

Instructional Leadership Practices Among Secondary School Teachers in Adola Town of Guji Zone

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Abstract

This research was aimed at studying the extent to which the teachers' practices instructional leadership in secondary schools of Adola town, Guji zone. In order to address the objectives of the study, a descriptive survey research design was employed. The positivist philosophical assumption was followed to study the problem. Quantitative research approach was used because only quantitative data collected via closed ended questionnaire. The target sample of the study were 48 teachers and 6 principals were selected as a sample using simple random and census sampling techniques respectively. Data collected from respondents was analyzed and interpreted using mean, one sample t-test, and weighted mean by using SPSS software version 25. The finding revealed that, among the instructional leadership functions, instructional leaders' role in supervising and evaluation of instruction, protecting instructional time, monitoring students' progress, maintain high visibility, coordinate curriculum, framing school goals seemed to be at a better level. Whereas, promoting professional development, providing incentive for teachers, and incentive for students were significantly low performed. Based on the findings, it is concluded that, instructional leadership practices in the town seem to be practiced to certain extent but not adequate. Thus, it is recommended that there should be leadership development strategy to develop leadership skills on the part of school principals through seminars, workshops and trainings on the practices of effective instructional leadership outlined in this study. Moreover, it is advisable if the concerned body of establish professional developments schemes so that the leaders will improve their skills continuously. Therefore, the school principals are advised to develop an instructional leadership development plan paying attention to their own leadership development so that they improve their leadership skills to influence their schools.

Keywords: Instructional Leadership, Instructional Leadership Dimensions, Instructional Leadership Functions, Teachers' & Principals' Practices.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education is the process by which human being passes the knowledge, skill and attitude accumulated throughout life to the new generation. Education helps human being to understand his/her environment and act up on it to change in a way which suitable for his/her life.

The term 'instructional leadership' is associated with measures that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to enhance students' learning. The instructional leader gives the top priority to improving instruction and making efforts to realize the vision. Principals who sustained diverse responsibilities for many aspects of school management, did not focus on the core business of schooling, teaching and learning, were urged to pay more serious attention to the matters of instruction (Hussain 2015).

Instructional leadership is obvious that in our country particularly Oromia region in general and Guji zone, Adola Town in particular, an extensive expansion of secondary education took place under ESDP II & III. However, instructional leadership practice in the region and zones is yet requiring much to be done. Thus, to improve this, school

principals need to be well competent and effective in performing instructional leadership activities. Consequently, the preceding attempts would indicate that the conditions of secondary schools invite for appropriate instructional leadership which in turn calls for scientific study to identify the status of instructional leadership practice.

The role of a school principal was seen as mainly that of a manager/administrator. In other words, the school principal undertook more management and administrative duties and less actual teaching. However, all the school principals' responsibilities are focused on the effective instructional activities to ensure successful accomplishment of the desired outcomes. Active involvement with the instructional program of the school is essential to any instructional leader in order to remain in touch with what is going on in the classrooms.

Currently, though the secondary schools have made various attempts to improve the effectiveness of the instructional leadership, there are some observed limitations that impede the teaching learning process. The researcher had been

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working as teachers and principals in secondary school for long time and he had the opportunity to observe such gaps and conditions. By my own experience triggered me with insight into how this critical phenomenon is dealt with. As to student researcher's observation, instructional leaders neglect the critical issues of teaching and learning while occupying themselves with the more administrative responsibilities.

Therefore, the existing situation could affect the quality of instructional leadership practice in secondary schools in the study area. Yet there were no enough studies that can show the status of instructional leadership practices in secondary schools of Adola town in Guji Zone. Hence, this study attempts to assess instructional leadership practices in secondary schools of Adola town of Guji Zone.

II. SIGNIFICANCES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to assess the instructional leadership practice in secondary school of Adola town. Therefore, the findings of the study may benefit to the Ministry of Education to formulate policy guidance based on the recommendations. The findings may further boost the knowledge capacity of secondary schools in instructional leadership and help in the enhancement of the teaching and learning processes. The study also sets up a stage for further studies in instructional leadership in institutions of secondary schools.

III. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- **Instructional leadership** - The leadership role school principal plays in achieving the school goal especially in improving instruction.
- **Secondary schools** - The learning levels that covers from grades 9 to 12.
- **Principal** - A person in the position of leadership who guide all instructional activities of the school.
- **Practices** - Activities and roles that principals undertake to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the educational processes in the school to promote learning.

IV. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although most literature on the topic states that the concept of instructional leadership developed during the 1980. At the time, Bridges (2002) was promoting his view of instructional leadership as 'experimenter', according to which he or she anticipated the connection between instructional leadership on the one hand, and innovation and school improvement on the other.

