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Empowering Public Secondary School Principals to Perform Instructional Leadership Roles in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract:

This Thesis draws on quantitative methods survey research conducted to examine how public secondary school principals can be empowered to perform instructional leadership roles in the Amhara region, Ethiopia. The units of analysis were 358 teachers and 76 principals. Teachers and principals were selected using random and convenience sampling methods respectively. Detailed reviewing of related literature to give profound insights about the research problems and objectives, a structured questionnaire made up of categorical and scaled question were included as tools of data collection. The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Version 20. The study identified that principals credited much of their empowerment to access for resources and support and attributed much of their perceptions to themselves. Measures of structural empowerment; psychological empowerment; and leadership behaviour have significant relationships with effective instructional leadership role performance of principals. Inadequate top management support, lack of awareness, absence of clear regulations on ways and tools of empowerment and insufficient funds, undue interference of top leaders, intimidation of principals and implementing unnecessary reshuffle of school principals were identified as major challenges of empowering principals. From the structural empowerment (access to support and opportunity for resources); psychological empowerment (meaning); and leadership behaviour (delegation of authority, skill development, and coaching for innovative performance) had been significant predictors of empowerment. Moreover, principals experience more empowered when they have more sociopolitical support from top management, subordinates, peers, superiors and even customers. The researcher also recommended that principals be should provided with professional freedom to effectively perform instructional leadership roles. Therefore, policy makers are required to formulate and implement empowerment process model for principals of public secondary schools. Finally, this study challenges all leaders to rethink on how they can empower school principals to effectively perform instructional leadership roles in the Amhara regional state of Ethiopia.

Keywords: Empowerment, instructional leadership, performance, principals, public, role and secondary school

1. Introduction

Very few researchers in the field of educational leadership would doubt the link between effective leadership and school performance. Onderi & Makori (2013) have published on the indirect link between educational leadership and pupil performance and Cunningham & Cordeiro (2009) are bold enough to make the claim that after what happens in a classroom, school leadership is the second most influential factor in school performance. To this effect principals' empowerment is a prerequisite for providing quality education at the level of the secondary school. McCay (2001) confirms that, today's argument on empowerment among educators has been focused on principal empowerment. Surprisingly no or little research has been carried out in the area of empowering public secondary school principals in Ethiopia. Although many organisations have adopted some kind of empowerment initiative for at least part of their workforce, less attention was paid to principals' empowerment in order to enable them performing instructional leadership roles. The aim of this thesis was thus, to examine how public secondary school principals (PSSP) can be empowered to perform their instructional leadership roles more effectively in the Amhara regional state of Ethiopia (ARSE). In researching this question with principals and teachers, the thesis aspires to support school principals in becoming more aware of their perceptions and practices on instructional leadership, with particular reference to the possibilities offered by instructional leadership to positively influence teaching and learning. The outcome of the thesis is hopefully providing useful insights to advance instructional leadership practices in the ARSE settings. This study uses an extensive literature review and subsequent field studies to examine the extent of empowering PSSPs to perform instructional leadership roles effectively in the ARSE. This is because of the fact that principals are currently challenged with a very fast growing demand for secondary education in Ethiopia as in most sub-Saharan African countries: "Faster than for primary education and/or faster than in any other sub education systems followed by lack of professionalism and poor management of the school by the principals" (Mulkeen, Chapman, Dejaeghere, Leu, & Bryner, 2005, p. 34). This is

verified by the Education Statistics Annual Abstract (MOE, 2013), according to which there are 1,912 secondary schools currently working and enrolling 1,900,735 students in the country (p. 40). The study is designed to enhance the knowledge and understanding of effective behaviours and competencies of principals in which leadership is broadly shared under the concept of empowerment.

The research done by Dea & Basha (2014) confirmed the challenges associated with public secondary school principals including lack of competence, engaging themselves with routine activities, failure to integrate activities, weak collaboration of stakeholders and high expectations of parents, all of which are identified as major barriers to principals' effectiveness. It was further reported by Roul (2012) that the restricted power of principals, lack of experience, and lack of training are among deterring factors of the principals' instructional leadership role performance. No matter how efforts are exerted to minimise or remove the aforementioned problems to ensure quality education, such actions alone are not enough to solve the problems faced by principals. Nevertheless, the challenges have significant links with the competence and empowerment of principals to perform instructional leadership roles. It is obvious that in the current situations of Ethiopia, many schools face a serious shortage of empowered principals; especially in public secondary school settings which creates problems for delivering quality instruction. Based on the results of the literature studied so far and the researcher's working experiences, the following major gaps were identified that this research should focus on. Hence, most principals:

