



Practice and Challenges of School Leadership in Government Secondary Schools of Dire Dawa Administration

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the practices and challenges of school leadership in government secondary schools within the Dire Dawa Administration. The assessment focused on key operational areas of leadership. A descriptive survey method employing mixed approaches was utilized to gather relevant data from primary and secondary sources, including questionnaires, interviews, and document analyses. Out of the 11 governmental secondary schools, a sample of 6 was selected. These schools collectively housed 39 school leaders and 355 teaching staff members. From this pool, 39 school leaders and 157 teaching staff were chosen for the study. The findings revealed that a significant number of school leaders lacked adequate training in school leadership, many schools did not have clearly defined vision and mission statements, and community involvement in realizing school visions was notably minimal. To address these challenges, it is recommended that the Dire Dawa Educational Bureau appoint principals and vice-principals with appropriate qualifications, offer well-structured training programs in school leadership for inadequately prepared school leaders, and establish platforms for community engagement to enhance school governance and improve student learning outcomes.

Keywords: Practice, Challenges, School Leadership, Secondary Schools, Dire Dawa

1. INTRODUCTION

The evolving educational landscape, characterized by increasing complexity and diverse activities, necessitates effective and professional leadership in schools to ensure greater accountability, equity, and excellence. A proficient school leader possesses the ability to prioritize, set a clear direction for the institution, motivate staff, and enhance capacity by developing personnel and optimizing resources. Heck et al. (1990) suggest that principals play a crucial role in shaping teaching practices and classroom dynamics through strategic decisions such as establishing school objectives, articulating high achievement standards, organizing instructional spaces, allocating resources, overseeing teacher performance, monitoring student progress, and fostering a conducive learning environment.

Despite not directly engaging in classroom teaching, school leaders wield substantial influence over teaching methodologies and classroom behaviors through pivotal administrative decisions. Scholars (e.g. Miller, 1995; Whitaker, 1997; Nsubuga, 2008; McNulty, Waters, and Marzano, 2005; Day & Harris, 2002; and Balunywa, 2000) emphasize that effective educational outcomes depends on sound leadership practices within schools.

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School leadership, therefore, emerges as a dynamic process where individuals are tasked not only with managing group activities and administrative duties but also with fostering collaboration and commitment among group members to achieve shared objectives within a specific context, significantly shaping the learning environment to facilitate student progress. Consequently, school leadership has garnered prominence on national and international education policy agendas.

Nevertheless, school leaders across various nations confront challenges that policymakers must address. In numerous countries, educational administrators face issues of overburdening, inadequate compensation, imminent retirement, and a scarcity of qualified successors (OECD, 2008). Similarly, in Ethiopia, school leaders grapple with a myriad of challenges due to the intricate and diverse operational environments within educational institutions. Reports from the Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2007 and Mulu (2012) highlight that leadership and management deficiencies constitute critical bottlenecks in Ethiopian education administration, resulting in persistently low school effectiveness.

Furthermore, the MoE (2018) underscores the pervasive weakness in leadership capabilities across Ethiopian educational authorities, spanning from top-tier management to grassroots levels. The shift towards a broader conception of learning, extending beyond classroom confines to encompass community integration, is widely acknowledged as essential for school effectiveness. However, a perceived deficiency in participatory planning, marked by stakeholder exclusion from the planning phase through to implementation, hampers the ownership and efficacy of educational initiatives, leading to extensive challenges in educational management at all levels (MoE, 2018). Additionally, the 2019 annual report of the Dire Dawa Administration Educational Bureau highlights issues such as teacher turnover and insufficient motivation, exacerbating the substandard quality of teaching and learning in secondary schools within the administration.

Evidently, the prevailing leadership and governance frameworks within Ethiopian schools, particularly in Dire Dawa Administration, exhibit shortcomings in fostering school effectiveness. Therefore, a comprehensive examination of the practices and challenges of school leadership in government-run secondary schools within Dire Dawa Administration is imperative to address the exigencies of policy frameworks and societal demands. Consequently, this study was conducted to address the following specific research inquiries:

1. What are the primary leadership functions practiced by leaders in Governmental Secondary Schools of Dire Dawa City Administration?
2. What are the predominant challenges impeding leadership functions in Secondary Schools of Dire Dawa City Administration?

2. Methods and Materials

This research project was carried out in 2019 at Governmental Secondary Schools within Dire Dawa Administration. The researchers employed a descriptive survey methodology involving mixed approaches for both data collection and analysis. This method enabled the assessment of opinions, attitudes, and suggestions of respondents concerning the practices and challenges of school leadership in secondary schools within Dire Dawa Administration. Among the 11 Governmental secondary schools in the area, a sample of 6 schools (Melka Jebdu, Sabian, Mariam Sefer, Dire Dawa Comprehensive, Laga Harre, and Addisu) was selected using a simple random sampling technique. These schools collectively housed 39 School leaders (6 Principals, 24 Vice-Principals, 3 Supervisors, and 6 Parent-teacher association Chairpersons) and 355 teaching staff members. From this pool, 39 school leaders and 157 teaching staff were selected. School leaders were chosen using a comprehensive sampling technique to gather detailed information, while teaching staff were selected through a stratified sampling method based on sex, followed by random sampling to ensure equal representation. In total, a sample of 196 respondents (50% of the total population) was included in the study using Krejcie and Morgan's table to determine the sample size.

Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized for this research. Primary data were gathered from Governmental Secondary School leaders and teaching staff, while secondary data were obtained through document analysis, including annual reports. This approach allowed the researchers to gain insights into the practices and challenges of school leadership in Government Secondary Schools of Dire Dawa Administration. Data collection instruments were developed based on the research questions. Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis were utilized to collect data on school leadership practices and challenges in Governmental Secondary Schools of the city. Questionnaires were chosen for their standardized data collection process, efficiency in reaching a large population, and objectivity in responses. Closed questionnaires were used to ensure broad coverage and generalizability. A pilot test was conducted at non-sample secondary School to refine questionnaire clarity and

effectiveness. It was also reviewed by two experts in Dire Dawa University with related background.

Interviews were conducted to provide in-depth insights into participants' views on school leadership practices and challenges. Semi-structured interviews were utilized to complement the data collected through questionnaires and offer a comfortable setting for participants to share information. Document analysis was employed to deepen the understanding of school leadership practices and challenges. Minutes of meetings and annual reports from the Educational Bureau of Dire Dawa Administration and sampled schools were analyzed to supplement data obtained through questionnaires and interviews. After data collection through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis, quantitative data were entered into a computer and prepared for analysis using SPSS-20 software. Mean, weighted mean, standard deviation, percentage, and t-tests were used for data analysis based on the study's nature and research questions. An independent sample t-test was conducted to determine the statistical significance of mean differences between school leaders and teaching staff respondents based on their positions.

3. Results and Discussion

In this section, the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the study's results were conducted, primarily utilizing tables and their descriptions. These results were then interpreted and discussed in conjunction with the reviewed literature to derive findings that address the research questions. The findings are structured into two main sections. The first section focuses on the characteristics of the respondents, particularly their personal and professional variables. The second section delves into the core topic of the chapter, involving the presentation, analysis, and interpretation of data on the practices and challenges of school leadership in Government Secondary Schools within Dire Dawa Administration.

Data for the study were collected through questionnaires from two groups of respondents based on their positions in secondary schools within Dire Dawa Administration: school leaders (comprising principals and vice-principals) and teaching staff members. The study involved a total of 33 school leaders, 157 teaching staff members, and 6 parent teacher association members. A total of 190 questionnaires were distributed to the sample schools, with 33 (excluding the 6 parent teacher association) distributed to school leaders and 157 to teaching staff members. Regarding the return rate of the questionnaires, all 33 questionnaires

distributed to school leaders were returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. For the teaching staff, 154 out of 157 questionnaires were returned as valid, accounting for a 98% response rate.

Table1 Demographic data of respondents by Sex, Age and Year of Service

Variables		Respondent					
		School Leaders		Teaching Staff		Total	
		No	%	No	%	No	%
Sex	Female	8	24%	33	21%	41	22%
	Male	25	76%	124	79%	149	78%
	Total	33	100%	157	100%	190	100%
Age	20 or below 20 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
	21-30 years	7	21%	57	36%	64	34%
	31-40 years	18	55%	81	52%	99	52%
	41-50 years	8	24%	19	12%	27	14%
	Above 50 years	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	33	100%	157	100%	190	100%
Year of Service	5 or below 5 years	1	3%	38	24%	39	20%
	6-10 years	8	24%	9	6%	96	51%
	11-15 years	5	15%	17	11%	22	12%
	16-20 years	10	31%	88	56%	19	10%
	Above 20 years	9	27%	5	3%	14	7%
	Total	33	100%	157	100%	190	100%

As depicted in Table 1 above, the majority of school leaders were males. Similarly, the gender distribution among teaching staff members reflected a similar trend, with 79% being male and 21% being female. This indicates a male dominance not only in school leadership positions but also in staff positions within the Dire Dawa Administration. Hence, it can be inferred that the Educational Bureau of Dire Dawa Administration may not have taken gender differences into account during the selection and appointment of leaders and staff. Consistent with this finding, several researchers have highlighted the challenge of obtaining gender statistics in formal leadership roles across many countries.

For example, Shakeshaf (2012) has pointed out that disparities in female education can impact the representation of women in leadership roles. He has also identified various barriers hindering women from entering leadership positions, including societal expectations and the undervaluation of women within communities. These obstacles contribute to gender discrimination and reinforce stereotypes about female competence, leading to the perception that women are less suitable for leadership roles. In terms of respondents' ages, the majority of school leaders (55%) and staff members (52%) fell within the age bracket of 31-40 years.

This suggests that a significant proportion of both school leaders and staff members belonged to the same age group.

