The Leadership and Supervisory Practices of Principals in Public Secondary Schools of the State of Amhara, Ethiopia, as Perceived by Teachers

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Abstract

This study aimed at examining the leadership and supervisory practices of secondary school principals in the State of Amhara in view of teachers. It investigated the leadership factors that attributed for poor education quality. To that effect, the leadership and supervisory practices of principals were examined. The study employed the descriptive survey research design of the quantitative approach involving 1115 teachers recruited through a proportionate stratified random sampling technique. Data collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multivariate analyses of variance revealed that teachers perceived the leadership and supervisory practices of principals were weak. Teachers have very weak differences in terms of three demographic factors, except sex which has no difference at all, regarding their poor leadership practices. Regarding supervisory practices, qualification level demonstrated a weak difference, the rest three with no significant differences. In addition, teachers' acknowledgment of the supervisory role of their principals is inversely correlated to the qualification level former, despite the weak difference. That is, the higher teachers' qualification level the less they acknowledge the supervisory role of their principals. The findings also revealed that leadership and supervisory practices of principals are correlated positively and significantly. Such a perception may have far-reaching consequences on the commitment and effectiveness of teachers and the quality of education. Therefore, the assignment of principals needs to be based on competence to foster commitment and ownership among all parties. In addition, further research that triangulates data from students, principals, and other stakeholders through different methods shall be conducted to resolve leadership-related limitations in secondary schools

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Introduction

Educators and professionals of educational leadership (Ringler et al., 2010; Schlechty, 2011; Van Camp, 2005; Ward, 2013) argue that school leadership has an indispensable role in school success next to teachers. According to these sources, principals contribute highly not only to creating a convenient instructional environment but also to staff professional development. If schools are to provide the best quality and relevant education for their pupils, according to Ward (2013), they require effective principals. Just like they need trained and committed teachers, Ward argues, schools require competent and effective principals. In many parts of the world, she also

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contends, there is a wide range of recognition that effective leadership is one of the major determinants for schools to provide the best possible education for their learners.

Sergiovanni (2001), in the same vein, claimed that effective school leadership is the bond that ties teachers together with their job to ultimately succeed in their job and get job satisfaction. Consistently, Bush (2007) expounds that school leadership is an indispensable attribute for the creation of a convenient teaching-learning environment and school improvement. Ärlestig (2007), Daniels and Daniels (2007), and Gale and Bishop (2014), similarly, argue that principals play key roles in communicating and shaping staff behavior and helping them build smooth relationships with the local community to boost their social acceptance at the end of the day. The principal is responsible to undertake both strategic and operational plans for schools and implement and carry out strategic tasks and daily routines within a school (Hallinger, 2003). According to Schleicher (2012), consequently, school effectiveness has been strongly related to the role and functions of principals in the sense that school success depends on leadership effectiveness.

The relationship between the leadership competence of principals and school effectiveness is worth emphasizing (Wallace Foundation, 2013; Whitaker, 2012). While demonstrating the contributions of the principals' leadership role in this respect Wallace Foundation (2013, p.4) states that "… most school variables … have at most small effects on learning. The real payoff comes when individual variables combine to reach critical mass. Creating the conditions under which that can occur is the job of the principal." Consistently, Akinbode and Al Shuhumi (2018) claim that, unlike in old times, school leadership in our era is quite a complex task because of the steady and dramatic changes in society brought about by the dynamic technological and communication environment. As the desire of society changes, in other words, schools must change to address the steadily growing need of the community. In such a complex and steadily changing school environment the principal takes the lion's share in shouldering the brunt of realizing the dynamic school vision and mission. Therefore, leadership competence among principals has a significant contribution to student achievement and school effectiveness (Bush, 2007; Sunaengsih et al., 2019).

Different writers propose different indicators of principal effectiveness. Kempa et al. (2017, p.306), for instance, state that "effective principal leadership is a leadership that can foster cooperative efforts and maintains an ideal working climate in schools." Ubben and Hughes (1997) focus on creating a conducive environment, being visionary, change-oriented, and paying attention to professional development describe effective principal, among others. In this respect, Wallace Foundation (2013) suggested five competencies that demonstrate an effective principal: establishing a sound vision and communicating it focusing on the success of all students; creating a suitable school environment for effective instruction; building interactive cooperation among the staff; developing a harmonious leadership environment that motivates teachers and students towards realizing the vision; and managing subordinates, resources, data and the instructional processes towards school improvement and quality. Yildirim and Kaya (2019, p.3) also found out that principals that are considered to have effective leadership competence excel in "learning, teaching, sharing leadership, communication, interaction, a safe school environment, encouragement, and strategic planning."

Ärlestig (2007) and Duignan (2006) have presented more explanatory dimensions of school leadership competencies that characterize effective principals. One, it requires drawing and communicating a value-driven vision for future improvement not only to inspire hope among teachers in order to give a sense of purpose, meaning, and hope among them but to take and translate the spirits or vision of teachers into their daily work practices as well. Building trust, transparency, and open communications, in addition, helps significantly in creating a more suitable, purposeful, and inspiring school environment (Sezgin & Er, 2016). According to Fullan (2007), this process also helps teachers properly understand the purpose and direction of their day-to-day endeavors and create a sense of strategic thinking in their work. Two, it highly demands managing staff relationships toward school success. This is a more dominant theme in school leadership because an effective relationship is the engine of effective school leadership. Practices such as encouragement of staff morale and keeping them motivated as well as developing teamwork or team spirit and providing opportunities for staff development are built through a smooth and healthy relationship across the board.