- Have insufficient preparation, experience and training
- Lack competence,
- Fail to integrate instructional activities,
- Have weak collaboration with stakeholders and to the high expectation of parents
- Have restricted power to make decisions autonomously, and
- Lack opportunities for career prospects and support,

These are some of the key challenges in terms of empowering public secondary school principals to perform instructional leadership roles more effectively in the ARSE. These malfunctions undoubtedly have significant associations with the absence of empowerment opportunities for principals that deprive them of the power to perform instructional leadership roles. In view of that, leadership theory suggests a stronger, positive relationship between empowerment and instructional leadership role performance. However, previous researchers (e.g. Awamleh, 2013) have called for more research to support such a link. Hence, in order to fill such gaps, school principals should be knowledgeable, professionally and administratively competent, and resourceful so that they will be more autonomous and empowered to perform their instructional leadership roles more effectively. This study responds to this call and thus fills an important void in the leadership literature. Based on the identified gaps, the following main research question was formulated for this research: How can public secondary school principals be empowered to perform instructional leadership roles in the Amhara region, Ethiopia? For systematic and logical handling of the major research question the following three specific questions were formulated.

As illustrated in the frameworks of this research, a relatively generic response is offered to this main question, suggesting that any comprehensive framework would include independent, dependent, and mediating categories of variables. So, this main problem leads now to the following three sub-questions of the research including:

- What are the relationships among empowerment, leadership behaviour, and effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance of principals?
- What empowering opportunities are needed by public secondary school principals at the regional, zonal and woreda education offices of the Amhara region, Ethiopia to perform instructional leadership roles?
- What are the challenges and significant predictors for empowering PSSPs in the Amhara region, Ethiopia to perform instructional leadership roles?

2. Aims and Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was examining how public secondary school principals can be empowered to perform instructional leadership roles in the Amhara region, Ethiopia. This main objective can be divided into the following sub-aims of the study:

- To establish the relationships among empowerment, leadership behaviour, and effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance of principals.
- To determine which empowering opportunities are needed by public secondary school principals to perform their instructional leadership roles at the regional, zone and woreda education offices in the Amhara region, Ethiopia.
- To determine the challenges and significant predictors for empowering PSSPs in the Amhara region, Ethiopia to perform their instructional leadership roles.

3. Research Methodology

The study used descriptive survey design and quantitative research approach to examine the practice of empowering public secondary school principals to perform instructional leadership roles in the Amhara region, Ethiopia. The rationale of using this quantitative approach is that quantitative research involves precise measurement, producing reliable and replicable data, that is, generalisable to other contexts. It emphasises importance of large groups of randomly selected teacher and purposively selected principal respondents; manipulates variables within the chosen research setting. It examines the relationship between empowerment (independent variable) and effective performance

(dependent variable) so that statistical procedures were used to determine whether the relationship was significant and aimed to generalise to a larger population beyond the study sample.

4. The Study Population and Sampling Techniques

The population of this study consisted of principals and teachers of public secondary schools from the four administrative zones including Awi, North Gondar, South Gondar and West Gojjam; and two city administrations such as Bahir-Dar and Gondar out of the ten administrative zones and the three city administrations of the Amhara region, Ethiopia respectively. These sample zones and city administrations were included using the purposive or convenient sampling method. This is the most widely used of all sampling techniques, and it is the least justifiable (Vogt, 2007). The reason for doing this is that in a quantitative methods research, the researcher is required to determine the size of his/her sample and the methods of selecting these sample participants known as the sampling scheme (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). When applied researches are conducted in real life, time and cost implications practically lead to an assortment of respondents, i.e., the selection of only a few items. The sampled subjects of the study should be representative of the study population in order to produce "a miniature cross-section".

Therefore, the total number of public secondary schools in the ten administrative zones and three city administrations of the Amhara region were 415 (Bureau of Education, 2016). The sample zones and city administrations constituted forty seven percent (47%) of public secondary schools of the region. Of these 415 secondary schools in the region, 296 were administered and sponsored by the regional government. Therefore, the researcher intended to work at 132 public secondary schools. Bearing such a situation in mind, some adjustment was made on school sample size in order to proceed based on the research schedule. Thus, 108 public secondary schools were selected for the investigation using systematic random sampling technique that enabled the researcher to have sufficient number of samples.

The subjects were selected on the basis of inclusion criteria to make them eligible subjects. Therefore, effects on a participant's performance in latter conditions that result from the experience the participant had in the previous conditions of the study and any factor that creates groups that is not equivalent at the beginning of the study were taken into consideration. Hence, teachers' and principals' years of services in the study site (current school) were considered so that each subject should have been active member of the current school for a minimum of one academic year or two semester period of time. In view of that, 50 principals and vice-principals were excluded from the study on the basis of the said criteria.