Regarding years of service, 31% of school leaders had 16-20 years of work experience, mirroring the majority of staff members (56%) who also had 16-20 years of experience. This implies that these staff members provided valuable insights, having had the opportunity to work alongside their principals and observe their leadership practices over an extended period. Additionally, the data indicates that a substantial portion of the workforce in Dire Dawa City Administration secondary schools possessed significant experience, which likely facilitated their support for their leaders and engagement in the process.

Table 2 Demographic background of respondents by Qualification, and Field of Study

Variables		Respondent				Total	
		Leaders		Teachers		No	%
		No	%	No	%		
Qualification	MA/ Msc / MED	25	76%	46	29%	71	37%
	BA/ Bsc/ BED	8	24%	106	68%	114	60%
	Diploma	-	-	5	3%	5	3%
	Total	33	100%	157	100%	190	100%
Field of specialization	School leadership/management	6	18%	-	100%	6	3%
	Others field of study	27	82%	157	100%	184	97%
	Total	33	100%	157	100%	190	100%
Training on school leadership was obtained.	Yes	11	33%	26	17%	37	20%
	No	22	67%	131	83%	153	80%
	Total	33	100%	157	100%	190	100%

As illustrated in Table 2, the distribution of qualifications among respondents indicated that the majority of school leaders (76%) held second-degree qualifications, while 24% possessed first-degree qualifications. In contrast, 68% of the staff members were first-degree holders, with 29% holding second-degree qualifications. This discrepancy suggests a significant disparity in qualifications between school leaders and staff members. Table 2 highlights a critical finding, revealing that 82% of school leaders in secondary schools within Dire Dawa City Administration were subject specialists rather than being qualified in the fields of Educational Planning and Management, Educational Leadership and Management, or Educational Leadership. This raises concerns about the city's approach to assignments based on professional backgrounds.

Furthermore, the study uncovers that 33% of school leaders had received training in school leadership/management, indicating that 67% of school leaders were overseeing schools without the requisite knowledge and skills essential for effective management. The research suggests that a considerable portion of school leaders lacked the necessary training in key areas such as knowledge, intellect, social competence, and psychological skills, which are crucial for enhancing school performance. In summary, the data from Tables 1 and 2 indicate that the prevailing characteristics of the majority of school leaders and staff members in Dire Dawa City Administration secondary schools, as depicted by the variables examined, suggest a lack of emphasis on specialization and training in the assignment of school leaders.

3.1. Sharing of and Holding Discussion on School Vision

Effective school leaders must engage all key stakeholders in the school and community to gather input, insights, and involvement in establishing the school's vision. Therefore, the practices of sharing the school's vision and the level of discussion held among key stakeholders have been assessed in two consecutive sections. Key indicators of sharing the school vision and discussions surrounding it were derived from a literature review and presented to respondents for rating on a five-point Likert scale ranging from always = 5 to never = 1. For analysis purposes, mean values were interpreted as follows: mean ≥ 4.5 indicated the practice was always implemented, $3.5 \leq \text{mean} < 4.5$ signified frequent practice, $2.5 \leq \text{mean} < 3.5$ suggested occasional practice, $1.5 \leq \text{mean} < 2.5$ indicated rare practice, and mean < 1.5 implied the practice was never carried out.

Furthermore, an independent sample t-test was utilized to examine whether the difference between means of samples was statistically significant based on respondents' positions as school leaders and teaching staff members. In the analysis, the calculated t-value was compared with the tabulated t-value (t critical = 1.96 at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance and $df = 219$). Tables 3 and 4 provide detailed information on the sharing of and discussions surrounding the school vision.

Table 3 Opinions of Respondents on Practices of Sharing School Vision

Items	Respondents' category						t-test	
	School leaders		Teaching Staff		Total		t	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	WM	SD		
Students share on the school vision.	3.13	.721	2.96	.848	3.00	.820	1.330	.185
Teaching staff shares on the school vision.	2.16	.660	2.13	.743	2.14	.722	.276	.783
Parents share on the school vision.	2.13	.771	2.13	.723	2.13	.734	.007	.995
School leaders share on the school vision.	3.27	.849	2.96	.923	3.04	.914	2.235	.026
Community shares on the school vision.	3.36	.729	3.10	.803	3.16	.792	2.186	.030
Educational bureau experts share on school vision.	2.75	.865	2.63	.856	2.66	.858	.891	.374
Educational bureau administrative personnel shares on school vision.	2.44	.834	2.40	.770	2.41	.784	.317	.751
The school vision has a chance to be refined once set.	2.65	.927	2.52	.977	2.56	.964	.869	.386
The school meetings serve to communicate school vision.	2.22	.686	2.02	.838	2.07	.806	1.553	.122
School-wide ceremonies that celebrate the school vision are carried out.	2.40	.807	2.45	.905	2.43	.880	-.334	.739
You have evaluated the importance of having vision.	2.22	.786	2.20	.828	2.21	.816	.105	.916

NB: The Extent of frequency: Mean \geq 4.5 = always; $1.5 \leq$ Mean < 2.5 = rarely; $3.5 \leq$ Mean < 4.5 = frequently, $2.5 \leq$ Mean < 3.5 = occasionally, Mean < 1.5 = never

Items 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8 in Table 3 indicate that the frequency of sharing practices with students, school communities, school leaders, educational bureau experts, and refining the school vision before establishment were rated as occasional, with weighted mean values of 3.00, 3.04, 3.16, 2.66, and 2.56, respectively. Conversely, items 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, and 11 suggest that discussions with teaching staff, parents, educational bureau administrative personnel before establishing the school vision, and subsequent actions to achieve the vision were rated as rare, with weighted mean values of 2.14, 2.29, 2.13, 2.41, 2.07, and 2.43, respectively.

