

Instructional Leadership Practices and Challenges in Primary Schools of Robe Town Administration in Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia

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Abstract - The main purpose of this study was to assess the practice and challenges of instructional leadership in primary schools of Robe Town Administration in Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia. To realize this purpose, three basic questions related to selection of school leadership, instructional leadership roles and challenges encountered were raised. To this effect, descriptive survey design involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed. Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Primary sources were 88 teachers, 5 school principals and 4 education experts. Simple random sampling technique was employed to proportionally select teachers while purposive sampling was employed to pick school principals and education experts. Interview and questionnaire were employed to collect primary data. Documents were consulted for secondary data. Percentage and mean were used to analyze quantitative data while the qualitative data were narrated and analyzed to support the qualitative analysis. The findings indicate that political affiliation and membership were emphasized in the selection of school principals. There were no fairness and transparency in application of the prescribed criteria. Instructional leadership roles like provision of instructional support and technical assistance, experience sharing and enhancing teachers' professional development, involving experienced teachers and the community in school leadership, securing material support and planning for proper utilization of resources were found low. Lack of commitment and professional development opportunities for the leadership, resistance to accept pedagogical roles, lack of adequate facilities and resources, shortage of budget and low financial support, low stakeholders' involvement and absence of support from the local political leaders were challenges to properly practice instructional leadership activities. Hence, it was concluded that actual instructional leadership activities were not to the expected level. Finally, it was recommended that school leaders be strictly trained to embark on instructional leadership activities beside the traditional school administration roles.

Keywords - Instructional Leadership, Pedagogical Leadership, Selection Of School Leadership, Primary School And Leadership Practices.

I. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Instructional leadership plays key role in strategic school activities such as setting clear goals, managing curriculum, monitoring lesson plans, allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth. As different from the traditional leadership that is there to control, instructional leadership involves the use of non-coercive influence to shape schools' goals and helps define schools' organizational culture [as process]; and it is the set

of characteristics attributed to individuals who are perceived to be leaders (Harris and Muijs, 2002). Instructional leadership develops the vision of future, and strategies for producing the changes needed to achieve that vision. It involves establishing direction; aligning people; motivating and inspiring people and producing a dramatic change and above all working with teachers in their effort to appropriately implement school curriculum. Hence, leadership is necessary to create changes and brings

improvements in the over school activities in general in implementation of school curriculum that directly influences students performances.

According to Novak (2002), schools are not isolated institutes that can stand by themselves. They are rather part of the larger society and connected with it in the context of constructing ethical and productive ways of living. Instructional leaders are expected to make rational decisions so that the choices they make should be guided by empirical evidences rather than emotions, personal bias, or political expediency. Similarly, many educators (Hallinger and Murphy, 1996; Blasé and Blasé, 1999); Coughlin and Baird (2013) have repeatedly identified instructional leadership as the most important role of the principal to propel school improvement. According to them, instructional leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the school culture and driving organizational changes that ultimately lead to a more effective learning.

The understanding of how school leadership impacts school improvement has progressed over the past several decades. The impacts of school leadership have been reflected in a number of research regarding school change and effectiveness (e.g. Fullan, 2002, 2006; Hallinger, 2005; Huber and Muijs, 2010, 1996), and school leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004 and Murphy, Elliott, & Porter (2007).

Empirical evidence suggests that school principals, along with their leadership teams commonly called school leadership, influence students out come by mediating academic progress through enhancing curriculum structures and development as well as through the academic supports that students receive (Silins, and Mulford, 1999, Mazzeo, 2003). On the whole, school leadership is a key factor and plays a deceive role in improving schools effectiveness in general and their students achievements in particular.

Researchers have tried to identify several problems that have an impact on the system of cultivating strong leaders. These problems include failure to attract high quality candidates to the school leadership, failure to prepare school leaders sufficiently through both pre-service programs and on-job trainings which focus on crucial issues of curriculum implementation and enhancement of students' learning rather than the on managerial issues such as administrative requirements and routinely organized administrative control.

The past experience has shown that issues related to relationship between instructional leadership and instructional strategies, curriculum implementation, and support for teachers' day-to-day instructional activities were

not adequately addressed. School leadership is poorly connected with stakeholders. To cultivate an effective learning of students through proper implementation of school curriculum; teachers obviously need support from school leaders, parents, education experts and officials at different echelons and communities at large who are directly or indirectly involved in leading education. On the other hand, education offices at different levels and communities play key role in developing school leadership itself and creating smooth working culture in schools. To put differently, they are responsible to create strong school leadership who sets clear goals, manage curriculum, monitor day-to-day teaching learning activities including instructional planning, allocate and monitor wise use of resources and evaluate teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth.