Consequently, random and comprehensive sampling methods were used to select teacher and principal respondents from the population of 11758 teachers and 108 principals and vice-principals respectively using The Research Advisors' Table (2006). Accordingly, while 378 eligible teachers who matched the selection criteria were identified by the researcher, just 92 principals and vice-principals were qualified to be included in the quantitative survey study. The random sampling method was used to select teachers which would make provision for individuals to be selected in such a way that each would have an equal chance of being selected (Statistics Canada, 2010).

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005a) in Onwuegbuzie and Collins (2007) further noted that while random sampling tends to be associated with quantitative research to be used for selecting schools and teachers, non-random sampling is used to select zones, city administrations, principals and vice-principals, zone and regional education office using purposive and census sampling techniques respectively. Hence, the researcher was required to decide sampling based on the researcher's resources including time, money etc. (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). These authors confirm that more emphasis is placed on the representativeness for the QUAN sample (pp. 86-87).

4.1. Instrumentation and Data Collection Techniques

Since the preferred approach of the study is quantitative, the researcher used 87 questionnaires to be completed by 365 teacher and 160 principal respondents who were selected using systematic random and comprehensive sampling techniques respectively. A structured questionnaire made up of categorical and scaled questions were used. The questionnaire was aligned to Day et al.'s (2010) eight dimensions of effective instructional leadership (define the vision, values and direction to raise expectations, reshape the conditions for teaching and learning, restructure parts of the organisation and redesign leadership roles and responsibilities, enrich the curriculum, enhance teacher quality, enhance the quality of teaching and learning, build collaboration internally, and build strong relationships outside the school community) and allowed for a thorough description by the respondents.

The questionnaire was comprised of five sections containing the following: Part I was related to principals' and teachers' demographical data, Part II attempted to elicit the principals' and teachers' perceptions on the relationship between empowerment and effective performance of principals in instructional leadership roles. Part III was also focused on leadership behaviours as mediating variables in the educational context and Part IV covered the variables and measures of empowerment practices in the school system. Part V dealt with open-ended questions for the respondents to give additional comments/opinions regarding how the instructional leadership role is effectively performed by public secondary school principals in which leadership is broadly shared under the concept of empowerment.

4.2. Data Collection Procedure

A consent letter was sent to the Deputy Head of Education Bureau of Amhara Region seeking permission for this study. This letter was explaining the intentions and purpose of the study. Both the principals of the schools and heads of education offices at zonal and woreda/district level were informed in writing and their permission sought. The principals were assured that the information obtained from principals and teachers would be used only for the research purpose and

treated with confidentiality. Accordingly, the principals and teachers were given the questionnaires by the researcher right after having their consent. This method was important because it ensured that the maximum number of questionnaires was completed by the principals and teachers.

4.3. Data Analysis and Presentation

Quantitative measures strived for precision by focusing on items that could be subjected to statistical analysis. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), Version 20. The level of significance was set at 0.05 levels. The reliabilities of instruments in the two study populations (principals and teachers) were examined using Cronbach's alpha and were reported as early as possible. In order to maintain the instruments reliable pre-test and retest were conducted on similar respondents from non-sampled schools. In judging an outcome measure of internal consistency, the researcher in empowering PSSPs to perform the instructional leadership role would report and consider the nature of data, the scale's length and width, the linearity and the normality of response distribution, the central response tendency, the sample response variability and the sample size.

Having these in mind, while the research questions 1 was examined using an independent t-test, question number 2 was answered by means of correlation analysis. Research questions 3 was tested using an enter method for multiple regression analysis. The first step of this part of the research involved a series of analyses to test the integrity of the data. Validity checks of the data were conducted to identify: 1) inconsistencies in the data within each data collection instrument, 2) unreasonable entries and 3) impossible entries. These checks were conducted both manually and by computer. All problems and errors were checked and corrected against the original instrument (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2007; and Yin, 2009).

The collected data from the questionnaire of the quantitative approach were uploaded into the SPSS data base and the significance of the relationship between the dependent (principals' effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance) and independent (structural and psychological empowerment) variables were calculated and interpreted.

4.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues must be taken into consideration in all forms of research. In this research, the principle of "informed consent" incorporated in UNISA guidelines and policies was applied. This refers to "a freely given agreement on the part of the researcher to become a subject of the research process" (May, 2001, p. 60). Hence, the researcher submitted a letter to the Amhara Regional Education Bureau where it was proposed that the data collection would take place in its sample zones, woredas and secondary schools. Using the letter of consent the researcher discussed the proposed research with the respective zone and woreda officials as well as school principals who were liable to accept and facilitate all the process regarding the data collection tasks. Accordingly, invitations to participate in the research were offered and schools freely accepted those invitations. However, the researcher recognised that usually the principal accepted on behalf of the school and the degree of consultation with the teachers beforehand was not known to the researcher. For the questionnaires, therefore, a letter of invitation was issued to teacher and principal respondents who were selected using multi-stage random and availability sampling techniques respectively. This provided the opportunity for any individual teacher or principal to withdraw from the research at any time so that all the respective bodies permitted to act accordingly.

