School Principals Leadership Practices in Secondary Schools of Somali Region, Ethiopia

Abdi A. Garad[1] and Ayalew Shibeshi[2]

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to assess and describe patterns of principals' school leadership practices and contextual factors affecting them. A cross-sectional research design was used in which data were generated through a questionnaire administered to a sample of 337 teachers, 5 school principals, and 12 parent-teacher association members by using multi-stage sampling. The data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and independent-sample t-test. The finding suggests that the school leadership practices; the three dimensions and 10 leadership functions were low. This pattern also was observed irrespective of the level, location, and size of the school. It was concluded that there was no sufficient evidence to support the claim that there was a difference between school principals of secondary and preparatory school principals; from the schools of pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas; and from small, medium, and large size schools in their engagement of school leadership practices and behaviors. The magnitude of the difference in their means was also very small. To improve school leadership practices, school principals should be aware and trained on generally accepted school leadership practices and should create and develop expectations, and rewards that force students to master basic skills, earn good grades, the complete school successfully, and go on to higher education.*

Keywords: *School leadership, Instructional leadership, Transformational school leadership, Distributed school leadership.*

[1] Lecturer, Department of Educational Planning and Management, Jigjiga University, Email: cabdigarad2010@hotmail.com

[2] Associate Professor, Department of Educational Planning and Management, Addis Ababa University, Email: ayalewshibeshi@yahoo.com

Introduction

Recently, school leadership became a high-priority issue in education policy globally. Leithwood et al. (2006) stated that school leadership has a very considerable impact on the quality of school organization and pupil learning. They provided different types of empirical shreds of evidence in their review of the literature on successful school leadership such as qualitative case studies and large-scale quantitative studies that examined overall leader effects and the effect of specific leadership practices. Leithwood et al. (2006) concluded that school leadership is positively and directly or indirectly linked with improved student performance and educational experiences.

Krüger (1993) stated, what differentiates between effective and ineffective school leadership is the awareness of the school's purpose and active commitment to achieving the school's mission. Krug described five main categories which describe the behaviors that effective school leaders perform when they involve in tasks of managing their schools. These categories are defining mission, managing curriculum and instruction, supervising teaching, monitoring student progress, and promoting an effective instructional climate.

Leadership can be conceptualized in different ways and researchers should attempt to find the appropriate manner to conceptualize and measure variables and constructs of leadership when they formulate and test leadership theories and practices (Yukl, 2008). Conceptualizations of school leadership offer various lenses to view and understand how leadership is practiced in schools. Different conceptualizations of school leadership often serve to reflect and inform changes in school leadership practices (Bush & Glover, 2014).

Hallinger & Heck (1998) mentioned that during the last fifteen years two conceptualizations dominated the study of school leadership practices: instructional leadership and transformational school leadership.

Recently, distributed school leadership also became a useful and important theoretical lens through which researchers can study and analyze the practices of principal leadership.

Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is the oldest concept that relates leadership to learning. Different names or constructs, such as learning-centered leadership, pedagogic leadership, curriculum leadership, and leadership for learning, are used to describe this relationship. Instructional leadership focuses on the activities that have an impact on the school and student outcomes (Bush & Glover, 2014). Niedermeyer (1977) classified three conditions that effective instructional leadership must fulfill: having a common understanding of school goals, determining whether school objectives are achieved, and providing the necessary resource to achieve the objectives of the school.

Hallinger & Murphy (1985) examined the instructional leadership behavior of principals in terms of specific job functions and how organizational and personal factors influence the practice of principal leadership behavior. They developed a comprehensive model of the instructional leadership role of the principal. This model contains three main components: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and promoting a positive school-learning climate.

The first component, which is defining the school mission, involves two sub-elements i.e., framing and communicating school goals. The second component, managing the instructional program includes supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress. The last component of this model is promoting a positive school learning climate, which focuses on protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, developing and enforcing academic standards, and providing incentives for learning.

Bridges (1967) indicated that in the literature on instructional leadership, there are four roles that school leaders are required to perform: evaluator, helper, integrator, and designer. He suggested that school leaders establish an experimental social system in which the principal becomes an experimenter. So instructional leadership provides a tool-kit through which school leaders deploy different strategies for action, where they can be evaluators, helpers, integrators, designers, or experimenters depending on the context.

In the Ethiopian context, Yohannes (2018) investigated practices and challenges of instructional leadership in government secondary schools of Addis Ababa city by utilizing a descriptive survey design. Specifically, the study emphasized the professional development of teachers and communicating school goals with stakeholders. The data were collected from 20 school leaders and 125 teachers. The study found weak communication between school administrators and school stakeholders, in addition to a lack of professional development for teachers. Resulting ineffective practices of instructional leadership. This affects negatively the teaching-learning process and student academic performance.