With this in mind, the researcher attempted to assess the practice and challenges of instructional leadership in primary schools of Robe Town Administration in Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia. In so doing, it seems important to see school leadership from different angles- strategic and implementation dimensions in general and from the role they play as instructional leaders in particular.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Leadership is a generic concept that requires specific areas of application tailored to the central objectives of the organization to be managed. School leadership is about creating opportunities to both students and teachers. Recent research suggests that effective principals spend more time in direct classroom supervision and support of teachers, work with teachers to coordinate the school's instructional program, help solve instructional problems collaboratively, and help teachers secure resources and professional training. A school principal is the primary leader in a school building. A good leader always leads by example. A principal should be positive, enthusiastic, have their hands in the day to day activities of the school, and listen to what their constituents are saying. Effective leaders are available to teachers, staff members, parents, students, and community members. They stay calm in difficult situations, think before they act, and put the needs of the school before themselves.

Effective leaders step up to fill in holes as needed, even if it isn't a part of their daily routine (Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe, 2008) and principal may also improve student learning through their control of the curriculum and their power to select and motivate skilled teachers.

Instructional leaders are expected to be effective in spending more time in direct classroom supervision and

support of teachers, in working with teachers to coordinate the school's instructional program, in helping solve instructional problems collaboratively, and help teachers secure resources and professional training. A good leader always leads by example. An instructional principal should be positive, enthusiastic, have their hands in the day to day activities of the school in general and in actual implementation of school curriculum in particular, and listen to what their constituents are saying. Effective instructional leaders are available to teachers, staff members, parents, students, and community members.

As instructional leaders, school principals are expected to transform schools into learner centered organizations by focusing on student learning, (Augustine et.al.2009). Schools are social and political institutions and therefore values and bias have become a common factor in decision making process of school. Center for Educational Leadership (2015) states that school leadership is the most influencing factor to enhance student learning. According to this center, instructional leadership is second only to teaching in its potential influence on student learning. As a critical component school leadership, the work of instructional leaders is, therefore, to ensure that every student gets the maximum possible benefits out of the learning experiences. Hence, doing so requires that instructional leaders lead for the improvement of instruction and the improvement of student learning.

In line with this, (Ismail, et al; 2018) noted that school principals who provide supervision and instructional leadership do not overly preoccupied with strict administrative routines. They rather undertake roles involving the setting of clear goals, managing the curriculum, evaluating teachers, monitoring lesson plans and assigning resources to instruction. This means, instructional leadership essentially involves the actions taken on by a principal to foster development in student learning.

From all the above discussion, it is clear that instructional leadership is vital for all phases of the school development processes and is held responsible for keeping the school as a whole on the right track and for adequately coordinating the individuals during the improvement process.

With this in mind, this study was triggered for the following reasons. First, the researcher's personal and informal observations show that there are problems of school leadership selection which attract researchers for further scrutiny. Secondly, most of the local studies (Sied, 2011; Tolla, 2010, Dejene (2014) and Desalegn, 2011) conducted on school leadership focuses mainly focused on traditional

school leadership activities such as teacher evaluation, planning, reporting, scheduling, budgeting and facility maintenance than the most salient aspects of instructional leadership. Thirdly, it is not uncommon to hear people complaining about unnecessary interferences from external bodies such as governing political party and other government structures. Finally, the researcher was inspired to conduct this research to assess whether there are real instructional or pedagogical supports from leaders so to bring the envisaged quality primary education in the area.

In view of the above research findings and ideas, the researcher was inspired to conduct a research on the practices and challenges of instructional leadership in primary schools of Robe Town Administration.

A. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess the practices and challenges of instructional leadership in primary schools of Robe Town Administration in Oromia Regional Sate of Ethiopia and comes up with concrete recommendation in order to improve instructional leadership qualities.

2. Specific Objective of the Study:

The specific objective of the study is the following:

- To assess the practice being followed in the selection and appointment of instructional leadership in the study area.
- To assess the actual pedagogical service teachers get from the leadership
- To assess the challenges being encountered in school leadership in the study area

3. Research Questions

- What practices and procedures are followed in the selection and appointment of instructional leadership in the study area?
- To what extent do school leaders play their role of pedagogical leadership role?
- What are the challenges in provision of pedagogical leadership services in the study area.

III. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Though there are both private and government schools in Robe Town Administration in Oromia Regional Sate of Ethiopia, this study is delimited to government primary schools of Robe Town Administration. Content wise, the

study focuses only on school principals' selection and appointment, pedagogical roles and challenges encountered.