Leading people is the third dimension of effective school leadership for Ärlestig (2007) and Duignan (2006). It refers to relationship building as well as the how of personal and professional relationships in schools. Leading people emphasizes not whether principals are friendly with teachers but rather how all the staff can cooperate in a team spirit to achieve school goals and objectives. Accordingly, leading people demands the existence of core values essential to professional relationships among principals. These include factors that play major roles in the development and maintenance of personal relationships such as honesty, trust, trustworthiness, respectfulness, tolerance, empathy, open-mindedness, team spirit as well as valuing students and the educational processes that altogether best serve the needs of students and their parents.

Fourth, according to Ärlestig (2007) and Duignan (2006), the capability of leading continuous change is another very essential element of effective principalship. Since we are in a time of rapid change and transition, it is necessary for the principal to realize that there may be casualties in the change process of education reforms. In such contexts, everyone may not come on board immediately (or even in the short term) with new ways of thinking and doing. For instance, aging teachers with long years of experience may get stagnated and complacent if they are not constantly encouraged and supported to cope with the changing school environment. Principals, therefore, need to be sensitive to the fears and anxieties of such people involved in the track of the change process. In addition, principals need to pay adequate attention to the issue of dealing with poor performance. In dealing with poorly performing teachers, it is better for the principal to confront and deal with the problem early and head-on in a responsible and professional manner that considers the interests of all concerned. That is because there is a deep concern for their students on the one hand and such situations are complex and multidimensional on the other. In other words, since there is high public pressure for accountability in schools, on the one hand, and constant pressure to improve student achievements on the other, these days, the competence of principals to lead change determines significantly. Such a school environment inevitably requires a strong demand for ‘doing more with less’ that in return demands from principals the competence of managing accountability and individual performance effectively.

Effective communication is the fifth element of principal competence. It refers to a meaningful engagement and dialogue of the principal with staff in their day-to-day activities in order to facilitate effective communication. As a whole good communication requires three things: the existence of something important to communicate; choosing the appropriate time and means to deliver the message; and active engagement with others beyond a simple one-way communication so that the intended messages and misunderstandings are clarified. Modern technology can be of great assistance in facilitating communication processes.

Sixth, balancing personal needs and professional responsibilities is another very essential ingredient of school leadership. Principals are often overwhelmed by pressures from different stakeholders to meet their targets they should not be flooded with a huge load of responsibility. Principalship demands not only coping with the pressures of heavy workloads but also having to do it with sufficient support. Principals who often accomplish their tasks in such a tight work environment should not be left to the tension of being thrown off balance or out of balance, with their work lives dominating their private lives.

In order to gain the recognition of teachers, principals shall convincingly carry out multidimensional tasks (Sergiovanni, 1996): setting a vision to inspire and mobilize the commitment of teachers, students, and parents; sharing and harmonizing stakeholders around the vision; institutionalizing values or translate the vision into practices and standards that guide behavior; motivating stakeholders; managing the daily procedures that make up a well-organized and effective school; working to relate requests for action directly to the common vision established by the stakeholders; providing the resources necessary to achieve a common goal and removing obstacles entangled against the common goal; contextualizing practices with community thought, deed, and expression; and supervising performance to support and ensure goal achievement.

Sergiovani's suggestion has, in one form or the other, been adapted into the Ethiopian education system as a standard for principal competence. The current education and training policy of Ethiopia, for instance, emphasizes that ensuring the quality, equity, and relevance of education requires effective management and leadership at all levels of the education system (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2020). The policy further explains that principals' engagement with the school community, students, teachers, and all educational stakeholders is crucial to achieving school objectives. To realize this policy intention MoE has developed professional standards whereby principals are required to meet five major competencies: articulate, share and facilitate school vision; develop strong school–community relation and manage it towards school success; provide effective instructional (teaching and learning) leadership; develop team spirit in a school as well as lead individuals and team for school improvement; and lead and manage school operations and resources towards efficiency and effectiveness (MoE, 2013).

Problem Statement

As it is operating in a complex environment school leadership has been faced with diverse problems. Mulkeen et al. (2007), for instance, noted that many school leaders in Sub-Saharan Africa are unprepared for their leadership roles and responsibilities. Bush and Oduro (2006)

consistently claim that in most parts of Africa, these days, principals are not required to have any formal preparation and/or professional development. Other research results (Harris, 2003) concluded that problems with staff, principles and their relationship with the top authorities, problems with parents, and problems related to the personal characteristics of the principals themselves are the most common challenges principals are faced nowadays.