Instructional leadership is an educational leadership that focuses on the core responsibility of a school, namely teaching and learning, by defining the school vision, mission and goals, managing the instructional programme and promoting the school climate (Hoy & Miskel, 2008).

All these focuses given to strengthening principals' professional competencies within the Ethiopian education system are congruent with the wide spread advocacy for the view that the most significant factor pertaining to the success of the school is the quality of leadership provided by the principal with regard to the teaching and learning. This

implies that the main function of the principal, as instructional leader, is making effective teaching and learning possible both inside and outside the class room (Kruger, Plessis and Maseko, 2002).

Different scholars define instructional leadership in different manner. Instructional leadership is a model of leadership which focuses on students learning and achievement through development of others, and also invests in capacity building by developing social and academic capital for students and all intellectual, professional capital for teachers (Harris et al, 2005; Leithood et al, in Dimmock, 1993). It is also a leadership that directly related to the process of instruction; teachers, learners, and the curriculum (Acheson & Smith McEwan, 2003).

Despite the fact that principals' instructional leadership would make a difference in school success, argument over the role of the principal is not a new phenomenon as numerous studies have noted that most principals in their actual practice emphasize the administrative or the managerial functions of the job over those of instructional leadership (Elmore, 2000), on their part indicated that the inadequacy of principals' preparation presents a major problem for policy and practice in light of the critical role principals play in school improvement, on the other hand stated that many of school principals seem to lack the knowledge or expertise necessary to promote students' achievements, which is more likely to be possible through sound teaching and learning processes. Worst of all, they emphasized, many of school principals are fearful of change and do not know how to cope with the new requirements required of them in promoting quality teaching and learning (Raheem, 2005).

Instructional leaders know what is happening in the classrooms and develop the capacities of their staff by building on their strengths and reducing their weaknesses (Spillane, 2009). Instructional leaders go beyond the traditional role of school administrators and spend a lot more time focusing on developing knowledge and implementation of the curriculum, as well as instruction and assessment. The Jita (2010) argued that improvement in learning is more likely to be achieved when the leadership is instructionally focused and located closest to the classroom.

Leadership is essential to an organization because it provides guidance in times of change and enhances the effectiveness of organizations. According to Yukl (2010) leadership has been incorporated into the technical vocabulary of organizational studies without being precisely defined.

Hallinger (2012) proposed three dimensions for the instructional leadership role of the principal (Defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school learning climate).

Mc Ewan (Tedla, 2012) identified the instructional leadership roles of principals as establishing clear instructional goals, being resourceful for staff, creating a school culture and climate conducive to learning, communicating the vision and mission of the school, setting high expectations for staff, developing teacher leaders, maintaining positive attitudes toward students, staff and parents.

Bekuretsion (2014) examined that school principals were not strong in identifying and addressing potential barriers to the implementation of a school vision and in channeling

the existing resources in support of the school vision. Instructional leadership was not so evident at schools, both the school leadership and external stakeholders are not necessarily working together to realize the missions and visions of the schools. School leadership is one of the most important factors contributing to the success of the school. Ensuring that a school has the best leadership includes careful selection of candidates, capacity building of those selected, and providing good career development prospects for them.

Manaseh (2016) suggested that the role of an instructional leader differs from that of a traditional school administrator in a number of meaningful ways: whereas the conventional head of school spends majority of his/her time dealing strictly with administrative duties, the head of school who is an instructional leader is charged with redefining his/her role to become the primary learner in a community striving for excellence in education. As such, it becomes the head of school's responsibility to work with teachers to manage the instructional programme.

One promising strategy could be having instructional leaders who have the necessary competence in accommodating or contextualizing educational changes to promote the quality of teaching and learning (Matebe, 2020).

V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Objectives

1. To determine the extent to which principals are performing the functions of instructional leadership activities.
2. To identify dimension of instructional leadership principals are giving more priority in instructional leadership practices.

Population

The population of the study were teachers and principals of secondary schools of Adola town. There are three government secondary schools in Adola town and all three secondary schools were selected by census sampling method for this study. The target populations of this study were six principals and 157 teachers of these 130 males and 27 female teachers included. Therefore, the total target population of this study were 136 males and 27 females, 163 in total.

Sample

Teachers and principals were selected through random and census sampling techniques respectively as a sample. In random sampling each individual in the population has an equal probability of being selected. Thus, with randomization, a representative sample from a population provides the ability to generalize to a population. Therefore, for this study, 48 teachers and 6 principals, totally 54 respondents were selected as sample of this study from three secondary schools.

Table-1: Distribution of the Sample.