Transformational School Leadership

Transformational school leadership is a reflective, educative, and ethical process. It attempts to transform the culture and social relations in schools into shared cultures and social systems by investigating and changing the taken-for-granted aspects of school life and work (Southworth, 1999). The characteristics of transformational leadership are inspiring followers, challenging them to become innovative problem solvers, and developing their leadership capacity. Bass & Riggio (2006) identified four distinct behavioral constructs of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

In the schooling context, Leithwood & Sun (2012) synthesized the results of 79 unpublished studies of transformational school leadership to investigate the practices of transformational school leaders that have an impact on school organization, teachers' internal states and behavior, and student achievement. They concluded that transformational school leadership practices have an effect that varies between moderate, significant, and positive on different aspects of school conditions such as shared goals, working environment, and improved instructions.

In the Ethiopian context, Tadele Akalu (2014) investigated the relationship between the five components of transformational leadership and teachers' job satisfaction factors such as intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Data were collected from 20 secondary schools and 320 teachers in Addis Ababa city. The instruments of data collection were a transformational leadership scale and a teacher job satisfaction questionnaire. Based on the perceptions of teachers, Tadele Akalu (2014) noted that school principals practice a moderate to a high level of transformational school leadership behavior.

According to Tadele Akalu (2014), teachers also have a low to moderate level of overall satisfaction, although they were highly satisfied with their principals' recognition, the encouragement they got from their colleagues, leaving them to do alone their work, satisfaction with their teaching profession and the positive relationship they have with their students.

Distributed School Leadership

Distributed school leadership is disseminating the responsibilities of school leadership among the staff of the school. Distributed leadership is less dependent on the actions of a single leader, rather the leader coordinates the diverse competencies of the school staff. Leadership competencies vary among people and complementing the skill and knowledge of one person to that of another person in the school is what

is expected from a skillful school principal (Copland, 2003; Elmore, 2000).

To summarize school leadership theories, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom (2004) reviewed the literature on school leadership and stated that different types of leadership were identified using adjectives such as instructional, participative, democratic, transformational, and distributed. However, irrespective of the adjectives used, all these leadership styles are expected to achieve two targets: setting direction for the organization and influencing the employees toward the organizational goals. Moreover, Crawford (2012) asserted that school leadership research should focus on leadership forms that reflect the cultural and policy context of school leaders by utilizing the theoretical lens of both solo and distributed school leadership.

Table 1: *Comparison of Principal Profiles by Teachers' Mean Rating: Thailand, U.S., and Malaysia.*

Subscales	**Thailand**	**The U.S.**	**Malaysia**
Frames School Goals	3.15	3.49	3.54
Communicates School Goals	3.08	3.36	3.55
Supervises Instruction	2.77	3.38	3.29
Coordinates Curriculum	2.92	3.32	3.48
Monitors Student Progress	2.89	3.29	3.22
Protects Instructional Time	3.15	3.61	3.28
Maintains High Visibility	2.45	3.30	3.13
Incentives for Teachers	2.91	3.43	3.18
Professional Development	3.08	3.72	3.51
Incentive for Learning	3.42	3.81	3.58
Whole scale	2.98	3.47	3.38

Source: Hallinger, Taranseina, & Miller (1994), p. 340.

Researchers (Bellibas et al., 2016, Siboma, 2020), in different parts of the world, begin to investigate school leadership practices by using both solo and distributed school leadership theories. For example, Nguyen, Hallinger & Chen (2018) examined patterns of instructional leadership

among primary school principals in Vietnam and the influence of contextual factors such as school size and location on the practices of school leadership by using mixed method research design. Data were collected from 569 teachers and 117 principals. They found, in Vietnam school principals invest more time in defining the school mission dimension, followed by managing the school's instructional program, and lastly developing a positive school climate. Their result also revealed no significant effect of school size and location on the instructional leadership practices of the school principals.

As indicated in Table 1, Hallinger, Taranseina & Miller (1994) reviewed the studies of instructional leadership practices conducted in Thailand, the U.S., and Malaysia by using the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) developed by Hallinger & Murphy (1985). According to Hallinger, Taranseina & Miller (1994) the highest-rated subscale in Thailand is framing school goals whereas, in U.S. and Malaysia, school principals invest most of their time in providing incentives for learning.

Likewise, studies of school leadership practices were conducted in Iran (Hallinger & Hosseingholizadeh, 2019), Rwanda (Siboma, 2020), Turkey (Bellibas et al., 2016), and Chile (Fromm et al., 2016). This indicates that studying the practices of school leadership become a global phenomenon.

In Ethiopia, after the fall of the Derg regime, the Ethiopian government began to give more emphasis to increase the enrollment rate of primary education. For example, in ESDP II (2002), the government stated that enrollment increased from 3.1 million students to 7.4 million students between 1998-2001. As more and more children enrolled in primary, secondary, and preparatory schools, the focus of the government moved from school enrollment to the improvement of the quality of schooling because access was achieved at the expense of quality of education.