IV. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell (2009) the research design employed is determined by the purpose/objective of the research. As mentioned earlier, the major purpose of this study was to assess the practice and challenges instructional leadership in primary schools. Hence, this research is descriptive survey in its nature. The descriptive survey design was employed with the assumption that it could help in obtaining information about the existing situation in relation to school instructional leadership activities in primary schools. The researcher believes that this mixed approach (quantitative and qualitative) serves the purpose mentioned above.

A. Data Sources

Both primary and secondary data sources were used secure data. Accordingly, the primary data were collected from schools principals, teachers and Town Administration Education experts using checklist, questionnaire and semi-structured interview. Secondary data were obtained from journals, books, policies and strategies and other relevant documents.

B. Sample Size and Sampling Technique

As indicated by Bowerman and Richard (2003), if information contained in the sample is required to accurately mirror the population understudy, it is advisable to make the sample representative. Koul (1996) also noted that if the numbers of sample selected from each stratum are proportional to the number of unit in the strata, the efficiency of the simple random sampling increases.

On the whole, the respondents included from sexes and various age groups having different educational background and professional services. Concerning sample size, out of 7 primary schools in the Robe Town Administration, 5 primary schools (Zeibela, MaddaWalabu, Ali Bira, Galama, and Kibete primary schools) were selected using random sampling technique. Out the total teachers 244 teachers, 98(40%) were teachers selected as sample of the study using stratified random sampling technique to include both male and female teachers. I so doing, the number of participants from each school was decided proportionally based the total size in each school. The researcher selected 4 Town Administration Education Office experts/officials and 4 school principals. Teachers were randomly selected from sample schools and while school principals and Robe Town Administration Education Office experts were picked purposely.

C. Instruments for Data Collection

In view of the basic research questions raised earlier, survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were employed. Questionnaire was employed to secure data from teachers. Close-ended and open-ended items were part of the questionnaire. Out of the 98 selected teachers as sample respondents, 88 teachers filled out the closed-ended items while only few of the respondents took time to properly give their responses for the open-ended ones.

Structured interview was conducted with 5 selected school principals and 4 Town Administration Education Office Experts. From these face to face interaction/discussions and interview responses, allowed the interviewees to freely express their idea and views that enabled the researcher obtain detailed reflections of education office and school level actors.

On the whole, the instruments used in the process of data collection enabled the researcher to secure data from relatively large number of people.

D. Procedures of Data Collection

Before administration of questionnaire, a pre-test was carried out in Chafe primary school in the same town. This helped the researcher to insure language lucidity and check appropriateness of the item, avoid ambiguities and errors contained in the questionnaire. During the initial stage of the distribution of the questionnaire, the researcher also gave clarification to the respondents in order to avoid any confusion. To maximize the rate of return of the questionnaire, the researcher administered the questionnaire at the time convenient for the respondents.

E. Methods of Data Analysis

The data collected from the study representative sample was processed and subjected to a variety of analysis techniques. Different methods of data analysis relevant to each variable were employed to analyze the data gathered. Accordingly, quantitative data were categorized and tabulated. Following this, frequency count, percentages, comparable order and mean were employed to analyze various characteristics of sample population. Qualitative data were also categorized and narrated under appropriate theme.

V. ETHICAL CLEARANCE

The researcher sought permission from the WEOs before administering the questionnaire in the selected sample schools. A letter of introduction presented to the principals of the sampled government schools. During the course of the introduction the researcher had a discussion with the

respective principals as to how to go about with the questionnaire administration and was agreed upon. Then after, the researcher administered the questionnaire by explaining to the teachers and students in a different schedule that the respondents were voluntary. Teachers and students were assured about the confidentiality of their individual identity and no elements of their response is used for other purpose other than helping the improvement of education.

VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Description of the Respondents

Description of the characteristics contains general profile of the respondents including sex, level of education and

service year in current position either as school teacher, principal or education expert.

As indicated earlier, respondents were selected from 5 primary schools (Zeibela, MaddaWalabu, Ali Bira, Galama, and kibtete) administered by Robe Town Administration Education Office. Of the total selected teacher respondents, 88 (89.8%) teachers properly filled the questionnaire and returned it back. The following table shows background data from these teachers and all principals of the selected schools participated in the study. Besides, 4 Town Administration Education Office experts took part in the study as per the original plan. Hence, one can conclude that the study more or less succeeded in including the required sources of data.

