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Keywords: *assessment, leadership, leadership styles, academic performance and secondary schools.*

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I. Introduction

Schools' ability to deliver high quality education is dependent to a very large extent on its leadership quality. This implies that the principals have a significant role to play regarding educational quality improvement. The importance of the principal's role in the enhancement of quality in schools is corroborated by Webster (1991) where he links it to the primary aim of the school, namely learner growth. He even suggested that learner growth be used as a measure for effective principal leadership.

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Kruger (2003) supports this notion of assessing the principal's effectiveness by the academic performance of students' by asserting that "the achievement of excellence in a school is dependent in the final analysis, on the quality of the educational experience of each of its students".

As part of the task of principals' leadership, Smith et al. (2001) assert that the principal, in order to influence the students' academic performance, should perform the following tasks:

- Establish the school's academic goals.
- Provide motivation to the educators and the students.
- Support the educators and the students with the needed instructional resources.
- Communicate high performance expectations to the educators and the students.
- Design policies and procedures by which to promote teaching and learning at school.

As part of the principal's responsibilities at school, Whitaker (1997) argues that principal leadership is the most critical responsibility for the school. This implies the significant influence the principal's leadership has on the success of the principal on academic success of the school are Hallinger and Heck (1998) and Smith et al. (2001) who argue that schools that make a difference in students' learning and academic success are those led by principals who make a significant and measurable contribution to the quality of what transpires in classrooms.

Moreover, the students' academic success is directly related to the principal's leadership is supported by many authors (Cheng, 1994; Donmoyer & Wagstaff, 1990; Heck, 1992; Leitner, 2004; Garman, 2005). For these authors, the principal impacts on student academic performance indirectly by influencing the teacher's behavior and attitude towards the core mission of the school in various ways. The teacher's behavior and attitude, in turn, influence the students' attitude to academic work and learning. The situation that initiated the researchers to study on this topic was the researcher's observation of different annual reports of students' academic achievement. Reports indicated

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that below 50% promoted and more than half of students show poor performance although the students took Ethiopian general secondary education certificate examination (EGSECE) are high in number. Besides, students who pass to preparatory are very few in Wolaita and Dawro zones and it needs special leadership and attention. This is due to a number of factors such as teacher related, school related, and learner related factors. Among school related factors, the most important aspect of the school that has great impact on student learning and achievement is school leadership(Berhanu, 2006)

The leadership style and managerial skills are important aspects in improving the quality of education and school management. The principal is the leading professional in the school that the major role of him/her is providing professional leadership and management for a school(Armstrong,2004). On the other hand, there have been still debates concerning a particular leadership style results in the most effective form of organizational performance(Zekariyas,2012). Different leadership styles are needed for different situations and each leader should know when to use a particular leadership style; and hence there are no one leadership style is ideal for every situation(Kamau,2007). The closeness of the relations between leaders and employees is one of the determining factors in the effectiveness of the roles and functions performed by the organization(Sonia,2009).

The Federal government of Ethiopia has been working strongly to make school leadership effective so that principals play a pivotal role that will assure school improvement in different schools. This is because; the main target of school improvement is improving students' achievement and student learning (GEQIP, 2010). However, many students failing in some secondary schools of the region. Although it is recognized that the failure rate in secondary schools could be contributed to by many factors…… (i.e. parental involvement, inadequate resources, not committed teachers, ill-disciplined learners, inadequate advisory services). Based on, the above problems and the researchers' observation, while teaching in secondary schools in Wolaita and Dawro Zones, the researchers are initiated to investigate the real problems of secondary school performance and leadership practice in the Zones.

In the light of the above perspective, this study is designed to examine the existing practice and related problems of leadership in secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro zone.

To this effect, the study will be guided by the following basic questions:

1. What kinds of leadership styles are employed by school principals in secondary schools of wolaita and Dawro zones?
2. To what extent does leadership styles of school principals influence students' academic performance of secondary schools of wolaita and Dawro Zones?
3. What roles can principals, teachers and other stake holders play to improve students' academic performance in secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones?