Despite a huge investment in the quality of school inputs such as teachers, books, buildings, and other school infrastructures, national learning assessments indicated deteriorating trends in student achievement (ESDP IV, 2010). So, the government became more interested in school improvement through the development of school leadership policies and practices that might influence student academic achievement (MOE, 2011).

In 2013, the Ethiopian ministry of education developed and implemented a national professional standard for school principals as a driving force to reform school leadership practices. The standard consists of three domains, five standards, twenty-eight elements, one hundred eighty-eight performance pieces of evidence, and seven pieces of evidence guide that contain two hundred twenty-two statements that indicate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes expected from the school leaders (MOE, 2013). The standard was also used as a training guideline for the postgraduate diploma in school leadership that most Ethiopian government universities offer in their summer program (Gurmu, 2018).

In Ethiopia, most of the studies on school leadership emphasized the preparation and selection of school principals (Gemechu 2020, Tekleselassie 2002) and very few studies (Tessema, 2020) investigated the challenges related to the practice of school leadership. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate and describe patterns of school leadership practices in the secondary and preparatory schools of the Ethiopian Somali region and to assess the influence of contextual factors on school leadership practices. Specifically, the study addresses the following questions;

- To what extent do the secondary and preparatory school principals practice school leadership in the Ethiopian Somali region, and
- To what extent do the contextual factors relate to school leadership practices of the secondary and preparatory school principals of the Ethiopian Somali region?

Definitions of Terms and Concepts

Distributed school leadership is a process involving the interaction of individuals across boundaries, where people with expertise and skills work together to fulfill leadership roles in the school.

Instructional School leadership includes the policies, practices, and behaviors initiated by the school principals.

School climate is the personality or the health of the school.

School leadership practice is a product of what the school leader knows, believes, and does, in and through particular social, cultural, and material contexts.

School leadership refers to the practices of the school principal in coordinating the knowledge, skills, and commitments of teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders to achieve a common goal.

Transformational school leadership is a school leadership theory that gives more emphasis to the accomplishment of school-wide objectives rather than classroom objectives

Methodology

Study Design

In this study, cross-sectional design was used to examine and describe the practices and behaviors of the secondary and preparatory school principals and compare the perceptions of teachers regarding the school leadership practices of their school principals based on the location (pastoralist and agro-pastoralist), level (secondary and preparatory) and size (small, medium and large) of their schools (Creswell, 2015).

Study Area

The study was conducted in the Ethiopian Somali region which is located in the east and southeast of the country. The region is the second largest region in terms of land mass after the Oromia region with an estimated population of approximately six million people. The region consists of 11 zones, 93 woredas, and six city administrations. In terms of access to education, the regional gross enrolment ratio for pre-primary, primary, secondary, and preparatory education is 8%, 65%, 5%, and 3% respectively (SREB, 2019). Promoting effective leadership at the school level is one of the priority areas of the Somali region education system as indicated in the ten-year plan of the Somali region education bureau (SREB, 2019).

Participants

The participants of the study were 337 teachers, five school principals, and 12 parent-teacher association members. Of 337 teachers, 52.8% were in secondary schools while the remaining was in preparatory schools. Regarding the age of the respondents, 49.3%, 25.8%, 17.8%, and 7.1% are in the age categories of 20-29, 30-39, 40,49, and 50 plus respectively. This reveals that as age increases, the number of teaching staff in secondary and preparatory schools decreases.

Regarding the experience of the respondents, 41.5% have less than four years, while 37.3% have more than 10 years of experience. Concerning qualification, 5.3%, 88.1%, and 6.5% have a diploma, first degree, and second degree respectively.

Sample and Sampling technique

In determining the sample size, the small population formula (Rea & Parker 2014, Anderson, Sweeney & Williams 2011, Triola 2018) was used since the size of the population was approximately 2500 teachers.

By utilizing the small population formula, the sample size was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z_{\alpha}^{2}[p(1-p)]N}{Z^{2}[p(1-p)]+(N-1)ME_{p}^{2}}$$

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^{2}(0.25)(2500)}{(1.96)^{2}(0.25) + 2499(0.05)^{2}} = 333.1067$$

Although the sample size was 334 teachers, to collect reliable data, 350 questionnaires were prepared and distributed. The actual number of participants used for analysis was 337, with a response rate of 96%.

To select the sample from the population, multi-stage sampling was utilized by using three steps. In the first step, using cluster sampling six zones were selected from 11 zones of the Somali region. In the second step, one secondary and preparatory school was selected from each zone, except Fafan and Shebele zones, because these zones have more secondary and preparatory schools than other zones. In Fafan and Shebelle zones, four and two schools were selected respectively. From each zone schools were selected based on the following criteria:

- The school that serves the highest number of students in the zone
- The school leader who has been in the principalship position for at least the last three years

These two criteria were set with the assumption that as the size of the school increases, the level of the complexity of leadership practices will also increase.

Lastly, to select respondents from each school I used simple random sampling. In addition to the questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with five school principals and 12 members of the teacher-parent association.