In the same vein, it has been widely echoed in Ethiopia in general and in the State of Amhara in particular that leadership competence is one of the key hurdles in the effectiveness of schools (MoE, 2015, 2020). The annual performance reports and inspection reports conducted by the Bureau of Education (BoE) of the State of Amhara, similarly, have been complaining about the weakness of school leadership as a function of quality deterioration in the study area throughout the last two decades. Those problems attract attention and evoke questions about the leadership competencies and effectiveness of principals. As a result, the researchers of the current study felt that there is a need to examine and identify the limitations of leadership practices that principals are faced with and suggest plausible solutions. Accordingly, this study intends to examine the leadership competencies of secondary school principals in the State of Amhara in view of teachers.

To that effect, the study is spearheaded by the following research questions: (1) is there a significant mean difference among teachers in terms of their sex, level of qualification, experience, and position regarding the leadership practices of their principals? (2) is there a significant mean difference among teachers in terms of sex, level of qualification, experience, and position in the supervisory role of their principals? (3) are there significant relationships between leadership practices and supervisory roles among principals?

Methods

In this study, the descriptive survey research design of the quantitative approach was employed. It has been undertaken in the State of Amhara and consists of 12 administrative zones and three city administrations under which there are about 105 *woredas* and 593 secondary schools by 2020. The populations of the study were all secondary school teachers in those all *woredas*. The target population of the study was 39,145 (29,776 Male and 9,369 Female) teachers deployed in 593 schools (BoE, 2020). To determine the sample size that filled out questionnaires, the single population proportion sample size formula of Daniel and Cross (2013)[2] has been implemented.

Daniel and Cross's formula is valid only for simple random or systematic sampling methods. But the sampling technique that was used for this study was multistage stratified random sampling. That is because, primarily, five zonal administrations and one city administration were selected through a simple random sampling (lottery) method. Then, two *woredas* from each zonal and city administration were selected through the same method. Finally, one secondary school had been selected from each *woreda* through the same sampling technique. Therefore, the calculated

[2] $n = \frac{z^2 p(1-p)}{d^2}$ *Note.* n = sample size, Z = Z statistic for the level of confidence, P = expected prevalence or proportion (in proportion of one; if 5%, P = 0.5), and d = precision (in proportion of one; if 5%, d = 0.05).

sample size requires to be multiplied by D. The design effect (D) provides a correction for the loss of sampling efficiency resulting from the use of stratified random sampling instead of simple random sampling. The design effect results in N = D x *n*, where N is the sample size for the stratified random sample, D is the design effect and *n* is the sample size obtained from the calculation.

By using the formula to determine the sample size for the simple random sampling method, the sample size was found to be around 384 when rounded off. Nonetheless, since the current study has implemented a stratified random sampling technique, the sample size obtained through a simple random sampling technique, which is three in this case, was multiplied by D because a three-stage sampling technique has been applied in the study. The stages included the selection of zonal administrations, *woredas* from each zonal administration, and schools from each *woreda* from where participants (teachers) were directly selected. All these procedures utilized the simple random sampling method. Thus, the actual sample size was found to be 3 x 384 (or 1152).

Participants were drawn through proportionate stratified random sampling techniques. This was intended to guarantee proportional representation of participants throughout the secondary schools in the study area. The strata of schools were framed on the basis of zonal and city administrations from each of which representative samples of schools were selected by using the systematic sampling method. Accordingly, 12 schools were involved among a total of 539 schools in the region. After obtaining a random sample of schools, teachers were selected using the proportionate stratified random sampling method from each school. The proportion of male and female teachers is also taken care of. The formula[3] indicated in (Bethlehem, 2009) was employed to determine the proportionate distribution of participants.

Table 1

Population and Sample Size

Zonal/City Administration	Population Size			Sample Size		
	M	F	T	M	F	T
East Gojjam	3612	1355	4967	212	80	292
Awi	2246	693	2939	132	41	173
South Gondar	2976	1027	4003	174	61	235
Gondar City	608	319	927	36	19	55
North Wollo	1989	551	2540	117	32	149
South Wollo	3433	784	4217	202	46	248
Total	14864	4729	19593	873	279	1152

Source. BoE (2020)

With respect to data gathering instruments, only a questionnaire was employed to collect data. The instruments were directly adopted from the N*ational Professional Standards for School*

[3] $n_k = \frac{n}{N} N_k$ *Note*. n_k = the sample size for k^{th} strata; n = the total sample size; N = the total population size; and N_k= the population size of the k^{th} strata.

Principals (MoE, 2013) with the intention of understanding teachers' perceptions about how much principals could change the competencies described in the standard into practice. Even though principals have six levels of competencies (extending from beginner to lead principal), only the competencies set for beginner principals were considered in the current study. This was done due to the fact that principals who fulfilled the minimum requirements among those involved in the professional competence assessment conducted in 2016 and 2019 (the only years data are available) were only 2.6% and not at all consecutively (BoE, 2020). Under such an objective reality, it sounds better to inquire whether principals fulfill the minimum competencies of a beginner principal instead of higher competence levels. Besides, the issue of manageability limits the investigation effort to focus only on one competence standard.

With the exception of six items set to collect demographic data, all the items in the questionnaire were close-ended. With the exception of demographic variables, similarly, all the variables of the study were measured using a rating scale (with scores between 1 representing *never* and 5 representing *always*). A rating scale has been preferred not only because it is easier to score but also because it is not that tiresome or boring to complete as many items as possible (Cohen et al., 2018; Gay et al., 2012).