II. Objectives of the Study

This section introduces the objectives of the study which includes general and specific objectives.

a) General objective

To examine the problems associated with leadership styles towards students' performance and suggest possible solutions to the problems.

b) Specific objectives

1. To assess the current leadership styles employed by school principals.
2. To describe factors that influence the choice of leadership styles.
3. To identify the major problems that hinder the role of leadership and implementation of students performance.

III. Conclusions

1. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents (principals and teachers) were qualified with first degree, which is bellow the required level of qualification to manage the secondary schools. Concerning to the field of specialization, majority of the respondents were not specialized in the management fields of study such as educational planning and management. They specialized in the area of other subjects. This reveals that most position holders (leaders) at various managerial levels were not familiar with scientific theories and principles of management. Hence, this may in turn affect their managerial skills in the process of leadership styles towards the academic performance of students in the education systems of sample secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones.
2. Leaders need to follow democratic leadership styles to bring improvements or change in students academic performance (Merron, 2005). With this respect, when the leadership styles in Wolaita and Dawro sample secondary schools checked against some important characteristics such as cooperating with groups in the school, generating new ideas, encouraging team work and seeking new ways of doing things were not as strong as it should be. Moreover, the leadership was found to be not visionary and is not ready to accept change. From this it is possible to conclude that the current

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leadership style in sample secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones was unable to bring about improvements in students academic performance as replied by teachers and principals.

3. The analysis revealed that the principals of selected secondary schools were affected by all listed items in their order of mean rank in the study. particularly, the political, social, cultural and economic environment in which the school functions, the type of staff involved in the task, the level of interaction and co-operation among the members of the staff, the principals' personality, the principals' self experience, skill, knowledge and professional qualification in the field of leadership and the degree of community and parents participation were highly affected the choice of principals leadership styles standing from first to fifth respectively.
4. The study also indicated that principals and teachers were unable to function their roles such as providing staff with the time and resources to pursue developmental objectives, checking the staffs work on regular basis to assess their progress and learning, the involvement of teachers and other stake holders in the decision making of school activities and the focus of teachers on school improvement efforts of management changes. Thus, it can be concluded that teachers, principals and other stake holders lack commitment to effectively and efficiently manage the tasks in order to improve students' performance.
5. Regarding the academic performance of grade 10 students; only two schools (Areka and Tercha secondary schools, by the years 2011 and 2012 respectively passed more than 50% students to preparatory level. However, the majority of sample schools such as Humbo, Bele, Gesuba, Waka and Gesa secondary schools didn't pass students as expected to the next level (preparatory level). Moreover, when we look at the average number of students who passed to the preparatory level in three consecutive years(2011-2013) of EGSECE were below 50% except Tercha secondary school(54.5%). From the total sample secondary school students who took the EGSECE(16,536), only (5,750) 34.8 % were passed to the preparatory level in the three successive years. Which means the level of students in these schools found to be bellow the standard (50%). This shows that the principals leadership style has a linkage with students performance. Therefore, it is concluded that a significant relationship existed between principals leadership style and students performance.

IV. Discussions and Findings

This study deals with the research methodology; source of data; sample size and sampling techniques; instruments and procedures for data collection; and methods of data analysis that were employed to analyze the data gathered.

In under taking the study, both qualitative and quantitative research methodology were used. Descriptive research design was employed as it is the appropriate method to enable the researcher to describe and assess the implementation practice of the current leadership styles and students performance in the two zones in a broad and wider magnitude. Hence, this method will be preferred on the ground that factors that affect leadership styles and students' performance is better perceived from the opinion survey of secondary school principals and teachers.

The data were collected from two sources-primary and secondary sources of data. This helped the researcher get pertinent data related to the study at hand from these important sources.