5. Results

The convenience sample was obtained from public secondary school teachers and principals. Four administrative zones - Awi, North Gondar, South Gondar and West Gojjam - and two city administrations (Bahir-Dar and Gondar) out of the ten administrative zones and three city administrations respectively of the Amhara regional state of Ethiopia were included using the convenient sampling method.

Variable	Categories	Teachers (n= 358)		Principal (n=77)	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Age	Under 29 year	107	30	29	38
	30-39 year	175	49	34	44
	40-49 year	50	14	9	12
	Above 50	25	7	5	6
	Total(percentage)	358	100	77	100
Gender	Male	199	74	76	99
	Female	91	26	1	1
	Total(percentage)	358	100	77	100
Educational Level	Diploma	4	1	2	3
	Bachelor Degree	268	75	42	55
	Master Degree	72	20	21	28
	Other	14	4	11	14
	Total(percentage)	358	100	77	100
Service year in the region	Less than 2 years	14	4	8	11
	2-5 years	54	15	14	18
	6-10 years	111	31	22	28
	Over 10 years	179	50	33	43
	Total(percentage)	358	100	77	100
Service year in the current School	Less than 2 years	93	26	17	22
	2-5 years	132	37	31	40
	6-10 years	97	27	20	26
	Over 10 years	36	10	9	12
	Total(percentage)	358	100	77	100

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

While the largest proportion of teachers (49%) and principals (44%) were categorized under the age of 30-39, insignificant percent of teachers (7%) and principals (6%) were found to be above 50 years of age. Whereas seventy four percent of teachers and ninety-nine percent of principals were males, the remaining teachers and principals were females (Table 1).

The largest portion of teachers (75%) and principals (55%) were bachelor degree holders while the second significant number of teachers (20%) and principals (28%) had master's degrees. The smallest proportion of teachers and principals did not describe their qualification. As indicated in the same table while the majority of teachers (50%) and principals (43%) served over 10 years, the next large proportion of teacher (31%) and principals (28%) reported to have 6 to 10 years of experiences. The majority of teacher (37%) and principal (40%) respondents had 2 to 5 years of service in the current school. Conversely, a small percentage of teachers (9%) and of principals (12%) had served over 10 years in the current school.

Teacher and Principal Respondents (N=435)		
	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Role performance	0.98	40
Leadership behaviour	0.95	17
Structural empowerment	0.92	12
Psychological empowerment	0.89	12

Table 2: Reliabilities of Instruments

The Cronbach's alpha were ranged from a high of 0.98 (instructional leadership role performance) to a low of 0.89 (psychological empowerment) which represents the internal consistency estimates of reliability (Table 2). The Cronbach's alpha of role performance; instructional leadership behaviour; structural empowerment and psychological empowerment subscales were in the acceptable range (0.80 or above), while the alpha of the role performance was excellent (0.98 or above).

Variables	Minimum	N=435 Maximum	Mean	Std.
Structural empowerment	1.00	5.00	3.50	0.81
Psychological empowerment	1.00	5.00	3.84	0.61
Leadership behaviour	1.00	5.00	3.82	0.77
Principals' role effectiveness	1.00	5.00	3.56	0.80

Table 3: The Overall Descriptive Statistics of Principals' Empowerment Practices in the ARSE

Mean values ranged from a high of 3.84 to the lower 3.50, indicating the perception that the respondents generally felt that their principals performed their instructional leadership roles effectively. Standard deviations ranged from 0.61 to 0.81, indicating moderate variability in the ratings. Participants rated their principals from a high of 3.84 for psychological empowerment and a low of 3.50 for structural empowerment (Table 3). To investigate the effect of one to the other the researcher used more statistical test to support the above information by applying advanced statistical methods like correlation analysis, regression analysis and chi-square association.

	Structural Empowerment	Psychological Empowerment	Leadership Behaviour	Effective Role Performance
Structural Empowerment	1	.76*	.63**	.74**
Psycho. Empowerment	.76**	1	.56**	.67**
Leadership Behaviour	.63**	.56**	1	.77**
Effective role Performance.	.74**	.67**	.77**	1

Table 4: Correlation Matrices between Independent and Dependent Variables

Note: Items Were Measured on A 5-Point Likert-Type Scale. Correlations of .56 or Greater are Statistically Significant at P= .01 (Two-Tailed); Coefficient Alpha Estimates of Score Internal Consistency are Given on the Diagonal. N= 435

Independent sample t-tests were carried out to assess whether the factor and outcome variables correlated. The correlation coefficients of structural and psychological empowerments; leadership behaviour (independent variables); and effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance (dependent variable) were summarised in Table 4 above the diagonal. The study found that most of the variables were significantly correlated. This Table reveals that structural empowerment, psychological empowerment, and leadership behaviour variables have relatively a direct linear relationship one to the others in performing instructional leadership roles more effectively.