Data Collection Instruments

To measure the school leadership practices and behaviors of the secondary and preparatory school principals, The modified version of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) developed by Hallinger & Murphy (1985) was utilized. The PIMRS consists of three dimensions (defining school mission, managing instructional program, and developing positive school climate), 10 leadership functions, such as framing school goals and monitoring student progress, and 50 specific practices that the school leaders are expected to perform in their day-to-day activities. The PIMRS teacher form contains 50 behaviorally anchored items, in which each item is scored on a five-point Likert scale: 1 Almost never; 2 Seldom; 3 Sometimes; 4 Frequently, and 5 Almost always. The PIMRS can be analyzed as a full-scale score, three dimensions, and 10 functions.

In addition to the questionnaire, a semi-structured interview guideline was prepared. The interview took approximately 40 minutes. The focus of the interview was defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and developing a positive school climate. Focus group discussions were also conducted with 12 members of the parent-teacher association. All the interviews and focus group discussions were conducted using the Somali language to allow participants to express their views deeply and without any language barriers. The interviews and focus group discussions were recorded and transcribed.

To contextualize the instrument to the Ethiopian context and determine the extent to which the instrument provides reliable data, the reliability coefficient of the teacher form of the scale was calculated in terms of the level of the scale (i.e., as a whole, three dimensions and 10 functions). As shown in Table 2, the whole scale alpha reliability estimate is 0.95. Reliability estimates for the three dimensions are 0.81 for defining the school mission, 0.89 for managing the instructional program, and 0.92 for developing a positive school learning climate.

Table 2: *Reliability of Subscales*

Subscales	**Reliability [a] (n=337)**	**Number of items**
Defines school mission	0.813	10
Frames school goals	0.710	5
Communicates school goals	0.715	5
Manages the instructional program	0.890	15
Supervises and evaluates instruction	0.766	5
Coordinates curriculum	0.780	5
Monitors student progress	0.809	5
Develops school climate	0.924	25
Protects instructional times	0.730	5
Maintains high visibility	0.752	5
Provides incentives for teachers	0.822	5
Promotes professional development	0.812	5
Provides incentives for learning	0.842	5
Whole scale	**0.952**	**50**

[a] *Reliability estimates are Cronbach's alpha coefficients*

The reliability estimates of the 10 instructional leadership functions are above 0.7 which is the recommended standard for the reliability estimates for most of the instruments used for research purposes. The leadership function of providing incentives for learning (0.842) has the highest reliability estimate followed by providing incentives for teachers (0.822) and promoting professional development (0.812). All these reliability estimates indicate a high-reliability level.

Hallinger and Wang (2015) also investigated the reliability and validity of the instrument by using 13 independent PIMRS studies carried out between 2008 and 2012. They analyzed the data of these studies by using Rasch analysis and differential item function (DIF) and concluded

that the PIMRS instrument meets commonly applied standards of reliability and internal validity.

Data Analysis

Data obtained through the questionnaire were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. For descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation scores were calculated to provide a better understanding of the data and describe the pattern of school leadership practices. For inferential statistics, an independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA were computed to determine whether there is a difference in the school leadership practices and behaviors of secondary and preparatory school principals in terms of the level, location, and size of the schools and to generalize the data to the target population.

Results

Demographic characteristics of participants

Data was collected from 337 teachers. 81.6% of the respondents were male teachers while the remaining 18.4% were female. 50.1% of the respondents were from Fafan zone, followed by Shabelle (16.95%) and Qorahay (12.8%) zones. Regarding the school level, there were 178 teachers in secondary schools and 159 teachers in preparatory schools. This indicates that there are more secondary school teachers than preparatory school teachers. This is due to the number of students in the schools because mostly there are more students in secondary schools than in preparatory schools. The representation of female teachers declines as we go from secondary to preparatory schools. So, the Somali region education bureau should employ more female teachers to increase the number of female teachers in secondary schools.

Most teachers who completed the questionnaires are from agro-pastoralist areas. For instance, 83.4% of the teachers are from agro-pastoralist areas, because access to secondary and preparatory education is more available in agro-pastoralist areas than pastoralist, although the majority of the regional population lives in pastoralist areas. Gender representation is also higher among the teachers in agro-pastoralist areas. For example, 83.9% of female respondents are from agro-pastoralist areas. Regarding teacher qualifications, 5.3%, 88.1%, and 6.5% are diploma, B.A/BSc, and master's degree holders respectively.

School Leadership Practices

In Tables 3 and 4, the mean scores and standard deviations for the three dimensions and 10 leadership functions of PIMRS were presented. Overall, the engagement of the secondary and preparatory school principals with these dimensions, functions, and behaviors was low. For example, the mean score of the three dimensions and 10 leadership functions was slightly above the mean.