Data gathered from different respondents that may have adequate information about the leadership styles and students' performance in the secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones. Accordingly, the Primary data was obtained from principals, vice principals, department heads, unit leaders and teachers. To substantiate the data obtained from the primary sources, documents such as plans and performance reports, annual reports, directives, journals and published and unpublished documents will be reviewed and used as secondary sources of data.

The sample size of the study comprises a total of 306 respondents: 292(66%) of teachers out of 445 of the population in the sample secondary schools and 14 (67%) of principals will be taken as a sample.

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Table 1 : Population and sample size of respondents

Sample Secondary schools		Respondents type							
		Principals				Teachers			
Out of 15 Secondary and Preparatory Schools, 4 and 3from each Zones Wolaita and Dawro respectively		Population		Sample		Population		Sample	
No	Schools	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
1	Bele Sec. & Prep.	3	100	2	66.7	51	100	38	74.5
2	Humbo Sec. & Prep.	3	100	2	66.7	98	100	57	58.2
3	Gesuba Sec. & Prep.	3	100	2	66.7	84	100	49	58.3
4	Areka Sec. & Prep.	4	100	2	50	95	100	55	57.9
5	Tercha Sec. & Prep.	3	100	2	66.7	41	100	30	73.2
6	Waka Sec. & Prep.	3	100	2	66.7	51	100	38	74.5
7	Gessa Sec. & Prep.	2	100	2	100	25	100	25	100
Total		21	100	14	100	445	100	292	

Source: Wolaita and Dawro Zone Education Department

In order to gather sufficient and relevant data for the study, two Zones were selected purposely because these are University catchment areas where research undertaken and the long experience of the researchers in these Zones. However, woredas within the zones, secondary schools and teachers were selected by using simple random and systematic sampling respectively, because to give equal chances for the variables to be included in the study. Moreover, principals were sampled by using availability sampling since their number was small and the available ones at the moment taken as a sample.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative data and the data were gathered by the help of instruments namely, questionnaires, interview and document review. Moreover, the questionnaires were pre tested.

The questionnaires with close ended and few open ended were designed to collect data from two groups(secondary school principals and teachers).The questionnaires help to collect data, particularly from large numbers of the respondents living in different localities. In supporting this, Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003) have argued that the questionnaire is a preferable data gathering tools which enable to effectively collect data in a planned and manageable ways.

Attempts were made to refer certain essential documents such as annual reports, directives, plans and students performance reports. This tool was employed for that it will have a great importance to include empirical evidence in the study, and it can also help to weight the validity of certain information that obtained from different sources.

The data collected on the basis of the purpose of the study through the above stated instruments were tallied, tabulated and organized properly. Then, the organized and tabulated data were presented on a table, which gives detailed background information about the sample population and their responses. The data analysis involved, the analysis of information gathered through document analysis and responses to the question items in the questionnaires. The data was analyzed on the basis of the research questions. Accordingly, frequency counts, percentage and mean were employed to analyze the data obtained. Frequency counts and percentage were used to figure out similar responses. Depending on the results of the analysis, interpretations and necessary discussions were made to clarify the issue.

a) The current leadership styles practiced in the secondary schools of the two zones

In the literature review of this study, it has been discussed that leadership styles are classified based on sharing of decision making between leader and followers. These styles are democratic or participative, autocratic or directive, bureaucratic or collegial and laissez-faire or free reign. Each behavior is associated with distinct cultural traits. With regard to this, Schein (2004) recommended that leadership and organizational culture conceptually are interconnected. He also argues that culture determines leadership while leaders create shape and manage culture. Each of the aforementioned leadership styles have their own unique behavior that distinguishes one from the other. The organization with autocratic leadership, for example, exhibited behaviors that are listed 1 to 3 of the table below. Accordingly, in this study, sample respondents were asked to rate their opinion on whether leadership in the secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro was characterized by the stated behaviors and what kind of styles practiced. The following table presents responses obtained from principals and teachers.