Specifically, the strongest correlation existed between leadership behaviour and principals' effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance ($r=.77$, $P=.01$). The second strongest correlation existed between structural empowerment and psychological empowerment ($r=.76$, $P=.01$). The relationship between structural empowerment and effective role performance was also high ($r=.74$, $P=.01$). The result of the analysis revealed that a stronger correlation existed between leadership behaviour and structural empowerment than between leadership behaviour and psychological empowerment. All the variables are, therefore, statistically significant at ($P\text{-value}<0.001$).

Model	R	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate	
1	0.853	0.727	0.718	0.423	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F-value	Sig.
Regression	197.112	14	14.079	78.791	0.000
Residual	73.979	414	0.179		
Total	271.091	428			

Table 5: Over All Model Summaries for Effective Instructional Leadership Role Performance of Principals in the Arse

Multiple regression analysis was used to predict the most important variables in empowering principals to perform instructional leadership roles more effectively. Based on the summarised analysis from Table 5, the model reveals that these variables depict 72.2% of a dependent variable empowerment of secondary school principals at $p\text{-value}<0.001$. It is also worth mentioning that the effectiveness of principals in their instructional leadership role performance depends on the practices of both structural and psychological empowerment and leadership behaviour.

Model	Coefficients			
	B	Std.Error	T	P-value
Constants	-0.189	0.162	-1.167	0.244
Str. Empowerment: Access to support	0.085	0.036	2.349	0.019
Str. Empowerment: Resource	0.122	0.036	3.358	0.001
Str. Empowerment: Information	0.051	0.034	1.500	0.135
Str. Empowerment: Opportunity	0.067	0.036	1.848	0.065
Psy. Empowerment: Competence	0.023	0.046	0.510	0.610
Psy. Empowerment: Meaning	0.107	0.046	2.328	0.020
Psy. Empowerment: Self –determination	0.054	0.045	1.214	0.226
Psy. Empowerment: Impact	-0.011	0.039	-0.280	0.780
LB. Delegation of authority	0.129	0.036	3.611	0.000
LB. Accountability	0.069	0.036	1.949	0.052
LB. Self-directed decision making	-0.045	0.041	-1.085	0.279
LB. Information sharing	0.056	0.034	1.652	0.099
LB. Skill development	0.150	0.039	3.871	0.000
LB. Coaching for inov. Performance	0.147	0.043	3.398	0.001

Table 6: Multiple Regressions among Variables

Means, standard deviations, alpha reliability coefficients, and correlations among the fourteen measures ranged from moderate to large correlations among all of the leadership behaviour scales and the composite measure of structural and psychological empowerment indicating that leader behaviours are related to the structural and psychological experience of empowerment. The study found evidence that the scales are positively related to the theoretically relevant outcome variables of effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance (Table 6).

Among the dimensions of structural empowerment, access to support and resource have statistically significant effect on principal instructional leadership role performance. Whereas meaning among the components of psychological empowerment has an effect on the effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance of principals at P-value=0.02. Further analysis showed that delegation of authority, skill development and coaching for innovative performance of leadership behaviour dimensions have significant relationships with effective role performance of principals (Table 6).

Sub-Themes	Teachers (N=358)		Principals (N=77)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Professional development opportunities	243	68	35	45
Support from superintendents	47	13	19	25
No opportunity is given to principals	68	19	23	30
Total	358	100	77	100

Table 7: Percentage of Opportunities Provided to Public Secondary School Principals

The comments below illustrate the types of opportunities provided by educational officials to ensure principals' empowerment. The overall response to the survey was also poor with the exception of professional development. These were classified into three broad categories professional development, monitoring and evaluation support, and no opportunity is given to principals. Among professional development opportunities available for principals included: providing further education programme for MA degrees, short term trainings and regional workshops related to policy issues. Some felt that frequent supervision, provision of school manuals and procedures were provided by the cluster supervisors (Table 7).