In addition, teachers' demographic data that included experience, level of qualification, sex, and workplace position was emphasized. The intention was to examine whether teacher perceptions of the leadership practices of their principals vary in terms of those demographic factors. Among those factors, there seems essential to make a little bit of explanation about the rationale behind the classification of experience. Teachers' experience in the current study was sorted out based on the guideline set by the FDRE Civil Service Commission (2019) regarding the selection, placement, and promotion of teachers, principals, and supervisors. According to this guideline, teachers with service years below five years are a *beginner* or *graduate teachers*. Those who served for five years are *proficient teachers* whereas those with eight years of experience are *accomplished teachers*. In the same line those with 11, 14, 17, and 20 years of service are classified as *senior teachers, associate lead teachers, lead teachers,* and *senior lead teachers* consecutively. In this study, accordingly, beginner teachers scored 1, proficient and accomplished teachers 2, those with service years more than eight years and senior teachers 3, and the rest teachers (with services > 11) scored 4. The classification was decided based on the closeness and synchronization of the job descriptions specified for each category in the *National Professional Standards for Teachers* (MoE, 2013).

As can be seen from Table 2, the questionnaire other than demographic information had two major categories, leadership, and supervisory practices. Each of them has nine and four variables consecutively. The reliability of the variables described in the table certifies the plausibility of the data analysis.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Tests

Dimension	Variable	Number of items	Reliability coefficients
Leadership practices	Framing school goals	5	0.907
	Communicating school goals	5	0.736
	Evaluating instruction	5	0.740
	Coordinating curriculum	4	0.595
	Monitoring student progress	9	0.799
	Protecting instructional time	6	0.822
	Providing incentives for teachers	5	0.896
	Promoting professional development	5	0.807
	Providing incentives for learners	5	0.766
Supervisory practices	Instructional Leadership Role	5	0.888
	Evaluation Role	8	0.856
	Coordination Role	6	0.880
	Consultation role	5	0.864

Finally, data collected through the questionnaire were cleaned, systematically organized, and tabulated by using SPSS-23 software. The mean and multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA), were utilized to analyze the data. MANOVA evaluates differences among composite means for a set of dependent variables (DVs) when there are two or more levels of groups or IVs. MANOVA is useful in educational research when there are more than two groups (any number of DVs may be used) DVs in an investigation. Once statistically significant differences are found among more than two groups, a post hoc comparison is applied. MANOVA was, therefore, utilized in order to assess the influence of the demographic factors on independent variables (IVs). In addition, Tukey *posthoc* test was picked because it is not only applicable for all pairwise comparisons but is also more powerful than the other test type with the same utility, known as the Bonferroni test, when more tests such as the one under study are done (Cohen et al., 2018; Larson-Hall, 2010). Five percent ($\alpha = 0.05$) has been taken as a standard level of significance in the study because many scholars of the field (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012) recommend it as a standard for social science studies. Nonetheless, notable sources of literature (e.g., Cohen et al., 2018; Muijs, 2004; Tabachnick, & Fidell, 2013) argue that dependence on significance level has limitations in effectively informing the strength of relationships because it is largely determined by sample size. That is, information about effect size tests is highly essential, if not the most essential index of all tests in social science research, either to substantiate or replace the significance test. In other words, effect sizes are often more useful and informative about the magnitude or strength of the difference that significance testing alone cannot do. Accordingly, a *partial eta squared* (η^2) effect size index has been implemented to measure effect sizes in the current study.

Results

Return Rate

Out of 1152 questionnaires distributed 1039 (90.2%) were filled out and returned. Among them, 1003 (96.5%) were found plausible for analysis. In other words, 113 questionnaires were not returned and 29 were deleted using the case-wise deletion approach among those filled out and returned because of the incompleteness of data. In addition, two demographic data were discarded at the analysis phase due to the incompleteness of many questionnaires that did not complete two items. The return rate of the questionnaires is high enough because, as a rule of thumb as low as a 50% response rate is tolerable for survey studies to be able to generalize about the population from which samples have been drawn (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012). In addition, this demographic data, in one way or the other, demonstrates the instruments found valuable and utilized in the analysis.

Table 3

Demographic Data of Participants

Measurement scale	Sex		Experience				Workplace position			Qualification level	
	Male	Female	< 5	5-8	>8-11	>11	Department head	Unit leader	Teacher	First degree	Second degree
Frequency	778	230	115	123	117	655	255	188	564	791	212
Percent	77.2	22.8	11.4	12.2	11.6	64.8	25.3	18.7	56.0	78.9	21.1

Leadership Practices of Principals

As displayed in Table 4, the mean scores of teachers' perceptions of their principals informed that the leadership practices of the latter are only a little more than average in all their aspects, except coordinating curriculum implementation and protection of the instructional time, both of which are below average. The results notify one to judge how poor secondary school principals are in their leadership practices because the items set for teachers to gauge the competencies of their principals utilized the competencies of beginner principals, the lowest level of competence in the principals' career hierarchy. On the other hand, the correlation relations among the DVs of principals' leadership roles investigated depict that there is a moderate and positive correlation among each composite variable. The correlation output implies that a successful practice in one component of leadership complements the same output on the other.