Table3: *Means &Standard Deviations for the Three Dimensions as Perceived by the Teachers*

Dimensions	Number of items	Mid value	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value	Level of sig
Defines school mission	10	3	2.86	0.64	-4.008	0.000
Manages instructional program	15	3	2.70	0.69	-8.092	0.000
Develops school climate	25	3	2.61	0.66	-10.967	0.000
Whole scale	50	3	2.68	0.60	-9.728	0.000

Note. -All ratings are based on a Likert Scale, which runs from 1--"almost never"-to 5--"almost always." Lower mean scores represent job functions that principals perform less frequently

As indicated in Table 3, teachers mentioned that their school principals relatively engage more with the defining school mission dimension (M=2.86; SD=0.64) followed by managing instructional program (M=2.70; SD=0.69) and lastly developing school climate (M=2.61; SD=0.66). When school principals involve more with developing school mission activities, they can influence the instructional focus of the teachers. This creates a school climate that emphasizes the school's most important task i.e., student academic achievement.

As shown in Table 4, school principals invest their time more in framing school goals (M=-2.95; SD=-0.70) and communicating school goals (M=-2.77; SD=-0.72). In framing school goals, school principals define school goals in a manner that increases their usefulness for instruction and assessment. The focus group discussions conducted with the members of the parent-teacher association also support this. For example, a parent mentions that " school principals set goals with the help of teachers or they may discuss with them, but rarely they discuss or inform these goals to the PTA members or students".

Table 4, indicates that the school principals spend some time in the second dimension which incorporates three leadership functions: supervising and evaluating instruction (M=-2.73; M=-0.80), coordinating curriculum (M=-2.70; SD=-0.78) and monitoring student progress (M=-2.66; SD=-0.83). In supervising and evaluating instruction, the school principal ensures the goals of the school are implemented as planned and monitors classroom instructions by making formal and informal visits.

Table 4: *Means & Standard Deviations for the 10 Functional Leadership Practices of School Principals as Perceived by the Teachers*

Subscales	Number of items	Mid value	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value	Level of sig
Frames school goals	5	3	2.95	0.70	-1.301	0.194
Communicates school goals	5	3	2.77	0.72	-5.808	0.000
Supervises and evaluates instruction	5	3	2.73	0.80	-6.103	0.000
Coordinates curriculum	5	3	2.70	0.78	-7.086	0.000
Monitors student progress	5	3	2.66	0.83	-7.566	0.000
Protects instructional program	5	3	2.72	0.75	-6.872	0.000
Maintains high visibility	5	3	2.76	0.79	-5.606	0.000
Provides incentives for teachers	5	3	2.36	0.87	-13.527	0.000
Promotes professional development	5	3	2.62	0.80	-8.747	0.000
Provides incentives for learning	5	3	2.60	0.88	-8.748	0.000

Note. -All ratings are based on a Likert Scale, which runs from 1--"almost never"-to 5--"almost always." Lower mean scores represent job functions that principals perform less frequently

As shown in Table 4, school principals invest less time in providing incentives for teachers (M=2.36; SD=0.87), providing incentives for learning (M=2.60; SD=0.88), promoting professional development (M=2.62; SD=0.80), protecting instructional time (M=2.72; SD=0.75), and maintaining high visibility (M=2.76; SD=0.79). These functions compose the developing school climate dimension. By spending more time in this dimension, school principals can create academic press which emphasizes norms, expectations, and beliefs that reward continuous school improvement.

According to the interview conducted with the school principals, they argue that they spent more time maintaining high visibility in the school. For example, they stated that: "mostly we are available in the school and I can say that we are better at doing this activity than any other activity".

As revealed in Tables 3 and 4, in the three dimensions, school principals invest relatively more time in defining the school mission and less time in developing a positive school climate. Similarly, in the 10 leadership functions, they engage more in framing school goals, communicating school goals, and maintaining high visibility. They also spent less time providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning, and promoting the professional development of the teachers.

In Ethiopia, secondary education is divided into general secondary education which is grades 9 and 10, and preparatory school which covers grades 11 and 12. Moreover, preparatory schools are also divided into natural and social science streams. Table 4 indicates the perception of secondary and preparatory teachers regarding the involvement of their school principals in the instructional management of their schools. Based on the perception of the teachers, in both the secondary and preparatory schools, school principals engage relatively more in the defining school mission dimension (secondary schools M=2.87; SD=0.66; preparatory schools M=2.85; SD=0.62) and spend less time in the developing positive school climate dimension (secondary schools M=2.59; SD=0.68; preparatory schools M=2.62; SD=0.64). This shows the existence of a deficiency in establishing academic press in these schools.

For secondary schools, the principal's involvement in promoting the professional development function is not different than providing incentives for teachers' function (M=2.58; SD=0.86). Similarly, for preparatory schools, principals spend less time providing incentives for learning (M=2.55; SD=0.86).

Relationship between Principal Practices and School Level, Location, and Size

To assess the influence of contextual factors such as the level, location, and size of the schools on the practices of school leadership, Tables 5, 6, 7, and 8 were prepared. To determine whether there is a difference in the instructional leadership practices and behaviors of secondary and preparatory school principals, an independent-samples t-test was conducted, to compare the instructional leadership dimensions of defining school mission, managing instructional programs, and developing positive school climate for secondary and preparatory schools.