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Table 2 : Mean rating results of respondents opinion on currently practiced leadership styles

No	Items	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	WM	WMR	Styles
1	A principal usually leads to high levels of absentism and staff turn over	18	44	42	148	38	3.53	3.56	1	Autocratic
2	A principal closely monitor and control the staff to ensure that they are performing correctly	47	58	47	98	40	3.58			
3	There is a clear division of labor between the principal and teachers	30	38	29	115	78	3.59			
4	A principal tells the staff what to do, how to do it and when he wants it done	32	50	49	95	63	3.37	3.09	3	Bureaucratic
5	Staff members were required to follow prescribed procedures under strict discipline	38	88	33	78	53	3.06			
6	Criticism and punishment were minimal in your school	39	112	38	50	42	2.86			
7	A Principal delegates as many tasks as possible in staffs' complete entirety	41	81	36	89	37	3.04	2.97	4	Democratic
8	Each individual is responsible for defining his or her job and encouraging team work	44	96	37	74	40	2.88			
9	Decentralized system of management has been practised in your school	60	60	41	80	46	2.99			
10	A principal does not assign work in small and easily controlled units	25	72	53	100	39	3.20	3.23	2	Laissez-fair
11	A principal leaves the team members to work on their own and allowed complete permissiveness	32	53	53	96	55	3.31			
12	A principal anticipate people will come up with the best working methods when given minimal instruction	41	60	40	100	49	3.18			

4.50-5.00= strongly agree, 3.50-4.49=agree, 2.5=3.49= Undecided 1.50-2.49= Disagree, 1.00-1.49= strongly disagree. The abbreviations refers to WM = Weighted Mean; WMR = Weighted mean rank

As shown in table 3, respondents were asked to rate their opinion on currently practiced leadership in Wolaita and Dawro secondary schools as a principal leads to high levels of absentism and staff turn over, closely monitor the staff to ensure that they are performing correctly, a clear division of labor between the principal and teachers. As computed mean values of 3.53 and 3.58 were confirmed that principals and teachers agreed about statement being stated. Moreover, both principals and teachers with the mean value 3.59 were agreed on the presence of a clear division of labor between the principal and teachers. Furthermore, weighted mean is 3.56 and its weighted mean rank is 1. This shows that autocratic leadership style is strong and highly practiced in schools by principals.

Notwithstanding this finding, Glueck(1991) provides a justification for the exercise of a directive or autocratic style of leadership. He contends that the nature of employees impact on the leadership style to be exercised over them. Some employees are said to have been raised in a society in which most leaders follow the directive model. Where the directive style of leadership is dominant in a society, in a school setting employees may expect that type of leadership style and are likely to work better when getting what they expect.

For items 4 to 6 of the table, the computed mean values depicts that the respondents were uncertain whether the listed leadership behaviors manifested or not. For items 4,5 and 6 the computed mean values are 3.37, 3.06 and 2.86 respectively replied by both principals and teachers. additionally weighted mean value is 3.09 as well as weighted mean rank is 3. It means bureaucratic leadership style is strongly and highly practiced by principals next to autocratic and laissez-faire leadership styles in the secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones. i.e., the listed characteristics represent bureaucratic leadership style of principals.

Senge (1990) sounds a word of advice that, colleagueship(bureaucratic leadership) does not mean that one needs to agree or share the same views. On the contrary, the real power of seeing each other as colleagues comes into play when there are differences of view. Lewis and Smith (1994) are of the opinion that a culture of collegiality results in high levels of participation within an institution.

From the table it is also indicated that the principals and teachers were not sure whether delegation of tasks, defining individuals' tasks, and decentralized system of management are clearly defined and clarified. The computed mean of 3.04, 2.88 and 2.99 respectively verified this fact. Moreover, the weighted mean value of 2.9 and weighted mean value rank is 4.This implies that the characteristics of leadership styles which indicated in the table about

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democratic leadership were rated the lowest and the principals practiced in smaller extent.