Sub-Themes	Teachers (N=358)		Principals (N=77)	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Lack of opportunity to make workplace decisions	92	26	28	36
Shortage of resources	119	33	12	16
Lack of the required skills and knowledge	147	41	37	48
Total	358	100	77	100

Table 8: The Challenges That Constrain the Practice of Empowering PSSPs

The challenges identified by the respondents include lack of access to information, support, resources, and opportunities to learn and grow in their work setting. The majority of teacher and principal respondents commented that lack of the required skills and knowledge were deterring challenges. The other important challenges were reported by the same groups that the lack of opportunity to make workplace decisions and shortage of resources (Table 8).

Most responses given to open-ended questions were surprisingly comparable to the variables identified in both empowerment and leadership behaviours which were obstructing the practice of empowering PSSPs to perform their instructional leadership roles more effectively. Principals and teachers were asked to suggest possible mechanisms to overcome the challenges that prevent the practice of empowering principals to perform instructional leadership

roleseffectively. Some principals expressed the belief that the autonomous right for self-directed decision making must be in place. For example, several principals suggested that as school principals they would benefit from training on matters including how to communicate better, how to be a good team leader, how to promote more positive leadership, how to manage time more efficiently, how to be more autonomous and more consistent with student discipline matters, and how to be professional while being friendly.

6. Discussion

The purpose of this descriptive survey was to determine how public secondary school principals can be empowered to perform instructional leadership roles in Amhara regional state of Ethiopia. The results of this study were presented on the basis of the research questions. A structured questionnaire made up of categorical and scaled questions was used to analyse the perceptions of principals and teachers on: the relationship between empowerment and the effective performance of instructional leadership roles; the instructional leadership behaviours exhibited by principals while performing instructional leadership roles; and the measures of both the structural and psychological empowerment practices.

It was stated that this quantitative study was aimed to investigate the relationship between empowerment, leadership behaviour, and effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance of principals. Table 2 depicts that the Cronbach's alpha ranged from a high of 0.98 (instructional leadership role performance) to a low of 0.89 (psychological empowerment) which represents the internal consistency estimate of reliability. The reliability coefficients for all 40 of the role performance, 17 of leadership behaviour, 12 of structural empowerment and 12 of psychological empowerment sub-scales were in the acceptable range (0.89 or above). According to McMillan (2004) and McMillan and Schumacher (2001), the average alphas for 40 of the role performance sub-scales were excellent (0.98 or above).

This study has also shown that the mean scores for teachers and principal responses ranged from a high of 3.89 (Redesign roles & responsibilities) to a low of 3.16 (Relationships outside the school community). The findings clearly indicate that there is a positive relationship between the effective role performance and structural empowerment that support the author's prediction (Table 3).

What stands out in the analysis of Table 3 is that while principals were "frequently" effective in their redesigning roles and responsibilities, they were "sometimes" effective in their performance of enriching teacher quality and relationship outside the school community. Principals were neither "almost always" nor "almost never effective" in their instructional leadership role performance. The result of the analysis indicates that their role performance was on average effective. An implication of this is the possibility that de-professionalisation of the leadership preparation negatively influences principals' role performance. This is surprisingly well-suited to the comments given in open-ended questions that many principals usually give more attention to managerial activities than instructional issues. The evidence from this study suggests that inadequate support from superiors was another cause for low practices of empowering principals to perform instructional leadership roles more effectively in the region.

The present study clearly indicates that three of the sub-scales of leadership behaviour including "self-directed decision making", "information sharing", and "coaching for innovative performance" received relatively lower average rates from principals and teachers than the other two sub-scales ("delegation of authority" and "accountability"). However, principals and teachers rated on average "agree" for all of the six sub-scales of leadership behaviour. The results of the analyses, therefore, indicated insignificant differences in respondents' perceptions on the specified dimensions of leadership behaviour. The results of this investigation show that respondents have moderately positive attitudes towards the practice of empowering principals to perform instructional leadership roles (means ranged from a high of 4.10 for delegation of authority & accountability to a relatively low average of 3.50 for skill development).

There was a significant positive correlation between structural empowerment, psychological empowerment and leadership behaviour with effective instructional leadership role performance of principals. The results of this study indicate that among the dimensions of structural empowerment, access to support and resource have a statistically significant effect on principal instructional leadership role performance, whereas meaning among the components of psychological empowerment has an effect on the effectiveness in instructional leadership role performance of principals at P -value=0.02. Further analysis showed that the delegation of authority, self-directed decision making and coaching for innovative performance of leadership behaviour dimensions have significant relationships with effective role performance of principals (Table 6).

It is believed that the literature review guides the reader to understand the contribution of the work by pointing out the shortcomings/gaps of this particular research problem. However, as it was confirmed in the statement of the problem in the introductory chapter, though there is plenty of literature to be reviewed to provide a critical overview on the concept of instructional leadership in the developed countries, there is a paucity of relevant materials as regards the study area (Amhara regional state of Ethiopia), leaving relatively sparse literature on empowering public secondary school principals in this context.