Table 4

The Bivariate Correlation among Leadership Variables

DVs	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1.FSG	17.22		.606**	.536**	.480**	.423**	.386**	.246**	.393**	.442**
2. CSG	16.16			.569**	.486**	.472**	.434**	.269**	.438**	.410**

DVs	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
3. EI	16.44				.528**	.516**	.492**	.326**	.499**	.493**
4. CC	12.56					.526**	.544**	.356**	.412**	.400**
5. MSP	29.01						.713**	.425**	.425**	.433**
6. PIT	18.73							.490**	.485**	.468**
7. PTI	13.51								.493**	.411**
8. PPD	15.94									.663**
9. PIL	16.09									

Note. ** correlation is significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)
FSG – frame school goals; CSG – communicate school goals; EI – evaluate instruction; CC – Coordinate curriculum; MSP– monitor student progress; PIT – protect instructional time; PTI – provide teachers with incentives; PPD– promoting professional development; PIL – provide incentives for learners; LR – leadership role; ER – evaluation role; CR– coordination role; CN – consultation role.

The existence of a positive correlation among the composite variables paved the way for running MANOVA to examine whether there are significant mean differences among the demographic variables. Separate MANOVAs run against each demographic variable (sex, experience, position, and qualification), displayed in Table 5, revealed mixed outputs. To begin with, sex did not display a statistically significant difference among teachers' perceptions on the composite (or combined) scores of principals' leadership practices (Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.969$, $p > 0.05$). The MANOVA result in terms of teachers' experience, however, demonstrated a very small mean score difference (Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.960$, $F(27, 2915) = 1.507$, $p < 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.034$). This implies that in the current study experience played a weak role in teachers' perception difference of the leadership practices of principals.

In the same vein, there was a weak mean difference among teachers in terms of their position with respect to the combined scores of principals' leadership practices (Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.929$, $F(36, 3738) = 2.068$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.018$). Although the *p*-value informs that there is a significant mean score difference among teachers in terms of positions they held, the effect size test (or η^2) value is very small. This suggests that the actual difference in the mean values is very small. Alike experience, position implies that the contribution of position in segregating teachers' perception about the leadership practices of their principals is small in magnitude. Effect size index, similarly, informed that teacher qualification explained a small mean difference among teachers regarding the leadership practices of their principals (Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.957$, $F(27, 2915) = 1, 64$, $p < 0.01$, $\eta^2 = 0.015$), despite the fact that the *p*-value informs the existence of a statistically significant difference. Just like experience and position, this also implies that the difference in levels of teacher qualification did not bring about a strong difference in their perception of the leadership practice of their principals.

Table 5

Multivariate Analyses of the Leadership Roles of Principals

Variables	Wilk's Lambda	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	η^2
Sex	.969	27	2195	.238	.011
Experience	.960	27	2915	.045	.034
Position	.929	36	3738	.000	.018
Qualification	.957	27	2915	.020	.015

Despite small the mean score differences, *post hoc* tests were conducted for the IVs to find out exactly where the mean score differences are. The tests were run only on variables that revealed significant differences. With respect to framing school goals, to begin with, differences have been observed between beginner teachers and proficient and accomplished (5 – 8 years services) teachers (Mean of < 5 = 17.92, Mean of 5-8 = 16.14, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, there were differences in the same variable between senior and lead teachers (with experiences > 11 years) and proficient and accomplished teachers (Mean of >11 = 17.42, Mean of 5-8 = 16.14, $p < 0.02$). It can be learned that senior and lead teachers tone down the leadership practices of their principals when compared with proficient and accomplished teachers. The *post hoc* test revealed the same trend with respect to communicating school goals, too. Differences were observed between beginner teachers and proficient and accomplished teachers (Mean of < 5 = 16.79, Mean of 5-8 = 14.98, $p < 0.03$) as well as between beginner teachers and senior and lead teachers (services >11 years) (Mean of < 5 = 16.79, Mean of >11 = 16.38, $p< 0.022$). From the figures, it can be understood those beginner teachers as well as senior and lead teachers highlight principals' practices of communicating school goals more than proficient and accomplished teachers.

In relation to the level of qualification, teachers with a bachelor's degree had higher mean scores than teachers with a Master's degree in all the variables that demonstrated significant differences: in framing school goals (Mean of Bachelor Degree = 17.48, Mean of Master's degree = 16.38, $p < 0.01$); in evaluating instruction (Mean of Bachelor degree = 16.29, Mean of Master's degree 15.29, $p = 0.000$); in promoting professional development (Mean of Bachelor degree = 16.26, Mean of Master's degree = 14. 78, $p = 0.000$); and in providing incentives for learners (Mean of Bachelor degree = 16.33, Mean of Master's degree = 15.29, $p < 0.046$). Despite *post hoc* test results informed weak mean score differences, the figures indicated that teachers with bachelor's degrees acknowledge the abovementioned leadership practices of principals more than do teachers with Master's degrees. In other words, teachers' acknowledgment of the principals' leadership activities is inversely related to their qualification levels. In relation to teachers' perception of principals' leadership practices in terms of positions the former held, too, the omnibus MANOVA result uncovered a statistically significant mean score difference, even though the effect size test result reported a very small difference between pairs of categories.

