to task accomplishment; and lack of changes in the work condition such that advancement of school leaders and/or principals is less likely and opportunities to learn are minimized."

This implies that the positive presence of such motivation factors generates increased effort and ultimately leads to satisfaction on the part of school leaders and/or principals. Conversely, when motivation factors are non-existent or in a negative direction, it results in decreased efforts and due course leads to the absence of satisfaction on the part of school leaders and/or principals. The main aim of applying instructional leadership as well as implementing a school improvement program (SIP) is to bring about quality education and ultimately enhance learners' academic achievement in the school.

Table 6: Group Statistics for difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards instructional leadership (IL)

	Position	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perception for IL	Teachers	153	3.9346	.70774	.05722
	School Leaders	23	4.4783	.31326	.06532
	Total	176			

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics comparing teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of instructional leadership in the sample Secondary Schools. The sample includes 153 teachers and 23 school leaders. The mean perception score for instructional leadership among teachers is 3.93 (SD = 0.71), while the mean score for school leaders is 4.48 (SD = 0.31). This indicates that, on average, school leaders have a more favorable view of instructional leadership compared to teachers. The standard deviation for teachers (0.71) suggests a greater variability in their perceptions, indicating a wider range of opinions about instructional leadership within

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

this group. In contrast, the standard deviation for school leaders (0.31) is considerably lower, showing that their perceptions are more consistent and less varied. The standard error mean for teachers is 0.057, and for school leaders, it is 0.065. These relatively low standard errors imply that the sample means are reliable estimates of the population means for both groups.

However, despite this mean difference, it is essential to determine whether this difference is statistically significant or not. To assess this, the researcher conducted an independent samples t-test.

Table 7: Independent Samples Test for difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards instructional leadership/IL

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perception for IL	Equal variances assumed	10.142	.002	-3.624	174	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-6.260	63.320	.000

The results of the independent samples t-test are presented in Table 7. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated a significant difference in variances between the two groups (F = 10.142, p = .002). Therefore, the assumption of equal variances was not met. Using the results from the row where equal variances are not assumed, the t-test showed a statistically significant difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards instructional leadership (t (63.320) = -6.260, p < .001). This indicates that the difference in mean perception scores between teachers and school leaders is statistically significant, confirming that school leaders indeed have a more favorable perception of instructional leadership compared to teachers.

To assess the practical significance of this difference, effect sizes were calculated and are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Independent Samples Effect Sizes for difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards instructional leadership

		Standardizer[a]	Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower	Upper
Perception_for_IL	Cohen's d	.67080	-.810	-1.256	-.363
	Hedges' correction	.67371	-.807	-1.250	-.361
	Glass's delta	.31326	-1.735	-2.399	-1.055

The result from the Table 8 indicates that Cohen's d was found to be -0.81 (95% CI: -1.256 to -0.363),

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

indicating a large effect size according to Cohen's conventions. Hedges' correction for small sample sizes also resulted in an effect size of -0.81 (95% CI: -1.250 to -0.361). Additionally, Glass's delta showed an effect size of -1.735 (95% CI: -2.399 to -1.055). These effect size estimates suggest that the difference in perceptions between teachers and school leaders is not only statistically significant but also practically significant, with school leaders exhibiting a substantially more favorable perception of instructional leadership.

Table 9: Group Statistics for difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards SIP

	Position	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perception for SIP	Teachers	153	3.84	.742	.060
	School Leaders	23	4.49	.43	.091
	Total	176			

The descriptive statistics comparing teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of the School Improvement Program (SIP) in sample Secondary Schools are presented in Table 9. The sample includes 153 teachers and 23 school leaders. The mean perception score for SIP among teachers is 3.84 (SD = 0.74), while the mean score for school leaders is 4.49 (SD = 0.43). This indicates that, on average, school leaders have a more favorable view of the School Improvement Program compared to teachers. The standard deviation for teachers (0.74) suggests a greater variability in their perceptions, indicating a wider range of opinions about the SIP within this group. In contrast, the standard deviation for school leaders (0.43) is lower, showing that their perceptions are more consistent and less varied.

The standard error mean for teachers is 0.060, and for school leaders, it is 0.091. These relatively low standard errors imply that the sample means are reliable estimates of the population means for both groups.

Table 10: Independent Samples Test for difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards SIP

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perception of stakeholders for SIP	Equal variances assumed	4.87	.029	-4.08	174	.000
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.96	44.35	.000

The results of the independent samples t-test are presented in Table 10. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated a significant difference in variances between the two groups (F = 4.87, p = .029). Therefore, the assumption of equal variances was not met. Using the results from the row where equal variances are not assumed, the t-test showed a

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

statistically significant difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards the School Improvement Program ($t(44.35) = -5.96$, $p < .001$). This indicates that the difference in mean perception scores between teachers and school leaders is statistically significant, confirming that school leaders indeed have a more favorable perception of the School Improvement Program compared to teachers.