The most striking findings to emerge from the analysis of the quantitative data were somewhat opposite to the responses reported by the education officials at district or zonal level. These rather contradictory results may be due to different perceptions of the school communities and the central offices. To verify the causes of perception differences, while principals and teachers felt that they are less secure in their roles because of low support from the leaders, on the contrary educational managers condemned principals by claiming that principals are not ready to empower themselves. It can therefore be inferred that the lack of knowledge and skills with the absence of support eroded principals' self-confidence on their responsibility. These are the paradoxes of the study results reported below.

Further analysis showed that, despite the general agreement on the importance of the empowerment principle, there are a wide range of differences among the two groups of respondents (teachers and principals as one group, and office managers on the other group) about the meaning, nature, tools and applications of empowerment to enhance instructional leadership role performance. This seems to be caused by the perception differences between managers and the instructional leaders (teachers and principals). While office managers thought that instructional leadership is linked with policy implementation and monitoring to budgeting and public relations, the perceptions of principals and teachers are focused on instructional issues that will impact classroom instruction and student achievement (this was discussed in the qualitative part of the same thesis which is not included here).

In terms of the structural empowerment, much of the work has been conducted under the terms high involvement work practices and high role performance systems and they have focused on school level outcomes. The means of principals' and teachers' perceptions ranged from a relatively high of 3.70 (access to support) to a relatively low of 3.38 (opportunity). Explicitly, while the two components of structural empowerment rated on "agree" (access to support and resource), the remaining two sub scales received "neutral" (information and opportunity). Respondents gave the lowest average ratings for structural empowerment practices, particularly for information and opportunity components. Another significant finding to emerge from this study is that "access to support" and "resources" may have more significant influence on principals' role performance than the "information" and "opportunity" components of the structural empowerment as revealed in Table 6.

The result of descriptive statistics of respondents' perceptions on the measures of psychological empowerment practices ranged from a high of 4.00 (competence) to a relatively average of 3.63 (impact). These results could explain the findings of Vacharakiat (2008) on psychological empowerment. The findings of this study may explain the relatively good correlation between effective role performance and psychological empowerment. The scales are positively related to the theoretically relevant outcome. As revealed in the analysis table, the majority of the respondents rated "agree" for all components of psychological empowerment. None of the rater groups reported means in the "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" categories. It seems safe to infer that empowerment is an essential tool for the enhancement of principals' abilities and capabilities in mastering their jobs. The results of this study is supported by Fernandez & Moldogaziev (2013a), who point out that organisations should create a work environment which promotes principals' ability and desire to act in empowered ways and remove barriers that limit their ability in this regard.

The finding related to the perceptions of teachers and principals on empowering opportunities needed by the principals is discussed herein. Many researchers in the structural empowerment perspective had shown that high involvement practices which involve sharing power, information, knowledge, and rewards with employees at all levels have positive outcomes for schools, particularly in terms of improvements of principals' quality of work life and the quality of educational services.

However, the findings of the current study do not support the previous research since most of the respondents reported having low to average opportunity levels on the subject of structural empowerment. A possible explanation for this might be that the practices of education officials to empower principals and implement school-based decision making has gradually resulted in a move away from the professionalization of teaching toward bureaucratic control as reported by principal respondents. All principal participants underscored the importance of merit-based assignments, professional freedom, and opportunity for skill and knowledge development to empower principals. Another possible explanation for this is that empowerment is ensured when principals feel that they can influence the decisions that impact on their lives and are provided with meaningful opportunities to make this an actuality and not a mere possibility.

Some authors have speculated in the reviewed literature that principals are empowered when they have access to information, support, resources, and opportunities to learn and grow in their work setting. Jobs that provide discretion and that are central to the school purpose increase access to these empowering structures. The present findings seem to be consistent with other research which found strong networks with school board members, and community stakeholders, peers, superiors, and other school members increase "access to support" (one of the dimensions of the structural empowerment). A possible explanation for some of the results of this research is that the lack of adequate support and resources lead to disempowerment of principals in the region.

Although most of the recent researchers have found that the roles of the principals had changed considerably in recent years, principals are still responsible for overseeing personnel, academics, finances, and community involvement duties (Berman, 2005). Increased accountability in education has also shifted the role of the principals. Though principals are asked to be empowered and exceedingly skilful instructional leaders, the accountability requirements drastically impact the time available and other opportunities for them to fulfill these tasks. Policy-makers should examine accountability requirements and strive to achieve a better balance between the reporting of progress as it relates to education in all schools of Amhara regional state with the time required to empower principals to be effective in their instructional leadership role performances (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005).