Supervisory Roles of Principals

As displayed in Table 6, according to the perception of teachers, the mean scores of each variable are not more than average, implying subordinates (teachers) perceive that the performance

of their principals in supervisory practices is not more than average. The results inform one to observe how poor secondary school principals are in their supervisory practices because the items set for teachers to gauge the competencies of their principals depended only on the competencies of beginner principals. On the other hand, according to teachers' perceptions, supervisory variables are moderately and positively related to each other. That is, an increase in one variable is accompanied by an increase in another. Just like in the leadership practices, it implies that a successful practice in one supervisory dimension assists in implementing the other successfully. The prevailing relationship, therefore, informs the possibility of running MANOVA to examine the mean difference among the demographic variables.

Table 6

The Correlation between Variables of Supervisory Roles

Variables	Mean	1	2	3	4
Instructional Leadership role	15.26				
Evaluation role	24.85	.701**			
Coordination role	18.83	.621**	.760**		
Consultation role	15.00	.611**	.726**	.762**	

Pairwise MANOVAs conducted on the supervisory role of principals showed that there were no significant differences in each of the independent variables except with respect to levels of qualification (Wilk's $\Lambda = .970$, $F (12, 2654) = 2.548$, $p < 0.002$, $\eta^2 = 0.01$), despite the fact that the effect size test result displayed a very week mean difference with respect to qualification level too. MANOVA results for teachers' male and female comparison (Wilk's $\Lambda = .981$, $F (12, 2654) = 1.586$, $p > 0.089$, $\eta^2 = 0.006$), experiences (Wilk's $\Lambda = .986$, $F (12, 2654) = 1.20$, $p > 0.277$, $\eta^2 = 0.002$), and positions (Wilk's $\Lambda = 0.991$, $F (26, 3062) = 0.599$, $p > 0.887$, $\eta^2 = 0.005$) did demonstrate no significant mean score differences.

Table 7

Multivariate Analysis of Supervisory Roles of Principals

Variables	Wilk's Lambda	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	P	η^2
Sex	.981	1.586	12	2654	.089	
Experience	.986	1.20	12	2654	.277	
Position	.991	.599	16	3062	.887	
Qualification	.970	2.548	12	2654	.002	.010

A *post hoc* test performed to identify the location of the significant differences regarding teachers' perceptions about principals' practice of supervisory roles is, therefore, limited to qualification levels of teachers. That is, teachers with a bachelor's degree perceived their principals are better in their instructional leadership practices than teachers with a Master's degree perceived (mean of bachelor's degree = 15.612, mean of master's degree = 13.882, p = 0.000). With respect to evaluation practices, too, teachers with a bachelor's degree than with a master's degree felt that

their principals demonstrated higher roles (mean of bachelor's degree = 25.448, mean of master's degree = 22.580, $p < 0.001$) in that regard. Similarly, teachers with bachelor's degrees highlighted principals' coordination role more than teachers with master's degrees did (mean of bachelor's degree =19.157, mean of Master's degree = 17.495, $p < 0.002$). In the same vein, teachers with bachelor's degrees perceived that their principals have higher consultation role mean scores than teachers with master's degrees perceived (mean of bachelor's degree = 15.226, Mean of Master's degree = 14.123, $p < 0.034$). It all implies the higher the teachers' qualification level the less they acknowledge the supervisory role of their principals, despite the difference being weak. That is, the higher their qualification level, the fewer the teachers who acknowledge the effectiveness of the supervisory role of their principals.

Relationship between Leadership and Supervisory Roles of Principals

The relationship between leadership role and supervisory role variables is depicted in Table 8. The output informs that the two variable groups are positively and significantly correlated to each other. That means, according to the perception of their subordinates – the teachers – when principals are good in their leadership roles so do they in their supervisory roles. According to the perception of teachers, a successful practice of any one of the leadership roles of principals is meant a successful practice of their supervisory roles. This implies that teachers understand the utility of both the leadership and supervisory practices of principals in the effectiveness of different school programs.

Table 8

Bivariate Correlations between Leadership Roles and Supervisory Roles

Variables	FSG	CSG	EI	CC	MSP	PIT	PTI	PPD	PIL
LR	.362**	.404**	.457**	.382**	.385**	.404**	.431**	.548**	.550**
ER	.372**	.416**	.472**	.379**	.402**	.426**	.378**	.552**	.515**
CR	.402**	.434**	.456**	.400**	.444**	.478**	.398**	.515**	.481**
CN	.374**	.485**	.434**	.375**	.412**	.465**	.397**	.507**	.494**

Note. ** Correlation significant at 0.01 (two-tailed)