Table 1: Description of Biographical Data of the Respondents

No	Variables	Respondent category (occupation)						Total	
		Teachers		Principal		WEO			
1	Sex	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
	Male	64	72.7	4	80	3	75	71	73.2
	Female	24	27.3	1	20	1	25	26	26.8
	Total	88	100	5	100	4	100	97	100
2	Educational Level								
	b. Diploma	17	19.3	-	-	-	-	17	17.5
	c. Degree	71	80.7	5	100	4	100	80	82.5
	d. Above Degree	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	88	100	5	100	4	100	97	100
3	Experience on the current position (in years)								
	a. Below 5	11	12.5	1	20	-	-	12	12.4
	b. 5-10	16	18.2	2	40	-	-	18	18.6
	c. 11-15	41	46.6	2	40	4	100	47	48.5
	d. 16-20	8	9.1	-	-	-	-	8	8.2
	e. Above 20	12	13.6	-	-	-	-	12	12.4
	Total	88	100	5	100	4	100	97	100

From the data tabulated in Table 2, the following significant characteristics of the respondents have been obtained. Regarding the sex of the respondents, the Table on the whole shows that majority [71 (73.2%)] of respondents were males while only 26 (26.8%) were females. The proportion of females was very few among teacher, principal and WEO experts. Only 24 (27.3%) of the teachers, 1 of the principals, and 1 of the WEO experts were females. From this data one can notice that females' participation as teachers, leaders of schools and WEO experts was relatively low compared to their male counterparts. This also verifies the fact that the proportions of females in the sample schools were very small as compared to male respondents.

Regarding educational qualification, Table 1 shows that 17(19.3%) teacher respondents were diploma holders while 71(80.7%) were degree holders. Concerning the qualification level of school leaders and education office experts, it was found that the principals leading the primary school as well as the education experts were all degree holders. This means, majority of the teachers in the sample schools were first degree holders, implying that the qualification of teachers in the schools under study fits the standard set by MOE-diploma for teachers in primary schools and first degree for teachers teaching in general secondary schools.

Concerning school principals, all the sample schools were led by degree holders. As noticed during the interview, experts from the Town Administration Education Office disclosed that no as such consideration was given to the fields of studies when recruiting and/or appointing principals.

Experience wise, the data shows that majority (69.3%) of the teachers served over 10 years as teachers while only 12.7% of the teachers have relatively lower work experience.

The work experience of the school principals on the current position shows 1 of the principals served on the current position for 1-5 years, 2 of them served for 5-10 years while the remaining 2 principals served for 11-15 years as school leader. Besides, all the selected education experts have served for the same years (5-10 years). This shows that majority of the respondents have relatively longer years of experience which could enable them to have clear understanding of the instructional leadership practices and challenges in their respective locality. On the whole, the experiences of the majority of the respondents on current positions (over 69% of the respondents served in their current position for more than 10 years) suffice the process of getting adequate data for this study.

B. Responses on the Practices and Procedures of Selection and Appointment of Instructional Leadership

This following table comprises data on criteria used to appoint instructional leaders, relevance of the criteria, fairness of the process and problems that were commonly observed with regard to the fairness of recruitment/selection process of the leaders.

Table 2: Responses regarding school principals' selection criteria

No	Item	Responses	Total		Rank
			f	%	
1	Criteria's used to appoint principals as views by teachers	a. Work experience/service	58	65.9	2
		b. Academic qualification/	27	30.7	3
		c. Field of study	21	23.9	4
		d. Political affiliation	74	81.1	1

		e. Community service	18	9.1	5
2	Serious concerns observed in selection process of principals	Lack of transparency in applying the prescribed selection criteria	62	70.5	3
		Giving less attention/consideration to the merits of the candidates	70	79.5	1
		Highly emphasis on political affiliation than on the prescribed criteria	64	72.7	2
		Highly interference from external bodies	61	69.3	4
		Ambiguity in the set criteria	9	10.2	5

*= Respondents were advised to select more than one choice if it applies.

Concerning selection criteria used to appoint school principals, 74(81.9%) teacher respondents indicated that political affiliation was important criterion. Again out of the total teacher respondents, 58(65.9%) reported that work experience/service was important. This shows that these two criteria were more emphasized in the selection of school principals. On the other hand, only 30.7%, 23.9% and 9.1% of the teachers viewed academic qualification, field of study and community service as important selection criteria in appointing principals respectively. The rank given for each criterion also shows that political affiliation and experience were the most important ones to compete for headship positions of schools. During the interview, the participants noted that though field of study is one the most important measures to be considered in the selection of school leaders, the reality is somewhat different in their respective locality. For instance, one of the interviews from education office noted:

Be it at school level or Education Office level, education leaders are important key actors in the politics and as such get the positions not because of their merit but based on their affiliation to the governing political party. There are times even when the Town Education Office [office responsible for the local education] are instructed whom to appoint as school leader. Because of this, it is not uncommon to see school leaders who give priority to their political engagements than to the day-to-day school activities.