Secondary Schools	Gender	Respondents		
		Teachers	Principals	Total
Oda Adola secondary school	Male	9	2	11
	Female	2	-	2
Adola secondary school	Male	18	2	20
	Female	2	-	2
Woyu secondary school	Male	15	2	17
	Female	2	-	2
Total		48	6	54

Tool Used

To measure instructional leadership dimensions, principal instructional management rating scale (five likert scale) which was formulated by Philip Hallinger was checked, modified and adapted. Therefore, in this research both teacher and principal versions of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) were used. The instrument provides a "1" to "5" response scale accompanied with each item with 1 representing "almost never"; 2 representing "seldom"; 3 representing "sometimes"; 4 representing "frequently"; and, 5 representing "almost always" (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Procedure

The researcher was adopted steps in collecting the data. First, relevant literatures were reviewed to get adequate information on the topic. Second, objectives and research questions were formulated to show the direction of the study. Thirdly, questionnaire was adapted from the Hallinger and Murphy instructional management rating scale and checked. Then, questionnaire was modified and finally, the questionnaire administered for teachers and principals of the schools under study. Ethical issues were considered from the beginning to the end of the study.

Data Analysis

In this study quantitative method of data analysis was employed. Hence, statistical analysis via SPSS were used to analyze the collected data. Therefore, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics; one sample t-test using mean and weighted mean to indicate the extent principals are practicing the functions of instructional leadership activities, and to show the dimensions of instructional leadership principals are giving more priority.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table-2: The View of Principals on Functions of Instructional Leadership Activities Practiced.

Instructional Leadership Functions	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-Value
Frame School Goals	6	3.43	0.32	26.24	.000
Communicate School Goals	6	3.50	0.24	35.00	.000
Supervise & Evaluate Instruction Protect Instructional Time	6	3.96	0.34	28.20	.000
Coordinate Curriculum	6	3.43	0.63	13.18	.000
Monitor Student Progress	6	3.56	0.54	16.09	.000
Supervise & Evaluate Instruction Protect Instructional Time	6	3.93	0.37	25.87	.000
Maintain High Visibility	6	3.56	0.15	58.02	.000
Provide Incentives for Teachers	6	1.50	0.20	17.51	.000
Promote Professional Development	6	1.83	0.40	11.00	.000
Provide Incentives for Learning	6	1.73	0.10	41.11	.000

As indicated in table-2, the results of one sample t-test revealed that principals demonstrated significantly relative higher mean scores in activities of instructional leadership functions such as framing school goals (3.43), communicating school goals (3.50), supervising and evaluating instruction (3.97), Protect Instructional Time (3.93), coordinating the curriculum (3.43), and monitoring of school progress (3.57) than the mean test value which was 3.00.

This may show that principals were performing the functions of instructional leadership relatively at higher level mainly on framing school goals, communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, protect instructional time and monitoring of school progress functions significantly ($p < 0.05$). Whereas providing incentives for teachers (1.50), Promote Professional Development (1.83) and Provide Incentives for learning (1.73) performed at lower level. On the other hand, the extent principals are performing the functions of instructional leadership activities in secondary schools.

Table-3: The View of Teachers on Functions of Instructional Leadership Practiced by Principals.

Instructional Leadership Functions	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Frame School Goals	48	3.45	0.27	85.76	.000
Communicate School Goals	48	3.07	0.44	48.02	.000
Supervise & Evaluate Instruction	48	3.35	0.42	54.14	.000
Coordinate Curriculum	48	3.56	0.51	48.36	.000
Monitor Student Progress	48	3.56	0.50	48.90	.000
Protect Instructional Time	48	3.30	0.46	49.63	.000
Maintain High Visibility	48	3.52	0.45	53.67	.000
Provide Incentives for Teachers	48	2.75	0.33	57.50	.000
Promote Professional Development	48	3.10	0.53	40.28	.000
Provide Incentives for Learning	48	2.99	0.40	51.21	.000

As shown in table-3, the results of one sample t-test shows teachers' ratings of the functions mean score of Coordinating Curriculum (3.57), Monitor Student Progress (3.56), Maintain High Visibility (3.52), Frame School Goals (3.45) and Supervise & Evaluate Instruction (3.35) were significantly higher than the mean test value (3.00). This may indicate that teachers are noticing that principals were performing Coordinate Curriculum, Monitor Student Progress and Maintain High Visibility functions better than all instructional leadership functions they are supposed to do.

On the other hand, principal's performance as teachers' evaluations of providing incentives for teachers (2.75) and providing incentives for students (2.99) mean score were lower than the mean test value (3.00). This may indicate that teachers are witnessing that principals were performing providing incentives for teachers, and providing incentives for students of instructional leadership functions significantly at lower level among all instructional leadership activities they are supposed to do ($P < 0.05$). On the other hand, teachers' mean scores of instructional leadership functions such as Communicate School Goals (3.07), Promote Professional Development (3.10) and Protect Instructional Time (3.30), are almost comparable to that of the mean test value (3.00).