Table 5: *Teacher Perceptions of School Level-Related Differences among Principals on PIMRS*

	School level						
	Secondary (n=178)		Preparatory (n=159)		Independent Samples t-test		
Dimensions	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*Mean diff*	*t*	*P*
Defines school mission	2.87	0.66	2.85	0.62	0.02	0.31	0.76
Manages the instructional program	2.69	0.70	2.70	0.67	-0.01	-0.09	0.93
Develops school climate	2.59	0.68	2.62	0.64	-0.03	-0.37	0.71
Whole scale	2.68	0.62	2.62	0.64	-0.01	-0.17	0.87

Note. -All ratings are based on a Likert Scale, which runs from 1--"almost never"-to 5--"almost always." Lower mean scores represent job functions that principals perform less frequently

For defining school mission there was no significant difference in the means for secondary (M = 2.87, SD = 0.66) and preparatory schools (M=2.85; SD=0.62; t (335) = 0.31, *p* = 0.76, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 0.02, 95% CI: - 0.12 to 0.16) was very small (eta squared = 0.006).

For the managing instructional program dimension, there was also no significant difference in the means for secondary (M=-2.69, SD=-0.70) and preparatory schools (M=-2.70; SD=-0.67; t (335) = - 0.09, *p* = 0.93, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = - 0.01, 95% CI: - 0.15 to 0.14) was very small (eta squared = 0.0009). Lastly, in developing a positive school climate, there was no significant difference in the means for secondary (M = 2.59, SD = 0.68) and preparatory schools (M=-2.62; SD=-0.64; t (335) = -0.37, *p* = 0.71, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = - 0.03, 95% CI: - 0.17 to 0.12) was very small (eta squared = 0.002).

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that there is no sufficient evidence to support the claim that there is a difference between secondary and preparatory school principals in their engagement of school leadership practices. The positive and negative sign for the mean difference indicates that school principals engage more in defining school mission practices and less in managing instructional programs and developing a positive school climate for secondary schools rather than preparatory schools. However, this does not represent a statistically significant difference.

The secondary and preparatory schools of the Somali region are located in agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas of the region. As indicated in Table 6, school principals from pastoralist areas relatively spend more time in defining school mission (M=-2.89; SD=-0.72) and managing the instructional program (M=-2.74; SD=-0.77) dimensions, whereas the school principals from agro-pastoralist areas invest more time in developing positive school climate (M=-2.61; SD=-0.66) dimension. In both agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas, school principals engage relatively more in the practices related to defining the school mission dimension, followed by managing the instructional program of the school, and lastly developing a positive school climate dimension.

Table 6: *Teacher Perceptions of School Location-Related Differences Among Principals on PIMRS*

	School location						
	Agro-pastoralist (n=281)		Pastoralist (n=56)		Independent Samples t-test		
Dimensions	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*Mean diff*	*t*	*P*
Defines school mission	2.86	0.62	2.89	0.72	-0.03	-0.35	0.73
Manages the instructional program	2.69	0.67	2.74	0.77	-0.06	-0.57	0.57
Develops school climate	2.61	0.66	2.59	0.65	0.02	0.18	0.86
Whole scale	2.68	0.59	2.70	0.63	-0.02	-0.17	0.86

Note. -All ratings are based on a Likert Scale, which runs from 1--"rarely"-to 5--"almost always." Lower mean scores represent job functions that principals perform less frequently

This suggests that school principals invest less time in creating a school norm that emphasizes student academic achievement. This opens doors for the students to involve more in activities related to academic dishonesty, such as cheating. Regarding leadership functions, both agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas school principals are involved more in the leadership function of framing school goals (for agro-pastoralist M=-2.94; SD=-0.70, pastoralist M=-2.98; SD=-0.73) and spend less time on the function of providing incentives for teachers (for agro-pastoralist M=-2.36; SD=-0.87, pastoralist M=-2.36; SD=-0.85).

To examine whether there is a difference between the instructional leadership practices and behaviors of the school principals from agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas, an independent-samples t-test was conducted as indicated in Table 6, to compare the leadership dimensions of defining school mission, managing instructional program, and developing positive school climate for the schools located in agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas. For defining school mission there was no significant difference in the means for the schools from agro-

pastoralist areas (M=-2.86, SD=-0.62) and pastoralist areas (M=-2.89; SD=-0.72; t (335) = - 0.35, *p* = 0.73, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = - 0.03, 95% CI: - 0.22 to 0.15) was very small (eta squared = 0.002).

For managing the instructional program of the school, similarly, there was no significant difference in the means for the schools from agro-pastoralist areas (M=2.69, SD=0.67) and pastoralist areas (M=-2.74; SD=-0.77; t (335) = - 0.57, *p* = 0.57, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = - 0.06, 95% CI: - 0.27 to 0.14) was very small (eta squared = 0.002).