The responses from the respondents clearly indicate a lack of collaboration among key stakeholders in establishing the school vision, which may have impacted their consensus and dedication to realizing that vision. In alignment with this perspective, Mulu (2012) has pointed out the absence of a cohesive vision among Ethiopian school communities when setting directions and goals for school enhancement. Conversely, McEwan (2003:67) argues that developing the school vision collectively with staff and the community is crucial for its successful realization.

Regarding the t-test results, there is no statistically significant difference for the majority of items, except for items 4 and 5. The calculated t-values of 2.235 and 2.186 significantly exceed the tabulated t-value ($t_{\text{critical}} = 1.96$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level and $df = 219$) for these items. This discrepancy suggests that while school leaders and the community collectively share the school vision, school leaders rated these items slightly higher than other staff members did. This divergence in ratings could be attributed to school leaders evaluating the items primarily from their own perspectives.

3.2. Practices of Discussion Held on School Vision

Not only before setting school vision but also after it has been set collectively, it should be communicated repeatedly to many sources in order to develop different opportunities to refine it more and facilitate its realization. To assess the extent to which discussion was held on school vision after being set among key stakeholders, some 12 major indicators of such practices were presented to the sample of the study and the ratings of school leaders and other staff members are shown in table 4 below.

Table 4 Respondents' response to Practice of Discussion School Vision

Items	Respondents' category						t-test	
	School leaders		Teaching Staff		Total		t	Sig.
	Mean	Std.D	Mean	SD	WM	SD		
Discussion is made with students before setting school vision.	3.65	.726	3.22	.888	3.33	.870	3.305	.001
Discussion is made with teaching staff before setting school vision.	3.09	.674	2.82	.833	2.89	.804	2.190	.030
Discussion is made with non-teaching staff before setting school vision.	2.64	.825	2.17	.821	2.29	.845	3.657	.000
Discussion is made with parents before setting school vision.	2.22	.686	2.02	.838	2.07	.806	1.553	.122
Discussion is made with educational bureau experts before setting school vision.	2.40	.807	2.45	.905	2.43	.880	-.334	.739
There is an agreement among stakeholders on the vision set.	2.22	.786	2.20	.828	2.21	.816	.105	.916
There is school-wide commitment to realize the schools vision.	2.40	.627	2.51	.720	2.48	.698	-1.032	.303
Educational bureau experts committed to realize the school vision.	3.25	.886	3.02	.767	3.08	.803	1.905	.058
Educational bureau administration personnel committed to realize the school's vision.	1.60	.627	1.83	.786	1.77	.754	-1.931	.055
Parents committed to realize the school's vision.	1.69	.540	1.96	.746	1.90	.709	-2.504	.013
School leader protect the vision and make it visible to others.	2.51	.573	2.48	.600	2.48	.592	.359	.720
All work together to articulate a shared purpose and school vision.	2.62	.757	2.33	.0896	2.40	.871	2.179	.030

NB: The extent of frequency: $\text{Mean} \geq 4.5$ always; $1.5 \leq \text{Mean} < 2.5$ rarely Low; $3.5 \leq \text{Mean} < 4.5$ frequently
 $\text{Mean} < 1.5$ never; and $2.5 \leq \text{Mean} < 3.5$ occasionally

Table 4 illustrates that the practices of protecting the vision and making it visible to others by school leaders, as well as the commitment of the school community to articulate a shared purpose and school vision, were rated as rare, with weighted mean values of 2.48 and 2.40, respectively. Conversely, discussions with students and teaching staff before establishing the school vision, and the commitment of administrative city educational bureau experts to realize the school vision were rated as occasional, with weighted mean values of 3.33, 2.89, and 3.08, respectively.

In the t-test analysis, there is no statistically significant difference observed for the majority of indicators, except for items 12, 13, 14, 21, and 23. The absolute values of the calculated t-values for these items—3.305, 2.190, 3.657, 2.50, and 2.179—significantly exceed the tabulated t-value ($t_{\text{critical}} = 1.96$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level and $df = 219$). This discrepancy suggests that school leaders rated the extent of discussions higher for items 12, 13, 14, and 23 compared to staff members, possibly stemming from a biased evaluation by the school leaders. Conversely, for item 21, the reverse was true, with staff members rating the discussion extent higher than school leaders. Negative t-test values indicate that school leaders' mean values were lower than staff members' mean values, with school leaders' mean considered as mean one and staff members' mean as mean two during calculation.