However, the principal's view on the functions of supervising and Evaluating Instruction and Protecting Instructional Time mean score is higher than the other functions. This might necessitate that teachers' observation of principals in the above-mentioned functions of instructional leadership activities found nearly at average level. Therefore, the above results from both teachers and principals showed that principals' performance in Supervise and Evaluate

Instruction, Protect Instructional Time, Monitor Student Progress, Maintain High Visibility, Coordinate Curriculum and Frame School Goals are better and they are far above average. Whereas, communicating school goals is at the average level. However, principal's performance in providing incentive for students, promoting professional development and providing incentive for students' is significantly low.

Table-4: The View of Principals on Dimension of Instructional Leadership Activities Practiced.

Dimensions of instructional leadership	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Defining the Mission	6	3.46	0.19	43.18	.000
Managing Instructional Programs	6	3.65	0.38	23.53	.000
Promoting School Climate	6	2.76	0.09	72.79	.000

According to table-4 indicates that the weighted mean for the three dimensions was calculated. The results of one sample t-test reveal that managing instructional programs (3.66, $p = 0.000$) and defining the mission (3.47, $p = 0.000$) were given more priority by the principal in sample secondary schools respectively. On the other hand, promoting school climate (2.77, $p = 0.000$) is the dimension of instructional leadership which was given less priority by principal in the town as perceived by principals. Similarly, the dimension of instructional leadership given more priority in practice by principals as viewed by teachers was examined by one sample t-test using weighted mean.

Table-5: The View of Teachers on Dimension of Instructional Leadership Practiced by Principals.

Dimensions of Instructional Leadership	N	Mean	SD	t-value	P-value
Defining the Mission	48	3.26	0.28	80.50	.000
Managing Instructional Programs	48	3.49	0.34	70.03	.000
Promoting School Climate	48	3.13	0.18	118.83	.000

As shown in table-5, the weighted mean value for each dimension was calculated. The results of one sample t-test depict that the dimension of instructional leadership school principals giving more priority found to be managing instructional program (3.49, $p = 0.000$) significantly at a level far from expected average followed by defining the mission (3.26, $p = 0.000$) at not far from an average level and promoting school climate (3.14, $p = 0.000$) significantly almost at expected average level in secondary schools of Adola town. The results of the scores entail that both principals and teachers were confirming that instructional leadership dimension principals were relatively giving priority in the secondary schools of Adola town was managing instructional programs followed by defining the mission. Still, attention given towards promoting school climate is significantly lower than the other dimensions in the study area.

VII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The study results from respondents concerning the current practices of instructional leadership functions: supervising and evaluation of instruction, protecting instructional time, monitoring students' progress, maintain high visibility, coordinate curriculum, framing school goals and communicating school goal were among instructional leadership functions performed by principals at a better and average level respectively. Whereas promoting professional development, providing incentive for teachers and students were performed at significantly low level by principals.

As far as the instructional leadership dimensions concerned, the result indicate that secondary school principals were practicing managing instructional program at a level not far from expected average, followed by defining school mission just about at average level, and promoting school climate at lower level below expected average.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that the principals of secondary schools in Adola town, Guji zone, to certain extent, practices the dimensions of instructional leadership functions. Managing instructional program and supervising & evaluation of instruction were among the dimensions and functions of instructional leadership given more priority by principals in their practices respectively. The dimension of Defining mission with its functions seems performed at not far from the average level. Whereas, promoting school climate with their instructional functions were found to be less performed dimension of instructional leadership by principals in the secondary schools of the town. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that principals were seemed to be inadequate in performing instructional leadership practices by integrating the functions in the three dimensions in the study area.

Limitations

Since the study confined to only three secondary schools of Adola town of Guji zone, the findings from this study may not be generalized to the whole schools of the zone. The other limitation the researcher suspected was that the study employed only quantitative approach of studying the problem so that it might needed other approaches to deal with the problem as far as the triangulation concerned.

Recommendations

On the basis of the conclusion drawn from the findings of the study, the researcher would like to suggest the following recommendations.

- Regional education bureau, Zonal, Woreda and Town education office should aware the principals so as to encourage the existing practices of the functions within the dimensions. This can be realized through designing sustainable and need based continuous professional development programs at Town, Woreda, Zonal level with special attention at school-based principals professional development programs. This may enable

principals to develop empirical and basic instructional leadership skills to perform instructional practice effectively.

- The school principals are advised to develop a leadership development plan paying attention to their own leadership development so that they improve their leadership skills to influence their institutions.
- There should be leadership development strategy to develop leadership skills on the part of school principals through seminars, workshops and trainings on the practices of effective instructional leadership outlined in this study.
- Further study on practices of principal's instructional leadership functions in secondary schools via other research approaches or qualitative approach is strongly recommended.

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