Lastly, in developing a positive school climate, there was no significant difference in the means for the schools from agro-pastoralist areas (M=2.61, SD = 0.66) and pastoralist areas (M=2.59; SD=0.65; t (335) = 0.18, *p* = 0.86, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = 0.02, 95% CI: - 0.17 to 0.21) was very small (eta squared = 0.001).

Based on an independent-sample t-test, it can be concluded that there is no sufficient evidence to support the claim that there is a difference between school principals from agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas in their engagement of school leadership practices. The effect size was also very small i.e., only 0.20%, 0.20%, and 0.10% of the variance in defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and developing a positive school climate respectively are explained by school location. So, the regional education bureau should train school principals on generally accepted school leadership practices irrespective of the size, location, and level of the school.

Table 7: *Means and Standard Deviations for Instructional Leadership Practices of School Principals as Perceived by the Teachers from Small, Medium and Large School Sizes*

	School size					
	Small (n=141)		Medium (n=139)		Large (n=57)	
Dimensions and Subscales	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Defines school mission	2.90	0.69	2.85	0.62	2.79	0.58
Manages the instructional program	2.80	0.69	2.62	0.68	2.64	0.67
Develops school climate	2.71	0.65	2.53	0.67	2.53	0.63
Whole scale	**2.77**	**0.60**	**2.62**	**0.60**	**2.62**	**0.57**

Note. -All ratings are based on a Likert Scale, which runs from 1--"almost never"-to 5--"almost always." Lower mean scores represent job functions that principals perform less frequently

To investigate whether the leadership practices of the school principals differ between different sizes of the schools, the sample schools were categorized into small, medium, and large size schools based on the number of students enrolled in each school. As shown in Table 7, the perception of teachers indicates that principals from small-size (M=2.90, SD=0.69) schools are involved more in defining school mission than the medium (M=2.85, SD=0.62) and large-size (M=2.79, SD=0.58) schools. Similarly, principals from small size (M=2.80, SD=0.69) schools engage more in the leadership practices and behaviors related to managing the instructional program of the school than medium (M=2.62, SD=0.68) and large (M=2.64, SD=0.67) size schools.

All small, medium and large size school principals spend more time in the activities related to defining the school mission, followed by managing the instructional program, and lastly developing a positive school climate. This suggests that school principals lack strong academic orientation and give less emphasis to the factors that press students to work hard in school. Regarding leadership functions, school

principals of the small, medium, and large size schools invest less time in providing incentives for teachers and learning.

Table 8: *One-way analysis of variance of PIMRS Dimensions by School Size*

Dimensions	*df*	*SS*	*MS*	*F*	*P*
Defining school mission					
Between groups	2	0.55	0.27	0.67	0.51
Within groups	334	136.56	0.41		
Total	336	137.11			
Managing the instructional program					
Between groups	2	2.44	1.22	2.61	0.08
Within groups	334	156.19	0.47		
Total	336	158.63			
Developing a positive school climate					
Between groups	2	2.49	1.25	2.90	0.06
Within groups	334	143.35	0.43		
Total	336	145.84			

As indicated in Table 8, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of school size on defining a school mission, managing an instructional program, and developing a positive school climate as measured by the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). Respondents were divided into three groups based on the number of students enrolled in each school (small: 475-1224 students; medium: 1225-5600; large: 5601 and above). For defining school mission, there was no significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level for the three school sizes: F (2, 334) = 0.67, p = 0.51. The effect size calculated using eta squared was 0.004 which is very small.

There was also no significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level in managing the instructional program of the school for the three school sizes: F (2, 334) = 2.61, p = 0.08. The effect size calculated using eta squared was 0.02 which is very small. Lastly, in developing a positive school climate, there was no significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level for the three school sizes: F (2, 334) = 2.90, p = 0.06. The effect size calculated using

eta squared was 0.02 which is very small. Based on the analysis of variance, there is no influence of school size on the three dimensions of instructional leadership behaviors.

As indicated in Tables 5, 6, and 7, contextual factors such as school level, location, and size do not influence the school leadership practices of secondary and preparatory school principals of the Ethiopian Somali region.

Discussion

The study examined the time spent on school leadership practices such as defining the school mission, managing an instructional program for the school, and developing a positive school learning climate; and the influence of contextual factors on school leadership practices. As shown in the findings of the study, overall, the secondary and preparatory school principals invest less time in the practices of school leadership, because the mean score of all principals regarding the three dimensions and 10 leadership functions of school leadership practices was slightly above the mean.

Perceptions of the teachers indicate that school principals relatively invest more time in defining the school mission, followed by managing instructional programs and lastly developing a positive school climate. Regarding 10 leadership functions, school principals engage more in framing and communicating school goals; and spent less time providing incentives for teachers and students. This pattern also exists approximately irrespective of the level, location, and size of the schools.