Discussion

Although the scales set for to examine teacher perceptions in this study have limited their emphasis only on the competences of beginner principals, according to teachers' perceptions, principals' leadership performances in most cases were only a little more than average. To make things worse, reportedly, principals' leadership practices regarding coordinating curriculum and protection of instructional time are found to be below average. In a similar pattern, teachers perceive that the supervisory performances of principals are not more than average in all dimensions examined. These findings notify that secondary school principals under investigation are not good enough in both their leadership and supervisory practices because most of the schools

from which data have been collected were those with principals that have competences beyond beginner principals. In other words, principals hardly accomplished below what is expected both in their leadership and supervisory roles. Hence, although many sources of literature (e.g., Bush, 2007; Gale & Bishop, 2014; Ringler et al., 2010; Schleicher, 2012; Schlechty, 2011; Ward, 2013) advocate that principals contribute highly to school effectiveness, according to teachers' perceptions, their leadership practices in the current study area did not render the required services effectively. This does have far-reaching consequences on the quality of education because a wide range of research reports (e.g., Leithwood & Reihl, 2003; Louis et al., 2010) confirm that principals are second only to teachers in affecting school effectiveness and student achievement.

In this respect, Crane and Green (2013), Farmer (2010), and Ivie (2007) suggested that schools with principals who are competent in all dimensions of leadership and supervisory functions successfully enhance teacher job satisfaction and motivation and thereby student achievement and school effectiveness (Bush, 2007; Starcher, 2006; Sunaengsih et al., 2019; Williams, 2009). Consistently, other wide range of sources (e.g., Danielson, 2006; Fullan, 2007; Green, 2010; Kempa et al., 2017; Lambert, 2006; Levine & Marcus, 2007; Louis et al., 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Murphy et al., 2007; Ross & Cozzens, 2016; Sezgin & Er, 2016; Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008) confirm that leadership competencies of principals have positive relationships with school improvement and the academic achievements of students. In addition, Barlow (2015) found a significant and positive correlation between perceptions of teachers to principal leadership practices and their job satisfaction. In this respect, the ascription of poor student achievement and low education quality to poor leadership and supervisory practices of principals by BoE and MoE is well substantiated by this study. Hence, the current finding links past study findings (such as Crane & Green, 2013; von Fischer & De Jong, 2017; Norton & Kelly, 2013; Sergiovvani & Starratt, 2002) which claimed that principals serve just like a captain of a boat in schools in all aspects of school functions serving as the wherewithal of overall schooling.

According to teachers' perceptions, correlation coefficients among the different leadership and supervisory practices confirmed positive relationships – some with moderate and others with significant correlations – implying that a successful leadership practice complements the same output on supervisory practices and school effectiveness by implication. This aligns with the outputs by Munir and Khalil (2016) as well as Williams (2009) who found out that teachers' perceptions of their principals are one of the most important factors that determine the academic performance of the former. This in turn corroborates the concerns of the BoE and MoE who attribute leadership defects to poor school performance. That is because most of the variables treated in this study emphasized on major ingredients of transformational and servant leadership practices, all of which were confirmed by Cansoy (2019), Crane and Green (2013), DuPont (2009), Haj and Jubran (2016), Hauserman et al. (2007) and Salem (2016) as predictors of teachers' performance and job satisfaction.

In addition, a comparison of mean scores on leadership practices among teachers in terms of demographic variables demonstrated the existence of significant differences among teachers, except with respect to their sex. That is, although the effect size tests suggested that the actual differences in all the variables focused are very small, experience, position, and qualification level

demonstrated statistically significant mean score differences among teachers. The finding complies with the findings of Faith (2014), Hang (2011), Hao (2016), Salem (2016), and von Fischer and De Jong (2017) all of whom reported that statistically significant differences were observed in teachers' perceptions about principal's practices on the basis of qualification, experience, and gender, which implies that all these variables do not significantly predict teachers' perceptions about their principals' practices.

Despite insignificant differences were, moreover, *post hoc* tests conducted on variables that revealed significant mean differences disclosed information that need not be disregarded. With respect to framing school goals, proficient and accomplished teachers differed from beginner teachers as well as from senior and lead teachers in such a way that senior and lead teachers to tone down the leadership practices of their principals when compared with the other teacher categories. This finding contradicts other earlier findings such as Hang (2011) who found out that more experienced teachers perceived their principals' leadership capacities as significantly higher than the younger ones, which implies the need for further study. With respect to the practices of communicating school goals, however, the finding of the current study demonstrated not only a mixed pattern whereby beginner teachers as well as senior and lead teachers highlight principals more than proficient and accomplished teachers do, implying still inconsistency with Hang and the need for a further study.

In relation to qualification, on the other hand, teachers with a bachelor's degree had higher mean scores than teachers with a master's degree in all the variables that demonstrated significant differences: framing school goals; evaluating instruction; promoting professional development; and providing incentives for learners. Even though effect size test results inform weak mean score differences, data manipulation revealed that teachers with bachelor's degrees acknowledge the abovementioned leadership practices by principals more than do teachers with master's degrees. In other words, teachers' recognition of principals' leadership competence is inversely related to their qualification levels. This may probably be due to the fact that a lesser level of qualification and experience may have forced teachers to acknowledge practices that may not get sensed at the same level by their seniors. With respect to teachers' positions, too, effect size test reports show a weak difference among teacher categories.