The other expert interviewed on this issue said:

It is hardly possible to get school leaders who are not member of the governing party. These leaders, added the interviewee, are loyal to their political and very active in doing political activities both in the schools and in the localities. Until recent time, some of them are highly feared leaders who are not questioned whatever problems they make in their school administration.

Still of the experts held:

Some experienced teachers are unwilling to apply for the position of school leadership mainly to distance themselves from politics. These teachers feel that they may be dragged unwillingly to the politics ones they are appointed as school leaders. Others consider school leadership as a burden without sufficient incentives and are not even attracted by the initial salary.

From the above qualitative and quantitative data, it seems obvious that merit is not at least a priority to appoint schools leaders in the study area. When this happens there is high chance for failure of day-to-day school activities in general and for the rundown of teaching-learning activities that require immediate follow up and support from the school leaders in particular. This is in battle with Drake and Roe (2005) views cited in Ismail, et al (2018). According them instructional leadership main task is helping effective implementation of school curriculum and improvement of students' achievements.

The above table also summarizes data on commonly observed problems in relation to the fairness of recruitment/selection processes of principals. Accordingly,

79.5%, 72.7%, 70.5% and 69.3% teacher respondents indicated that there were less consideration of merits, high emphasis of political affiliation, lack of transparency in applying the prescribed criteria and high interference from external bodies, respectively. Ambiguity of the set criteria was selected by only 9 (10.2%) of the teachers, indicating that it was not as such a common problem in selection of school principals. This means, where there were no transparent, open and merit based selection process, coupled with politics and inferences from outside bodies, the move to have effective pedagogical leaders becomes tough. In response to the same issue, one of the interviewed participants also boldly noted:

One cannot be appointed as school principal without the ‘go ahead’ of the politicians even if he/she fulfills all the criteria. Because of the interference, it is only after

the final approval by the politicians that the WEO notifies the appointment of an applicant.

As noted by Coughlin & Baird (2013) becoming an effective pedagogical leader is both multidimensional and complex. It requires dispositions like curiosity, openness, resiliency and purposefulness help to create conducive learning environment. Mere assignment by politicians cannot guarantee students learning that requires the belief that student learning development is the most significant goal of schooling from school leaders’ side. As stated by Blasé and Blasé (1999), it is by possessing the required skills and knowledge that school leaders may become an advocate of effective pedagogical supports that involve sharing, guiding and smoothing the progress of making decisions regarding instructional improvement that will enhance the education of the student.

Table 3. Relevance criteria used and fairness of the selection process

No	Item	Responses	f	%	Mean
1	Relevance of the criteria being used to appoint principals	a. very high	3	3.4	2.18
		b. high	5	5.7	
		c. medium (somewhat)	15	17.0	
		d. low	47	53.4	
		e. very low	18	20.5	
		Total	88	100	
2	Fairness of the recruitment/ selection process of school principals	a. Very High	4	4.5	2.24
		b. High	7	8.0	
		c. Average	11	12.5	
		d. Low	50	56.8	
		e. Very Low	16	18.2	
		Total	88	100	

In relation to relevance of the criteria being used to appoint school leaders in the locality, 65(73.9%) teacher

respondents revealed that the selection/recruitment criteria of school leaders have either ‘very low’ or ‘low’ relevance were

'not relevant' while only 8(9.1%) teachers considered the criteria being applied as having 'very high' or 'high' relevance. The remaining 15 (17.0%) responded that the criteria applied were 'somewhat relevant'. The calculated weighted mean of 2.18 also depicted that the relevance of the criteria being applied was low when seen against the instructional roles expected of school leaders. To further clarify this issue, experts in the sector were asked about the relevance of the criteria. Accordingly, one of the experts said:

In principle, the criteria for the selection of school principals are clear. Above all the guideline clearly sets that academic qualification, work experience, field of study and performances as teachers are the key issues to be considered for school principal's position. These criteria are relevant. However, applicants having the same work experience and qualification are assessed on the basis of their political connection and membership to a certain political party [ruling party]. The problem is not with the criteria set in the guideline but with its practical implementation during the selection process.

Another expert also noted:

Political engagement overweighs all other criteria in selection of school principals. From the perspectives of politics, school principals, along with some politically active members in their schools, are expected to handle any problem in their locally and as a result political engagement is given more weight in the selection process.

When this happens, it may be difficult to get pedagogical leaders who view their leadership as significant position that concentrates on enhancing the teaching learning activities. Politically appointed individuals may not help both teachers and students to be in control of their own fate as they are cannot easily give up their political engagements.