The mean score of this study is quite low when compared with the results of other studies conducted in Thailand, the U.S., and Malaysia (Hallinger, Taranseina & Miller,1994). In this study, the three highest-rated subscales are framing school goals (M=2.95), communicating school goals (M=2.77), and maintaining high visibility (M=2.76). The three lowest-rated subscales were providing incentives for teachers

(M=2.36), providing incentives for learning (M=2.60), and promoting professional development (M=2.62). According to Hallinger, Taranseina & Miller (1994) the three highest-rated subscales in Thailand, using teacher rating was providing incentive for learning (M=3.42), framing school goals (M=3.15), and protecting instructional time (M=3.15). The three lowest-rated subscales were maintaining high visibility (M=2.45), supervising and evaluating instruction (M=2.77), and monitoring student progress (M=2.89).

Hallinger, Taranseina & Miller (1994) reported that Pratley (1992) conducted a study in Michigan U.S. by examining instructional leadership practices of the school principals. Pratley's finding indicated the three highest-rated subscales were providing incentives for learning (M=3.81), promoting professional development (M=3.72), and protecting instructional time (M= 3.61). The three lowest-rated subscales were monitoring student progress (M=3.29), maintaining high visibility (M=3.30), and coordinating curriculum (M=3.32).

Hallinger, Taranseina & Miller (1994) also mentioned Saavedra (1987) investigated instructional leadership practices in Iligan City, Malaysia. The three highest-rated subscales were providing incentives for learning (M=3.58), communicating school goals (M=3.55), and framing school goals (M=3.54). The three lowest-rated subscales were maintaining high visibility (M=3.13), providing incentives for teachers (M=3.18), and monitoring student progress (M=3.22).

The three highest-rated subscales in this study were approximately similar to the studies conducted in the other three countries. For example, both the studies conducted in Thailand and Malaysia rated highest on the subscale of framing school goals, whereas the study conducted in Malaysia again rated highest on the subscale of communicating school goals. However, the differences exist in the subscales rated lowest in this study. For instance, the study conducted in the U.S. rated highest (providing incentive for learning and promoting

professional development) two of the subscales rated lowest in the study conducted in the Ethiopian Somali region.

Generally, the subscales reported in this study are lower than the other three studies conducted in Thailand, U.S., and Malaysia. This may be due to the school leadership practices assessed by the PIMRS being uncommon among school principals of the Ethiopian Somali region. Secondly, this study was conducted in the Somali region which is one of the emerging regions of Ethiopia and the result may become different if the study was carried out in other Ethiopian regions such as Oromia, Amhara, or Tigray regions. Lastly, these results can be viewed as a preliminary or tentative portrait of leadership practices since they were not large-scale research projects.

Conclusion

In the three dimensions of school leadership practices, school principals invest relatively more time in framing the school mission and less time in developing a positive school climate. This indicates that school principals invest less time in promoting a positive school learning climate which facilitates establishing environmental forces that press for student academic achievement on a school-wide basis.

This suggests the sample schools lack school leadership practices, expectations, and rewards that require students to work hard and to do well academically. The absence of standards that emphasizes the importance of academic work, makes student engage in other acts of academic dishonesty, such as cheating. This also increases student tardiness, absenteeism, and truancy.

Mostly, school principals do not collect information that can be used to identify teachers and students whose performance is either above or below the accepted level of performance, and based on the performance of teachers and students, school principals could not provide incentives for high performers and take correction measures against low

performers. Without establishing a strong reward and punishment system, it is difficult for school principals to create a school learning climate in which students give value to academic achievement and teachers achieve exceptional performance.

Regarding the influence of school context on the school leadership practices of the principal, there is no sufficient evidence to support the claim that there is a difference between secondary and preparatory school principals; or between school principals from agro-pastoralist and pastoralist areas in their engagement of school leadership practices. Moreover, there was no influence of school size on the three dimensions of instructional leadership behaviors.

Recommendation

Overall, the engagement of the school principals with school leadership behaviors, functions, and dimensions was low. To solve this problem, school principals should be aware and trained on generally accepted instructional leadership practices. School leaders should create and develop expectations, and rewards that force students to master basic skills, earn good grades, complete school successfully, and go on to higher education.

School leaders should ensure that the school has a clear mission and that the mission is focused on the academic progress of its students to create a goal-oriented, academically-focused, and learner-centered school. With the help of the staff and parents, the school principal should set school goals by incorporating data on past and current student performance and clearly stating staff responsibilities for achieving the goals. Performance goals should be expressed in measurable terms

The school principal should communicate the school's academic goals to teachers, parents, and students by discussing and reviewing them with staff regularly during the school year, especially in the context of instructional, curricular, and budgetary decisions. Both formal

communication channels and informal ones should be used to communicate the school's primary purpose

The school principal should ensure that school goals are translated into practice at the classroom level by coordinating the classroom objectives of teachers with those of the school and evaluating classroom instruction. The school principal should also provide instructional support to teachers by monitoring classroom instruction through formal and informal classroom visits.

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