These findings suggest that despite occasional discussions with students, teaching staff, and administrative city educational bureau experts to actualize the school vision, key stakeholders have not effectively collaborated to articulate a shared purpose and school vision. This indicates a lack of attention from school leaders in communicating and realizing the potent force of the school vision, which drives schools toward excellence and long-term success. Furthermore, data gathered during interviews with PTSA Chairmen revealed that while a few schools had a vision, the majority lacked clearly articulated vision and mission statements. Even in schools with established visions, they were often inadequately set, communicated, refined, and protected by leaders.

In agreement with these findings, the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2018) has highlighted a perceived lack of participatory planning, where stakeholders are excluded from the design stage of planning up to implementation. This exclusion hampers ownership of educational programs and projects, leading to significant challenges in managing educational activities from the top down to the grassroots level.

3.3.School-Based Participatory Decision Making

Decision-making stands as a fundamental responsibility of school leaders, encompassing all other functions of school leadership. Notably, participatory decision-making has been acknowledged within the school system. Consequently, an evaluation of school-based participatory decision-making is outlined below in three sections.

3.3.1. School Community Involvement

According to scholars, among levels of school-based perceptive decision-making, one is decisions made collectively by school community. To assess involvement of school community in school decisions, 9 major indicators of such practices were identified in the study. The responses of school leaders and staff members have shown in table 5.

Table 5 Response of respondents on School Community Involvement

Items	Respondents' category						t-test	
	School leaders		Teaching Staff		Total		T	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	WM	SD		
School communities are empowered to participate in school decisions	3.58	1.031	3.37	1.006	3.43	1.014	.323	.187
Participation of students are encouraged to participate in school decision making.	4.15	.970	4.00	1.003	4.04	.995	.940	.348
Participation of staff is encouraged to participate in school decision making.	3.67	1.071	3.36	1.068	3.46	1.080	2.456	.015
The school community is well informed as decision making is decentralized to school level.	3.56	1.007	3.43	1.070	3.44	1.052	.197	.844
The school community is clear about steps of decision making.	3.44	1.214	3.18	1.017	3.24	1.072	1.538	.126
School decisions are based on information provided by members of the school.	3.07	.790	2.81	.727	2.88	.750	2.244	.026
There are opportunities where decisions are taken by involving school community.	3.38	1.063	3.04	.005	3.13	1.028	2.141	.033
Students are practicing active participation in decision making to improve their learning.	2.49	.778	2.36	.761	2.46	1.65	1.044	.297
The school community satisfied with decisions made in their school.	3.13	.854	3.02	.841	3.10	.844	.861	.390

NB: Extent of agreement: Mean \geq 4.5 strongly Agree; $1.5 \leq$ Mean $<$ 2.5 Disagree; $3.5 \leq$ Mean $<$ 4.5 Agree Mean $<$ 1.5 Strongly Disagree; and $2.5 \leq$ Mean $<$ 3.5 Less Agree

From items 1, 5, 6, and 7 in Table 5, respondents expressed less agreement that school communities were empowered to participate in decisions about the school and were clear about the steps of decision-making, with weighted mean values of 3.43 and 3.24, respectively. Similarly, respondents exhibited less agreement that school decisions were based on information provided by school communities, that there was an opportunity for involvement in decisions, and that they were satisfied with decisions made in their school, with weighted mean values of 2.88, 3.13, and 3.10, respectively. These findings suggest that collective involvement of the school community in school decisions was not a prominent feature of their schools. Notably, while school leaders agreed that the school community was well-informed when decision-making was decentralized to the school level, staff members were less inclined to agree, indicating a lack of strong cohesion between schools and the school community, potential deficiencies in openness and accountability among school leaders, and an awareness gap between leaders and staff members.

On items 2 and 8, respondents agreed that students felt their participation in decision-making promoted school improvement, with a weighted mean value of 4.04. However, there was disagreement on whether students were actively participating in decision-making practices, with weighted mean values of 2.46. This data suggests that while students may have a positive attitude toward participating in decision-making, opportunities for active involvement may be lacking. Through an independent sample t-test, statistically significant differences were observed on items 3, 6, and 7, as the calculated t-values of 2.456, 2.244, and 2.141 significantly exceeded the tabulated t-value ($t_{\text{critical}} = 1.96$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level and $df = 219$). These discrepancies indicate that school leaders and staff members may not share a common understanding, possibly influenced by their respective positions within the school hierarchy.