Concerning fairness of the recruitment/selection process of school principals, about three-fourth (66 teachers) of the teacher respondents responded that fairness of the process and procedure is either 'low' or 'very low' indicating their displeasure in the process of selection being employed. Only 11 (12.5%) teachers of the total respondents considered the

process as 'highly fair' or 'fair'. Weighted mean (2.14), which falls in the category of 'low', also confirms unfairness of the process of selection. In relation to this, one of the experts at the local education office said;

It is unwise to expect the fairness of the selection process. Some applicants who have political connection with the officials have even full information the announcements and its contents beforehand. These applicants are sure that that they will be appointed and the posts are announced merely to fulfill the procedure indicated in the guideline.

From all these, one can clearly observe that there were weaknesses in purely applying criteria like academic qualification, relevant work experience, commitment and fields of study that may sometimes complicate the practice of provision of pedagogical support to classroom teachers. This, as reflected by some participants, is particularly true when those who lack the merit for the position but appointed by virtue of their political commitment. This shows that selection process has some limitations and cannot be hundred percent relied on as relevant. The impact can obviously be reflected in provision of quality instructional leadership in the schools. In a situation where maximum care is not given to qualifications, and experience and where the relevance of the criteria applied and fairness are not up to the expectations, it might be difficult to have school leaders who promote pedagogical activity that require special readiness and ability based on the hidden attitudes and the feeling of leadership and authority, such as a teacher or pedagogue.

C. Responses on School leadership Practices

Instructional leaders, as stated (Blasé and Blasé, 1999) are professionals who by their actions, speeches or otherwise promotes the actual pedagogical activity both inside and outside the classroom. These professional tasks require special readiness and ability based on the hidden attitudes of the leader. The leader's role includes the feeling of leadership and authority, such as a teacher or pedagogue. Within mind, respondents were asked to rate the leadership practice or tasks in their respective school using the scales very low (1), low(2), average(3), high(4) and very high (5).

Table 3: Responses on leadership instructional support

No	Items	Scale					mean
		VL	L	A	H	VH	
		%	%	%	%	%	
1	Instructional support for classroom teachers	35.2	42.0	14.8	5.7	2.3	1.98
2	technical assistance and advice provided on policy issues	35.2	42.0	17.0	3.4	2.3	1.95
3	Creation of experience sharing and networking among teachers	20.5	46.6	18.2	11.4	3.4	2.31
4	Involving experienced teachers in school leadership	26.1	46.6	10.2	11.4	5.7	2.24
5	Enhancing teachers' professional development	29.5	33.0	15.9	14.8	6.8	2.36
6	Provision/securing of adequate instructional resources	33.0	31.8	15.9	10.2	9.1	2.31
7	Facilitation of proper utilization of pedagogical resources	37.5	23.9	15.9	12.5	10.2	2.34
8	Leadership's practice of involving community which in turn may help classroom teacher	28.4	38.6	18.2	6.8	8.0	2.27
9	Facilitation of collaboration among departments	33.0	35.2	15.9	10.2	5.7	2.20

Cut off points: very low=1:00–1:49; low=1:50–2:49; undecided=2:50–3:49, high=3:50–4:49; very high=4:50–5:00

As shown in the above table, all pedagogical leadership practices were rated 'low'. That is, item 1 (instructional support for classroom teachers), item 2 (technical assistance and advice provided on policy issues), item 3 (creation of experience sharing and networking among teachers), item 4 (involving experienced teachers in school leadership), item 6 (provision of adequate pedagogical resources), item 7 (facilitation of proper utilization of pedagogical resources), item 8 (leadership's practice of involving community which in turn may help classroom teacher) and item 9 (facilitation of collaboration among departments), were rated 'low' with mean values ranging from 1.95 - 2.36. This clearly indicates that the pedagogical supports provided for classroom teachers were as expected and the services were limited.

In supporting this, the reflections of participants consulted through interviews depicted that though school leadership can have constructive influences on teachers' competencies in general and on their day-to-day teaching activities in particular. In schools under studies, the leadership has

number weaknesses which require further improvement. To this effect, one of the principals said "To be frank with you I am relatively new to the position of leadership and both of my vice principals are also new. I think we need some time in order to get practical experiences on pedagogical leadership". An expert from Education Office also forwarded the following.

I feel that pedagogical leadership practices improve teachers' knowledge and skills of applying active learning, continuous assessment and enhance schools community relationship. However, in our locality it seems that deep involvement of school leadership in teaching & learning is far from reality. Our school leaders are lagging behind in playing these instructional leadership roles and in strengthening school community links.