Table 11: Independent Samples Effect Sizes for difference between teachers' and school leaders' perceptions towards SIP

		Standardizer[a]	*Point Estimate*	*95% Confidence Interval*	
				Lower	*Upper*
Perception for SIP	*Cohen's d*	*.71080*	*-.911*	*-1.359*	*-.461*
	Hedges' correction	*.71388*	*-.907*	*-1.353*	*-.459*
	Glass's delta	*.43412*	*-1.492*	*-2.103*	*-.864*

To assess the practical significance of the observed difference in perceptions, effect sizes were calculated. Table 11 presents the effect size calculations. Cohen's d was found to be -0.91 (95% CI: -1.359 to -0.461), indicating a large effect size according to Cohen's conventions. Hedges' correction for small sample sizes also resulted in an effect size of -0.91 (95% CI: -1.353 to -0.459). Additionally, Glass's delta, which uses the standard deviation of the control group (teachers), showed an effect size of -1.49 (95% CI: -2.103 to -0.864). These effect size estimates suggest that the difference in perceptions between teachers and school leaders is not only statistically significant but also practically significant, with school leaders exhibiting a substantially more favorable perception of the School Improvement Program.

Conclusion of the Study

Given the findings obtained from the literature study and the empirical investigation, the following conclusions were drawn in line with the research sub-questions of the study.

1. Management of school improvement program and instructional leadership (as essential educational/school reforms for school effectiveness) has been considered as effective and efficient in the sample schools of the study.
2. The contributions of instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential educational/school reforms) in enhancing school effectiveness have been duly acknowledged by the major stakeholders of the schools.
3. There were strong positive perceptions among secondary school's major stakeholders (Principals, vice principals, Supervisors, School Improvement Program /SIP/ Coordinators, Parent-Teacher-Student

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

Association /PTSA/ members, teachers, and students) towards instructional leadership and school improvement program (as essential educational/school reforms) for school effectiveness. However, the difference in mean perception scores between teachers and school leaders is statistically significant, confirming that school leaders indeed have a more favorable perception towards school reforms that include instructional leadership and School Improvement Program/SIP compared to teachers.

4. The effort exerted by the secondary school's major stakeholders (Principals, vice principals, Supervisors, School Improvement Program /SIP/ Coordinators, Parent-Teacher-Student Association /PTSA/ members, teachers, and students) to apply instructional leadership and implement SIP in their respective schools was considered as high.

5. The commonly agreed barriers that negatively affect implementation of reforms such as instructional leadership and SIP in the schools were lack of adequate capacity building (lack of in-depth training) programs for the secondary school's major stakeholders (Principals, vice principals, Supervisors, School Improvement Program /SIP/ Coordinators, Parent-Teacher-Student Association /PTSA/ members, teachers, and students); and lack of strong commitment on the part of school leaders to be engaged in tasks related to instruction/teaching and learning.

Recommendations of the Study

To improve schools effectiveness through applying instructional leadership approach and implementing SIP (as essential educational/school reforms), the following recommendations are suggested given the findings and conclusions drawn from the study.

1. Creating opportunities for continuous professional development and capacity-building programs for the secondary school's major stakeholders (Principals, vice principals, Supervisors, School Improvement Program /SIP/ Coordinators, Parent-Teacher-Student Association /PTSA/ members, teachers, and students) on applying school reforms for school effectiveness.

2. Sharing experiences among schools would enhance the effectiveness of the schools. Therefore, REB, ZED, WEO, and the school in collaboration should work in devising strategies that help the schools share their best experiences. This would help schools with different performance levels to share their respective school's various experiences.

3. Appropriate time management on the part of school leaders and/or principals by allocating adequate time for instructional activities/tasks in the school would inspire teachers and learners in the school to utilize their time effectively and efficiently in activities related to academic issues to which any school reform focuses.

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

References

Adinew Ontoro Kedo and Dawit Legesse Edamo (2018)."Availability of Learner Support System and its Management in Secondary Schools of Sidama Zone, Ethiopia."*IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS). Vol. 23 No. 2, 2018*, Pages, 31-37.

Amare Asgedom (2000). The State of Educational Research in Ethiopia.*The Ethiopian Journal of Education. Vol. XX. No. 2.*

AmareAsgedom and TemechegnEngida (2002). Education in Ethiopia: A Development Perspective. *The EthiopianJournal of Education.Vol. XXII No. 2.*

Belay Tefera and Abdinasir Ahmed (2015). Research Methods (1st edition). Addis Ababa: Mega Printing Press.

Best, J. W. & Kahn, J. V. (2004).Research in Education. (7th ed.). New Delhi: Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited.

Bickman, L. &Rog, D.J. (2009).Applied Research Design: A Practical Approach. In: L. Bickman& D.J. Rog (eds.). The Sage Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc. 3-44.

CCSSO (Council of Chief State School Officers) (2015).Model Principal Supervisor Professional Standards 2015. Washington, DC: CCSSO.

Cohen, L. Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2011). Research Methods in Education (7th ed.),

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

London: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2007). Research Methods in Education (6th ed.). London: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches. (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, USA: SAGE publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2012). Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research (4th edition). New York: Pearson

Day, c., Gu, Q., & Sammons, P. (2016), The Impact of Leadership on Student Outcomes: How Successful School Leaders Use Transformational and Instructional Strategies to Make a Difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly 2016, Vol. 52(2) 221-258.*

De Bevoise, W (, February 1984). "Synthesis of Research on the Principal as Instructional Leader," Educational Leadership.