3.3.2. Teachers Involvement

Collective decision-making by teachers represents another dimension of school-based participatory decision-making. In order to evaluate the extent of teachers' involvement in school decisions, seven key indicators were identified in the study, and the responses of school leaders and other staff members were presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Responses of respondents on Teachers' Involvement

Items	Respondents' category						t-test	
	leaders		Teachers		Total		T	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	WM	SD		
Information about the school is shared and decision is made together with teachers.	4.40	.62	4.34	.63	4.36	.62	.579	.563
Teachers feel that engaging them in decision-making promotes school improvement.	4.62	1.04	4.64	.95	4.63	.97	-.134	.894
Teachers are willingly participating in decision-making processes that concern them.	3.58	9.94	3.45	.89	3.48	.92	.948	.344
Teachers have making active participation in school decisions.	2.78	.76	2.75	.88	2.76	.85	.261	.794
A sufficient number of teachers support school decisions.	3.71	1.012	3.42	1.09	3.49	1.07	1.723	.086
Procedure for teacher appraisal is developed in a collaborative manner.	2.58	.762	2.55	.88	2.56	.85	.261	.794
There are opportunities where decisions are taken collectively with teachers.	3.53	9.94	3.40	.89	3.43	.92	.948	.344

NB: Extent of agreement: Mean \geq 4.5 strongly Agree; $1.5 \leq$ Mean $<$ 2.5 Disagree; $3.5 \leq$ Mean $<$ 4.5 Agree; Mean $<$ 1.5 Strongly Disagree; and $2.5 \leq$ Mean $<$ 3.5 Less Agree

From table 6, items 1, 2, 3 and 4 designed to assess teachers feeling to engage in decision-making, their willingness and the actual participation. Accordingly, the respondents have less agreed that information about the school has shared and decision has made together with teachers and strongly agree that teacher's engagement in decision-making promotes school improvement with weighted mean values of 4.36 and 4.63 respectively.

However, they less agreed on teachers have willingly participating in decision making processes that concern them and making active participation in school decisions with weighted mean values of 3.48 and 2.76 respectively. This data indicates that mean of teachers feeling was greater than mean of their willingness and mean of their actual participation. This is what is expected to be and it is logical. From items 5 and 7, the respondents less agreed as a sufficient number of teachers supports school decision and having opportunities to participate on school decisions with weighted mean values of 3.49 and 3.43 respectively. It was also reported that the participation of teachers in developing procedure for teachers' appraisal were less likely.

From the results of t-test, it shows that there is no statistically significant difference between school leaders and other staff members in the rating of teacher involvement in school decisions. These show that they have similar perception on teacher involvement in school decisions.

In addition to quantitative data analysis above, data gathered during interview with PTA (Parent-teacher Associations) chairpersons on school-based participatory decision making were narrated below.

One PTA chairperson stated:

“In our school, staff and parents have actively participated in school decision making. This is because: no ‘losses’ for schools as a result of greater teacher and parent involvement in decision-making. Rather, a set of gains for the school. To tell you the truth, this school is really going through learning and maturing process in its journey towards greater parent and teacher involvement in decision-making in schools. As a result, meaningful involvement is to be achieved that impacts positively on the learning of students, rather than resulting in greater school bureaucracy that is exclusive of the school community.”

Another PTA chairperson has raised some concerns as follows:

“There are too many responsibilities the school leader needs to handle. But he is not alone. He can give tasks and responsibilities to teachers and administrative staff. At the beginning, some teachers were reluctant to handle the authority, but when he strongly encouraged them, they were committed. He always tells them, what he/she doing and prepares them to be the future leaders in this school.”

However, one PTA chairperson has stated that:

“We don’t find any major difficulties in this school, but sometimes there is a difficulty of coordination and clarity of the school decision making. This is certainly not a good practice as no single authority figure can take decisions in school matters.”

Similarly, one PTA chairperson told that:

“I think the leaders’ action is inspiring others to dream more, to do more and become more and more. So, as a leader, you should have the ability to lead, to set the directions, to take others with you ...then give them the responsibilities and trust them then, they will do it. However, when come to our school, our leader emphasizes power over staff. Parents them salves not empowered to participate in decisions about the school affairs and he try to gain few points of view from the staff before solving important school decisions.”

As we have observed from the voices of some PTA chairperson, it is perhaps possible to generalize that there is collaborative mode of operation within the school community. They were sharing responsibility and accountability for decision-making with teachers and parents. In short, the principal was no longer the single decision maker in the school. Despite the

relatively positive findings reported for these three schools, what is yet to emerge is evidence that greater involvement in school decision making by parents and teachers actually leads to improvement in student learning or even more generally in the quality of education available. However, as we have observed from the voices of most PTA chairmen above, they relatively oppose the opinion of other PTA chairmen as the sharing responsibility and accountability for decision-making with teachers and parents were minimal.

According to them, decision-making was not satisfactorily decentralized and major decisions were not publicized to the school community. This may reflect that School-Based Participatory Decision-Making (SBPDM) was less likely the feature of their schools. Generally, information shared and decision made rarely together in their schools.

From t-test version of analysis, in a very different way from other tables, there is statistically significant difference between sample respondents on the majority of items. This opinion difference among respondents in quantitative and qualitative data analysis may tell us that community of the schools did not commonly understand the practice of school-based participatory decision-making process.