The other expert also noted the weak linkage between the school and the local community. He reflected that schools contact local community only when they need some material and financial supports. In such a situation, it seems difficult for schools and the community to benefit one another. In such a situation, it might be difficult to have the kind of leadership suggested by University of Washington (2015). According to University of Washington instructional leadership must focus on the improvement of instruction and the quality of student learning. It must address the cultural, linguistic, socioeconomic and learning diversity in the school community. This means, in modern schools, school leadership cannot only embody the role of traditional school administrators. Schools and their leadership should be linked directly to the changes that are taking place in the society if

the need is to undergo profound changes to provide quality education for children. Overall, from the above data one clearly see that implementation school leadership practices didn't bring positive contributions and provisions of quality pedagogical services as expected.

D. Responses on the Challenges of School Leadership Activities

The following table summarizes data on the challenges faced in school leadership while practicing school leadership activities. The extent to which each of the factors challenge school leadership activities was rated using the given scale levels (1=very low; 2=low; 3=average; 4=high' 5=very high.

Table 4: Responses on challenges in provision of pedagogical leadership services

No	Items	VL	L	A	H	VH	Mean
		%	%	%	%	%	
1	Lack of material supplies/resources	6.8	12.5	25.0	26.1	29.5	3.59
2	Lack of professional development opportunities for the leadership	14.8	10.2	12.5	30.7	31.8	3.55
3	Lack of understanding of the government policies and directions by the leadership	8.0	18.2	27.3	34.1	12.5	3.25
4	Lack of school leadership's understanding of their roles and responsibilities	6.8	27.3	37.5	20.5	8.0	2.95
5	Resistance to accept pedagogical roles by school leaders	5.7	8.0	22.7	36.4	27.3	3.72
6	Lack of adequate facilities (water; electricity, etc.) to support pedagogical activities	5.7	4.5	27.3	34.1	28.4	3.75
7	Shortage of budget and low financial support from education office to play pedagogical roles	8.0	15.9	12.5	26.1	37.5	3.69
8	Lack of commitment from school principals	5.7	11.4	19.3	43.2	20.5	3.61
9	Lack of stakeholders involvement	9.1	10.2	25.0	29.5	26.1	3.53
10	Absence of support from the local political Leaders	6.8	14.8	15.9	37.5	25.0	3.59

As summarized in the above table, lack of material supplies/resources, Lack of professional development

opportunities for the leadership, Resistance to accept pedagogical roles by school leaders, lack of adequate

facilities (water; electricity, etc.) to support pedagogical activities, Shortage of budget and low financial support from education office to play pedagogical roles, lack of commitment from school principals, lack of stakeholders involvement and absence of support from the local political leaders were rated high by the teacher respondents with mean values ranging from 3.53–3.75, indicating that these challenges were encountered to properly undertake instructional leadership activities. Participants in the interview also depicted the existence of a number of challenges. Particularly the at Town Administration level, Education Office experts portrayed that shortage of resources and high turnover of teachers were among the major challenges influencing school leadership activities. For instance, one of the experts has the following to tell:

Instructional leadership requires sufficient resources in general and financial and materials resources and supply of equipment and laboratory chemicals in particular. Leadership could be said effective if it goes beyond the routine activities of management and support classroom teachers in their day-to-day activities. Let alone supply of these services and resources, our schools are not in a position to consistently supply basic stationery materials.

The other expert was concerned noted about lack cooperation among teachers and school leadership. His particular concern was about induction program. In relation to this he said:

School level actors are not serious about induction program. Most of them consider it as routine activity conducted to fulfill requirements. Most experienced teachers want to avoid being assigned as mentors. Even those who accept the assignment do not show commitment to assist the novice teachers. The culture of cooperative leaning and sharing of experience and resources is not a common practice among teachers and school leadership. This challenges instructional leadership activities in our schools.

One of the school principals also complained about shortage of resources and pervasiveness of meetings on many

societal issues other than education. He noted: Series of meeting by the education office and the governing party take much of our time and as such we have no time to focus on classroom teaching-learning activities and curriculum implementation by teachers. The other principal also noted:

Since principals are by default members of the ruling political party, the town administration engages almost all principals in political activities like organizing local communities in small groups, mobilization of the public for timely political issues as elections and sporadic campaigns for unforeseen local problems.

This clearly shows that all the identified variables had an impact on the implementation of effective instructional leadership activities. Seen from the above quantitative and qualitative data, one can understand that school leadership activities were challenged by a series challenges. As indicated above, some of these factors are related with schools and school level actors while others (resources) seem beyond the capacity of the schools.