DejeneKassahun (2013). Research Paper Writing Principles and Concepts (2nd Edition). Addis Ababa: Mega Publishing and Distribution PLC.

FDRE (1994) (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia).Education and Training Policy. Addis Ababa: ST. GEORGE PRINTING PRESS.

Fraenkel, J. R., and Wallen, N. E. (2009).How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education (Seventh Edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Gay, L.R. (2006). Educational Research Method: Competencies for analysis and application. New Jersey, Von Hoffmann Press, Inc.

Illeris, K. (2009). Contemporary Theories of Learning, edited by K. Illeris. Oxon: Routledge: Sage Publication.

Jones, S.R., Torres, V. &Arminio, J. (2006).Negotiating the Complexities of Qualitative Research in Higher Education: Fundamental Elements and Issues. New York: Routledge.

Joshi, R.D., &Verspoor, A. (2013), Secondary Education in Ethiopia: Supporting Growth and Transformation. Washington DC: The World Bank.

Kothari C. R. (2004), Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques (Second Revised Edition). New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited, Publishers.

Le Fevre, D. M., & Robinson, V. M. J. (2015). The Interpersonal Challenges of Instructional Leadership: Principals' Effectiveness in Conversations about Performance Issues.

Leithwood, K., Harris, A., & Hopkins, D. (2008). Seven strong claims about successful school leadership. *School Leadership and Management, 28(1), 27-42.*

Lovitts, B. & Wert, E. (2009). Developing Quality Dissertations in the Social Sciences: A Graduate Student's Guide to Achieving Excellence. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. Retrieved from: http://doras.dcu.ie/617/2/Helena_Walker_

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

-_thesis_2

Mitchell, M. L. &Jolley, J.M. (2010). Research Design Explained (7th ed.). Wadsworth: MacMillan Publishing Solutions.

MOE (2008) (Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP). Addis Ababa: MOE.

MOE (2010) (Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia).School Improvement Program Guidelines. Addis Ababa: MOE.

MOE (2015) (Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). Education Sector Development Program V (ESDP V) (2008-2012 E.C. i.e. 2015/16-2019/20 G.C.): Program Action Plan. Addis Ababa: MOE.

MOE (2017) (Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia).Education Statistics Annual Abstract (ESSA), 2008 E.C. (2015/16 GC). Addis Ababa: MoE

MOE (2018) (Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018-30). An Integrated Executive Summary, Draft for Discussion by TirussewTeferra, AmareAsgedom, JeiluOumer, Tassew W/hanna, AkliluDalelo and BerhannuAssefa. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Education, Education Strategy Center (ESC).

MOFED (2010) (Ministry of Finance and Economic Development of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). Growth and Transformation Plan I (GTP I) 2010/11-2014/15. Volume I: Main Text. Addis Ababa: Berhanenna Selam Printing Press.

Murnane, R.J. & Willet, J.B. (2011). Methods Matter: Improving Causal Inference in Educational and Social Science Research. New York: Oxford University Press.

NPC (2016) (National Planning Commission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia). Growth and Transformation Plan II (GTP II) 2015/16-2019/20. Volume I: Main Text. Addis Ababa: BerhanennaSelam Printing Press.

O'Donoghue, T. (2007).Planning Your Qualitative Research Project: An Introduction to Interpretivist Research in Education. London: Routledge.

Owens, R. (2001). Organizational Behaviour in Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Robinson, V. M. J. (2011). Student-centered leadership. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Santrock, J.W. (2008). Educational Psychology.(3rd edition). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Scott, D. (2012). Frameworks, Strategies, Methods and Technologies. In A.R.J. Briggs, M. Coleman & M. Morrison (eds.). Research Methods in Educational Leadership and Management. (3rd ed.) London: Sage Publications. (Pages 106-121).

Seid Mohammed &SerawitHandiso (2018).Practices

ISSN(online): 27892875
Volume IV, Issue II
(2024)
Research Original Article

and Challenges of Educational Leadership in Selected Secondary Schools of Bole Sub-city, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.*Global Journal of Current Research. Vol. 6, No. 1, 2018, Pages (1 – 10).*

Sisman, M. (2016). Factors related to instructional leadership perception and effect of instructional leadership on organizational variables: A meta-analysis. *Education Theory and Practice. 16(5):1761 -1787.*

SNNPRSEB (2016) (South Nations Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State Education Bureau).Education Statistics Annual Abstract (ESAA), 2007 E.C. (2014/15 G.C).Hawassa: SNNPRSEB.

SNREB (2014 E. C.) (Sidama National Region Education Bureau).Unpublished Compiled Report.

SNRSPEDB (2014 E. C.) (Sidama National Regional State Planning and Economic Development Bureau).Unpublished Compiled Report.

Tobin, R. (2010). Descriptive Case Study. In: A.J. Mills, G. Durepos& E. Wiebe (eds.) Encyclopedia of Case Study Research. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc. (Pages 289 - 290).