However, items 10, 11 and 12 in the same table, the mean values show that a principal does not assign work in small and easily controlled units was 3.20, A principal leaves the team members to work on their own and allowed complete permissiveness was 3.31 and A principal anticipate people will come up with the best working methods when given minimal instruction was 3.18. As the weighted mean value is 3.23 and also weighted mean rank is 2. These characteristics indicate laissez-faire leadership styles of principals. Thus, laissez-faire leadership style is strongly practiced followed autocratic leadership style in the schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones by principals.

b) Students' academic performance

In this section, three consecutive academic years (2011-2013) national examination results of grade 10 in seven secondary schools of Wolaita and Dawro Zones were analyzed from documents. It helped to examine the amount of students in percentage promoted to the next level of education and to assess the distribution of the results in selected secondary schools. Moreover, the result indicates how many secondary schools were able to pass students in maximum percentage in each year.

The importance of the principal's role at school is further pointed out by Short(1998) when arguing that the principal's primary task is to focus efforts on what the school wants to achieve, what it wants to be, and what it wants to do for the students' academic performance. Short's view is supported by DuFour(1999) who asserts that the ultimate test of any leadership is the results the school can achieve students.

Table 3 : Students' academic performance of grade 10 (EGSECE) in seven (7) selected secondary schools from 2011-2013 consecutive three years in Wolaita & Dawro Zones

Name of schools	Students took the exam	Number promoted		Not Promoted		Average no. of students not promoted in three years	Ranking Zonal	Year in G.C
		F.	%	F.	%			
Humbo prep.	952	181	19	771	81		18	2011
	1064	261	24.5	803	75.5	75.7	19	2012
	1084	320	29.5	764	70.5		3	2013
Bele prep.	744	264	35.5	480	64.5		4	2011
	838	283	33.8	555	66.2	65.8	8	2012
	885	295	33.3	590	66.7		10	2013
Gesuba prep.	1368	510	37.3	858	62.7		3	2011
	1233	233	18.9	1000	81.1	74.9	10	2012
	1019	237	19.2	782	80.8		7	2013
Areka prep.	988	201	20.3	787	79.7		14	2011
	1392	671	48.2	721	51.8	55.4	14	2012
	1538	1003	65.2	535	34.8		11	2013
Tercha prep.	245	201	82	44	18		1	2011
	283	150	53	133	47	45.5	9	2012
	398	114	28.4	284	71.6		11	2013
Waka prep.	437	146	33	291	67		3	2011
	441	198	44.8	243	55.2	70.9	6	2012
	432	41	9.5	391	90.5		15	2013
Gessa sec.	368	114	30.9	254	69.1		2	2011
	368	169	45.9	199	54.1	62.9	3	2012
	459	158	34.4	301	65.6		8	2013

Source: National examination result (2011 to 2013) collected from each sampled preparatory schools during document analysis

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As indicated in table 8, regarding the academic performance of grade 10 students; only two schools(Areka secondary school, 65.2% in 2013 and Tercha secondary school, 82% and 53% in 2011 and 2012 respectively students passed to preparatory level. However, the majority of sample schools such as Humbo, Bele, Gesuba, Waka and Gesa secondary schools didn't pass students as expected to the next level (preparatory level). Which means the level of students in these schools found to be bellow the standard(50%). Moreover, when we look at the average number of students who passed to the preparatory level in three consecutive years(2011-2013) of EGSECE were below 50% except Tercha secondary school(54.5%). From the total sample secondary school students who took the EGSECE(16536), less amount(5750) 34.8 % were passed to the preparatory level in the three successive years. Furthermore, Zonal ranking was given to the secondary schools in Wolaita and Dawro Zones among 27 and 15 schools respectively comparing the students' results in grade 10 National exam.

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