3.3.3. Impediments to effectiveness of school leadership in Secondary schools

In order to assess the major factors that may impede school leadership effectiveness in government secondary schools in Dire Dawa Administration, 18 anticipated factors were selected and presented to respondents for rating on a five-point Likert-scale ranging from very high=5 to very low=1.

Based on the interpretation principle of rounding mean values, the ratings were categorized as follows: $\text{mean} > 3.5$ = very highly hindered, $3.5 < \text{mean} < 4.5$ = highly hindered, $2.5 < \text{mean} < 3.5$ moderately hindered, $1.5 < \text{mean} < 2.5$ = slightly hindered and $\text{mean} < 1.5$ = very slightly hindered. Additionally, an independent sample t-test was conducted for further analysis. This approach aimed to not only identify and rank the major factors potentially obstructing school leadership effectiveness but also to prompt relevant authorities to acknowledge these challenges and seek solutions. The findings from this analysis could serve as a basis for addressing issues and enhancing the overall effectiveness of school leadership in Dire Dawa Administration.

Table 7 Ratings on Impediments to Secondary School leadership

No	Items	Respondents' Category						t-test	
		leaders		Staff Members		Total		t	Sig.
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	WM	SD		
1	Lack of vision.	2.49	.96	2.43	.75	2.44	.81	.500	.617
2	Lack of training on how to lead and manage the school.	3.65	.92	3.73	.80	3.71	.83	-.571	.568
3	Instability of principal assignment	3.45	1.05	3.48	.85	3.47	.90	-.151	.880
4	Fear of political authorities.	2.75	.70	3.84	.93	3.57	1.00	-8.001	.000
5	Work load on school leaders.	4.05	.73	3.53	.88	3.66	.87	3.966	.000
6	Absence of regulation for staff appraisal.	3.29	1.06	3.47	.86	3.43	.92	-1.253	.212
7	Staff and Students discipline problems.	3.45	1.15	3.45	1.20	3.45	1.19	.015	.988
8	School leaders feel difficulty to share leadership to teachers and students.	3.47	.71	3.67	.75	3.62	.74	-1.698	.091
9	School leaders unable to give priority to activities in the school.	3.45	.89	3.58	.89	2.55	.89	-.931	.353
10	School leaders fear of staff for their positions.	1.87	.66	2.28	.81	2.18	.79	-3.331	.001
11	School leaders afraid to give order.	2.02	.87	2.40	.86	2.31	.87	-2.872	.004
12	School leaders lack of self-confidence.	3.38	1.00	3.77	.90	3.67	.94	-2.684	.008
13	Less concern for people (stick to the rules, no humanity).	2.31	1.16	2.91	1.11	2.76	1.15	-3.417	.001
14	Unable to solve conflicts in the school.	3.16	.91	3.29	.91	3.26	.01	-.881	.379
15	Unmotivated behavior of school leaders.	2.84	1.45	3.05	1.15	3.03	1.16	-1.411	.160
16	School leaders unable to plan in collaborative manner.	3.75	.75	3.92	.68	3.88	.70	-1.610	.109
17	Lack of constructive feedback to staff performance.	4.00	.94	4.08	.64	4.06	.73	-.742	.459
18	Lack of school infrastructure and Financial problem	1.42	.44	1.98	.70	2.00	.66	-3.031	.000

Table 7 presents the major factors that may hinder leadership effectiveness in Governmental Secondary Schools of Dire Dawa Administration, with a focus on the top five factors impacting school leadership practices significantly. These factors include lack of constructive feedback to staff performance, school leaders' inability to plan collaboratively, inadequate training on leadership and management, lack of self-confidence among school leaders, and excessive workload on school leaders, with weighted mean values ranging from 3.66 to 4.06. The t-test analysis revealed no statistically significant difference between school leaders and staff members regarding these top factors, indicating a consensus among both groups that these issues significantly affect school leadership effectiveness. Additionally, these factors were highlighted by PTSA Chairmen during interviews as major problems faced by their schools.

The data in Table 7 categorizes the factors into three sections based on their impact on school leadership practices. The first section comprises eleven factors with weighted mean values mostly falling in the range of 3.5<mean<4.5, indicating a high level of impact on leadership

practices. The second section includes four factors with mean values in the range of $2.5 < \text{mean} < 3.5$, signifying a moderate impact. Lastly, the third section consists of three factors with mean values in the range of $1.5 < \text{mean} < 2.5$, indicating a low impact on practices. Through an independent sample t-test, statistically significant differences were observed for items 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 17, and 18, where the calculated t-values exceeded the tabulated t-value ($t_{\text{critical}}=1.96$ at $\alpha=0.05$ significance level). Notably, in most of these items, school leaders' mean ratings were lower than those of staff members, suggesting potential reluctance on the part of school leaders to assess personal factors affecting their leadership practices.