Findings inform that teachers perceive that the performances of their principals in supervisory practices are below their expectations. This in turn informs that secondary school principals in the current study area are poor because the items set for teachers to gauge the competencies of their principals not only depended only on the competencies of beginner principals but were garnered from schools most of which have principals with experiences and competencies beyond beginner teachers. Such a perception may have its own effect on the performance of teachers because of different research reports (e.g., Birkenmeier & Sanséau, 2016; Colquitt et al., 2012; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Ferrin et al., 2007; Neves & Caetano, 2009) argue about the existence of a strong correlation between the perceptions of the employees to their supervisor and the trust they have in their supervisor, which in turn affects workplace commitment and job performance of subordinates. The argument of BoE and MoE about the role of leadership on the quality of education in the current study area sounds reasonable because other a wide range

of research reports (such as Colquitt et al., 2012; Dirks & Ferrin, 2001; Elnaga, 2012; Ferrin et al., 2007; Neves & Caetano, 2009; Vlaar et al., 2007) favor it in such a way that employee perceptions towards their supervisors affect their behavior, commitment, and effectiveness in their workplaces. That is, a positive perception of employees for their supervisors not only stimulated positive trust and cohesion between the two but also improved commitment, job performance, efficiency, and effectiveness among employees.

With respect to the supervisory role of principals, findings uncovered no significant differences in each of the independent variables except with respect to the level of qualification, which by itself displayed a very weak effect size result. The *post hoc* test conducted to identify the where of the weak difference in teachers' perceptions about principals' supervisory practices in terms of qualification levels of teachers, however, revealed that teachers with a bachelor's degree emphasized more principals in their practices of instructional leadership, evaluation, coordination as well as consultation than do teachers with master's degree. Despite the weak difference, it implies that the higher their qualification levels, the fewer teachers acknowledge the consultancy role of their principals. Just like in the case of leadership practices, this finding explains that the lesser the level of qualification and experience among teachers, the more the possibility to acknowledge the supervisory practices of their principals. That is, in turn, because likely teachers with less level of qualification and experience lens the supervisory practices of their principals on the basis of their qualification levels and experiences.

Conclusion

In the current study, the perception of teachers toward the leadership and supervisory practices of their principals is not favorable. The perceptions did not significantly vary in terms of the level of qualification, experience, position, and sex of the teachers. Weak differences were observed among three demographic factors, except sex, regarding the poor status of leadership practices and only the level of qualification demonstrated weak differences regarding the poor status of supervisory practices, the rest three with no significant differences. On the other hand, a wide range of literature demonstrates the existence of a strong relationship between employee perceptions of their leaders and the job performance of the employees. Accordingly, it is plausible to conclude that in the current study area the perception of teachers towards the leadership practices of their principals has far-reaching consequences on their commitment and effectiveness, the spillover effect of which could be reflected in the effectiveness of secondary schooling.

Implications

A wide range of literature across the globe informs that there is a positive relationship between principals' leadership behaviors and the job satisfaction, efficacy, and the normative and affective commitment of teachers. In other words, teachers' perceptions toward their principals play significant roles in their job performance and organizational commitment or in school improvement in general. According to the findings of the current study, teachers perceive that their

principals in most cases lacked to deliver in line with the instructional leadership practices of principals specified in their national professional standards (such as framing and communicating school goals, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating instruction and curriculum as well as reward systems and professional development practices, etc.). Hence, it is hardly possible to bring about job satisfaction, motivation and commitment among teachers so long as principals are not equipped with the competences required by the national professional standard, won popularity among teachers and has a sense of shared values with teachers. Similarly, provided that there are no communicative principals in secondary schools who can persuade teachers toward the realization of school goals, confronting the highly competitive and rapidly changing school environment of the 21st century – a workplace environment that is built from the congruence among principals and teachers – will be a highly challenging task in the current study area.

Recommendations

Plausibly, different remedial mechanisms are commendable in this study. From the outset, the assignment of people to the position of principalship needs to be based on knowledge, skill, and enthusiasm for the profession. Once they have assigned principals, secondly, woreda and state education offices must ensure that principals are capable of employing different complementary practices that not only foster a shared sense of school ownership and purpose among teachers but also endeavor towards the realization of school goals. The following are major mechanisms among others: creating supportive and distributive leadership; establishing a long-lasting culture of teacher development, reward, motivation, and retention system; shielding teachers from undesirable obstructive external pressures that threaten their social, political, and academic freedom; and build a continuous organizational learning culture in schools. Third, a sound and encouraging internal and external supervisory service (well-planned monitoring, evaluation, and reward system) that creates a teacher-friendly school environment must be in place because teachers with a sense of team spirit and shared purpose likely feel valued and supported in their work and remain in the profession. This entails education offices at all levels to endow schools with popular principals who can create a teacher-friendly school culture through closer follow-up, support, feedback, motivation, and a sense of teamwork. Bestowing and empowering principals with such responsibilities in one way or the other enhances not only the possibility of retaining competent and experienced teachers but also the attractiveness of the profession as a career choice, which ultimately improves the quality of teaching practices and student achievement or school effectiveness. Lastly, further research that involved students, principals, and other stakeholders, besides teachers, as well as different data types is commendable to effectively examine and resolve problems related to principals' performance and school effectiveness.

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