On the question of possible strategies available to empower principals, this study found that sometimes there was confusion about what is meant by the term 'empowerment'. For example, though it is not uncommon for managers to tell employees that they are empowered but do not explain what they mean by empowerment. A principal may make an assumption about what the manager means by empowerment - he or she responds enthusiastically by making a decision independently that they may have had to get approval for in the past. The manager responds negatively because he or she was just looking for principals to share more ideas with them, and not actually make decisions of their own. Consequently, the principal feels unhappy and returns to his or her old ways of working. As such, a key issue for managers is to be clear and explicit about what they mean by empowerment.

The research has also shown that more variations were revealed in terms of their skills such as knowing how to access adequate resources for their successful accomplishments, acquiring more professional skills and knowledge, and exhibiting leadership skills in their day-to-day role performance. Yet, there are other variations related to the overall autonomy of principals comprising more control over their self-directed decision making, more influence in decisions regarding themselves and others, more participation in managerial decisions, and more feelings of empowerment. Fortunately the researcher has had a short discussion with education managers at zonal and regional offices so that they blamed principals that, though there had been adequate professional development opportunities, the unwillingness of principals themselves was found to be the cause of their disempowerment. These varied outcomes were mentioned by participants throughout the discussion related to the practices of empowering principals to perform instructional leadership roles effectively. This combination of findings provides some support for the conceptual premise that the two groups of participants tried to externalise the sources of the existing problems. It is important to bear in mind the possible bias in these responses. An implication of this is the possibility that each group used to blame each another as the source of the problem.

7. Recommendations of the Study

Based on the reviewed literature, field survey empirical data together with the above mentioned findings and conclusions, four major recommendations followed by important suggestions are pointed out. Such advice includes those that related to the understanding and knowledge of the field, implications for practice and improving the existing policy documents that enhance principals' empowerment to perform instructional leadership roles more effectively in the secondary schools of the Amhara regional state of Ethiopia. These major recommendations are specifically associated with policy-makers, school boards and/or community stakeholders, practitioners, and principal preparation programmes. Finally, future research should be conducted to review the processes or procedures principals or other educational leaders use and implement for the transition from being managerially fixated to being instructionally focused.

7.1. Recommendations for Policy-Makers

Policy-makers have a role to play in strengthening the ability of principals to be more effective instructional leaders. Related to hiring, institutions such as Regional Education Bureau and the Woreda Education Offices as they concern principals should develop joint statements of "best practices" that would be endorsed by these institutions. These best practice agreements could then be used to influence the hiring criteria that are used to select principals and in particular better define their roles as they pertain to evaluation purposes. It is recommended that further revision of the existing policy documents be undertaken to provide principals with adequate time balance of the responsibility with accountability.

7.2. Recommendations for School Boards and Community Stakeholders

Officials are required to organise capacity building programmes for school board members and community stakeholders. Another recommendation of the findings of this study is for school boards and community representatives to receive training that helps them understanding their role in the school management and thereby exerting their efforts where they will be most effective in supporting the school's mission and goals.

7.3. Recommendations for Education Managers and Principals

Education managers and principals should allocate sufficient time to support school board members. One of the unique relationships that exist in a district/woreda education office is the one between the school boards and school principals. As the local government's representatives, the school boards are asked to put the vision of the school into action which at times detrimentally has an impact on the principal's role as an instructional leader (Hoyle, Bjork, Collier, & Glass, 2005). School boards are extremely active in the political scenario and the principal is very often asked or directed to accompany school boards to these events and meetings to offer background information and advice on educational matters. As a result the relationship with school boards demands a large amount of the principal's time during each working schedule in order to enhance their capacity.

Education leaders should update local laws and procedures. Effective applications and practices of principals' empowerment require top management support, mandatory legal measures, positive organisational culture regarding empowerment and rewarding activities and practices. This will help in disclosing the real challenges and possible solutions to organise and carry out more academic and practical activities regarding empowering principals to promote awareness of empowerment concepts, importance and tools and mechanisms of effective application in real life schools. So, the researcher feels that it will add values for education leaders to update local laws and procedures with special and direct attention on reinforcing principals' empowerment practices. This helps in linking empowerment to principal leadership success and motivation to encourage empowerment practices in real life schools.

Make fair re-allocation of the organisational resources and power among schools. Another recommendation is to re-allocate organisational resources and power (access and utilisation) to make fair and balanced empowerment throughout the educational institutions' hierarchy. Results of the reviewed literature highly praised the importance of empowerment in that it gives principals more power, knowledge, experience, meaning, opportunities and status. Many of the principals reported that some managers consider themselves as they alone are the source of the best ideas. Starting with small initial steps at sharing power, setting clear limits for empowerment, and building trusting relationships have been found to be effective mechanisms for reducing these concerns.

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