4. Conclusion

In light of the research questions and the findings elucidated in the study focusing on leadership effectiveness in Governmental Secondary Schools of Dire Dawa Administration, several critical insights have emerged. The identification and ranking of key factors impeding school leadership practices, such as the lack of constructive feedback, inadequate collaborative planning, limited leadership training, low self-confidence among leaders, and burdensome workloads, underscore the multifaceted challenges faced within educational leadership in the region. The consensus among both school leaders and staff members on these top impediments highlights a shared understanding of the pressing issues affecting leadership effectiveness, emphasizing the urgency for targeted interventions and solutions to enhance leadership practices and ultimately improve educational outcomes.

Moreover, the research's categorization of factors based on their impact levels offers a nuanced perspective on the hierarchy of challenges faced by educational leaders in Dire Dawa Administrative City. The significant discrepancies observed in perceptions between school leaders and staff members, particularly regarding personal factors affecting leadership practices, suggest a need for introspection and self-assessment within leadership roles. These findings underscore the importance of fostering collaboration, providing targeted training and support, and promoting a culture of open communication and feedback within school leadership structures. By addressing these identified barriers and fostering a culture of continuous improvement and shared responsibility, educational institutions in Dire Dawa Administrative City can strive towards more effective and impactful leadership practices that support the overall advancement and success of their schools and students.

5. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion above, the following recommendations were made in alignment to each research question of the study.

5.1. The Practices of School Leadership

Harris and Muijs, (2007) have indicated that the school ability to improve and sustain improvement largely depends upon its ability to foster and nurture learning communities. In support of this, Fullan (2007) alludes that the illiterates of the 21st century are not those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn and unlearn. Therefore, it recommended that: Dire Dawa Administration education office: 1) Balance sex proportion and publicize to the community to increase the acceptance. 3) Build the capacity of leaders and staff members of the schools through training and workshops in relevant areas of secondary education (*on key functional area of school leadership; on Strategic planning and professional developments; on school improvement program; on school leadership and managerial practices; on computer literacy and on teaching and curriculum development*).3) Insure mechanisms that encourage a supportive professional culture that values relevance, specialization, competence and merit in job placement through code of conduct.

5.2. The Practices of Sharing and Discussion of School Vision among Stake Holders

School leaders have the responsibility for defining a clear vision to provide direction to the future of the school. As quoted by Naluwemba (2007), one critical element in strategic visioning is the leader's ability to assess the school's environment and take into account its major stakeholders. It is through a shared vision and mission that the school leader would be able to offer a sense of direction to his/her stakeholder. With a concise vision and mission, the school can and should then develop a strategic plan. The plan should be broadly shared and understood by all the stakeholders. If this is accomplished, it helps the school to deliver quality education and hence improve school achievement. It is therefore strongly recommended that every secondary school in Dire Dawa Administration should: 1) undertake a visioning process whereby the leaders and the stakeholders create a vision for the school and the process of developing a school's vision and mission and later on the strategic plan is a consultative process. 2) School leaders in collaboration with key stakeholders need to hold frequent discussion on the vision set to open the door for refining it further and help its realization. 3) Dire Dawa Administration secondary school leaders should communicate their

school vision by expressing it in attention-grabbing manner in their school compound in the way that it is highly visible to both the staff and the students.

5.3. The Practice of Participation of and Collaboration among Stakeholders

For school improvement program, stakeholders are the greatest asset. However, in Dire Dawa Administration secondary schools, the data show that there was low participation and collaboration with key stakeholders and the community were not voluntary to come for school meetings and practiced very weak follow-up for students learning. Therefore, Dire Dawa Administration and Dire Dawa City Educational Bureau collaboratively should be: 1) facilitate forums for community awareness creation and community empowerment for school governance to improve students' learning. 2) Facilitate forums for experience share between nearby secondary schools. 3) show interest and commitment to initiate and facilitate parents in order to actively involving in school activities, and realize their dream for their children. 4) School leaders need to establish and maintain a collaborative school climate.

5.4. The Practice of School Based Participative Decision Making

School Based Participative Decision Making (SBPDM) has the potential to improve the quality of decisions; increase a decision's acceptance and implementation; strengthen staff morale, commitment, and teamwork; build trust; help staff and administrators acquire new skills; and increase school effectiveness. Accordingly, On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that: 1) all school council members should be encouraged to attend regular workshops on school-based participatory decision-making and Dire Dawa Administration educational Bureau in collaboration with concerned institutions should facilitate such programs for the school leaders and other representatives of school councils. The training/workshops should be amid at providing better knowledge and understanding about school-based participatory decision-making policies and programs at the regional, national, and international levels. 2) School leaders should be demonstrating leadership skills and capacities that facilitate such involvement, in particular, the capacity to empower and delegate effectively. 3) school leaders should be make the decision making process open and clear to all concerned bodies and consistent with reality.

5.5. Impediments of secondary schools of Dire Dawa Administration

The study also discovered that lack of constructive feedback to staff performance, school leaders: unable to plan in collaborative manner; lack of training on how to lead and manage the school; lack of self-confidence and work load were the five top problems to Dire Dawa Administration secondary school leadership effectiveness. To alleviate these problems, school leaders should plan collaboratively with key stakeholders to increase their commitment and the tradition of seeking and giving constructive feedback should be developed.

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