VII. MAJOR FINDING

A. Findings on Selection and Appointment of Instructional Leadership

- Majority of the teacher respondents noted (81.9%) that political affiliation was the most important criterion followed by work experience/service. The least emphasized criteria, as confirmed by both qualitative and quantitative data, were field of study and community service.
- From the analysis it was found that the selection/recruitment criteria being applied to select and appoint school leaders have either 'very low' or 'low' relevance as reported by majority (73.9%; weighted mean = 2.18) of the teachers. In a similar manner three-fourth of the teacher respondents (with weighted mean of 2.14) reported that fairness of the process and procedure is either 'low' or 'very low'. This was also confirmed by the qualitative data obtained from the education experts.

B. Findings on Pedagogical Leadership Roles

- In relation to the extent of pedagogical leadership roles practiced, the findings indicate that instructional support for classroom teachers, technical assistance and advice provided on policy

issues, creation of experience sharing and networking among teachers, involving experienced teachers in school leadership, (provision of adequate pedagogical resources, facilitation of proper utilization of pedagogical resources, leadership's practice of involving community which in turn may help classroom teacher and facilitation of collaboration among departments, were rated 'low' (mean = 1.95 - 2.36) indicating that the pedagogical supports provided for classroom teachers were as expected and the services were limited. In supporting this, the reflections of participants consulted through interviews depicted that though school leadership can have constructive influences on teachers' competencies in general and on their day-to-day teaching activities in particular. In schools under studies leadership has number weaknesses which require further improvement.

C. Findings on the Challenges to Undertake Pedagogical Leadership Roles

- Concerning challenges encountered to undertake pedagogical leadership activities, the study revealed that lack of capacity and professional development opportunities for the leadership, shortage adequate material supplies/resources and facilities (water; electricity, etc.), resistance to accept pedagogical roles by school leaders, lack of to support pedagogical activities, shortage of budget and low financial support from education office to play pedagogical roles, lack of commitment from school principals, lack of stakeholders involvement and absence of support from the local political leaders were the challenges (mean=3.53–3.75) encountered to properly undertake instructional leadership activities. Participants in the interview also depicted the existence of a number of challenges including capacity problems.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusion was drawn on the basis of the findings of the study.

- From the findings of the study it was made clear that emphasis was given to political affiliation and external interferences were there in the selection process. As noted earlier, there were some hesitations among teacher respondents about the selection process in general and on its fairness and relevance in particular. Hence, this has some impacts on purely applying

criteria like academic qualification, relevant work experience, commitment, and the like and may sometimes complicate the matter. This shows that that selection process has some limitations and cannot be hundred percent relied on as relevant. The impact can obviously have negative impacts in provision of quality leadership in the schools.

- School leadership involves undertaking a range of activities related teaching learning process, teacher development including instructional leadership, student support, improvement of all school environments, working in collaboration with school and local community, resource mobilization and utilization. However, leadership practices were not practiced as expected and the services that were provided by the school leadership were limited. Hence, one can conclude that school leadership constructive influences were not in place in the schools under study and this has its own impacts on the day-to-day school management and teaching activities.
- Effective implementation of instructional leadership activities in Robe Town Administration schools was highly challenged by unavailability of material resources, lack of adequate financial resource, lack of qualified manpower to run schools and the like. Unless the concerned bodies tackle these problems, it is difficult to expect much improvement in day-to-day activities of schools in general and in leadership activities in particular.
- From the findings one can realize that qualified human power in the study area is inadequate to effectively run the school leadership activities. In the absence of qualified manpower leading schools continues to be challenging task in the schools under study.

Generally, one can conclude that though there aspects few positive aspects of the practice of school leadership in the study, one can safely say that selection and recruitment of principals and provision of leadership services/activities were not to the expected level and pedagogical leadership was hampered by inadequate supply of capable and committed leaders, materials and financial supports. Unless acted on by concerned bodies, these challenges may further impede the instructional leadership practices in Robe Town Administration primary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Depending on the findings of research results and organized data, the following points were recommended.

- Schools should be the center of productive human power and as such they should have sufficient capable and experienced instructional leaders. To realize, it seems advisable to apply the criteria prescribed in the MoE documents and there has to be fair and transparent selection process free from any political interference. This means candidates' leadership experience, relevance of the field studies and community service beside the level of qualification.
- Continuous capacity development programs should be organized by the town education office for all the existing school leaders so as to convince them that they are both school administrators and instructional leaders. It is also advisable to implement these programs to mitigate capacity and awareness related challenges and help them understand detailed pedagogical roles expected of leaders in modern schools.
- It is also recommendable that all stakeholders such as the local education office, parents and the local political party that govern the area should help schools with the necessary financial supports, facilities and material resources. It also seems wise to help schools develop their internal income generation schemes in the long run so that they rely on themselves to overcome shortage of materials, equipment and facilities.

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