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Perception, Practices and Problems of School Improvement Program Implementation: The case of selected secondary schools in Hawassa City Administration, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT: The primary goal of this study was to investigate the practise and problems of school improvement programme implementation in Hawassa City Administration Government Secondary Schools, with a focus on perceptions, practices, and challenges that affect its proper implementation, and to find solutions to ensure the success of SIP in Hawassa City Administration Government Secondary Schools. A mixed study strategy that included both quantitative and qualitative data was used to accomplish this goal. The research was carried out at four secondary schools in the Hawasa City Administration. Teachers, administrators, school board members, PTA members, student councils, and Hawasa City Education Department officials were the primary data sources. The sample teacher respondents were chosen using a simple random sampling approach, whereas school boards, principals, vice principals, educational officers, SIC, and PTA members were chosen using a purposive sampling technique. The information was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups. After collecting the data, it was processed using SPSS-V20 software and evaluated using descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviations, and ranges. Furthermore, the t-test was employed to assess the association between teachers' and other respondents' replies to study variables. The study's findings revealed that the level of engagement of teachers, leaders, and parents in planning and executing SIP was low; the system for monitoring and evaluation used to support SIP implementation was unable to properly conduct SIP. Furthermore, the majority of the activities across the four domains were carried out at a moderate level. Overall SIP adoption was moderate as a result of the study's findings. A lack of a properly prepared plan for SIP implementation, a lack of proper understanding of SIP at the school level, a weak monitoring and evaluation system of SIP, a lack of leadership capacity, different organs of the school not properly understanding their role in SIP, a lack of sufficient stakeholder involvement in SIP, and a lack of attention for SIP were major factors that hampered SIP implementation. To address the challenges and improve the implementation of SIP, it was suggested that schools prepare adequate awareness-creation programmes to ensure practical involvement of all stakeholders in SIP implementation, make school committees functional, and strengthen monitoring and evaluation of school improvement programme implementation.

Keywords: School Improvement Program, Primary and Secondary Education

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces issues, which are covered in the study by giving an overview of them. It begins with a general background that leads to the specific issue being investigated, and deals with the problem, taking the study's context into consideration. This is followed by what the study intends to achieve, and also its contribution. The chapter also briefly explains the scope, the methodological approach, and results and discussion used to do the study. Finally, the study presents the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

1.2 Background of the Study

Education is currently considered a critical instrument for a country's overall growth. According to Leithwood (1993), education is a cornerstone of economic and social growth since it develops productive capacity as well as political, economic, and scientific institutions. In the same vein, education should play a significant role in national development in Ethiopia. According to the Education and Training Policy of 1994, education allows individuals and society to actively engage in the development process by allowing students to gain information, skills, capacities, and attitudes.

Since the early 1980s, educators all around the world have faced constant and dynamic changes in their classrooms and the institutions that support them. A merciless transformation in schools makes teachers and administrators responsible for a diversity of complicated educational requirements (Telford, 1996). The increasingly competitive environment in which schools operate has compelled them to boost standards and enhance service quality (Harris, 2005). Furthermore, there is a greater need than ever to engage in innovative methods of thinking about educational challenges and strategies for schools to accomplish the required and desired reforms. As a result, educational systems all around the world have been subjected to extensive reform projects. As a result, several countries have implemented significant reforms.

Many authors define the term "school improvement program" in a different ways. For example, Barnes explains school improvement as "the process of revising specific practises and procedures in order to improve the teaching and learning process" (cited in MoE, 2008). In order to change particular practises and policies, individuals working on a school improvement programme should be aware of the elements within schools that may be modified to improve educational quality, as well as what conditions outside the school are required for improvement. Dea, L.M., and Basha, T.T. (2014). In this aspect, note that, because schools differ in terms of design, size, structure, culture, political climate, and other factors, there is no universally accepted school improvement strategy that works in all school institutions and environments. As a result, various countries have developed education reform techniques that are suited to their own educational problems (MoE, 2012).

As a result, Ethiopia's Ministry of Education launched a school improvement strategy. The basic purp ose of the project, according to the Ministry of Education's school improvement programme bluepri nt document (2008), will be to improve students' achievement by providing a collaborative teaching and learning environment and working with parents actively in the teaching-learning process. This new programmes are launched in a specific educational system and continue to be implemented, it is important to evaluate the implementation process in order to identify the process's strengths and limitations.

The evaluation not only allows schools and educational leaders to identify strengths and shortcomin gs in the execution of school improvement programmes, but also provides an understanding of what actions they should take to remedy the problems and develop their capabilities. As a result, conduct ing an assessment of current practice and problems in implementing SIP is necessary.

1.3. Problem Statement

In 2007, our country's education system launched the general education quality assurance package from the ministry of education. A variety of programmes are included in the curriculum. The school improvement programme is one of the package's components. The programme is divided into four domains. Relationships between parents, communities, and schools; teaching and learning; school leadership and administration; and providing an appropriate teaching and learning environment are just a few of the topics covered. The SIP is currently being implemented in every school in the country. According to documents from the FDRE ministry of information, Ethiopia has a challenge with implementation capacity in all areas, public and private. As part of the wider government apparatus, the education sector is expected to face similar problems. These issues might hinder the sector's ability to undertake projects and programs. As part of the governmental framework, the Hawassa city administration cannot be free of such implementation capability difficulties. As a result, implementing SIP in the city administration's schools is fraught with problems. According to the researchers' own experience, there were several issues that hindered the implementation of SIP in the city.

Despite the above-mentioned factors, due to the complex nature of the issue, there was insufficient research undertaken in the field of SIP. In terms of SIP, the researcher comes across these studies, which are thought to provide insights into the practise and challenges of implementing SIP. However, the solutions recommended by the studies may not be feasible for all localities because solutions to the same problems are observed in multiple cultural, political, social, and economic forces. In this sense, Sodhi's (1983:9), described as follows: National educational systems are similar to national experimental laboratories dealing with similar concerns. The solutions to these issues are found in the cultural conditions of various nations, contemporary political and social goals, and economic factors.. So, in order to solve these problems, it is critical to know the traditions, forces, and goals that operate behind the scenes of education, according to Sodhi (1983:9). Sodhi's justifies the importance of examining the same problems in different ways, even within the same country. In light of the foregoing discussion, it is more important to evaluate how the school improvement programme is really being implemented as well as to identify issues that impede school improvement activities in secondary schools in Hawassa city administration's cultural, political, social, and economic contexts. The study was designed to answer the following basic research questions as a result of this:

1. How do teachers and school leaders perceive SIP in government secondary schools in Hawassa city administration?

2. To what extent is SIP implemented in the schools under study with respect to four domains of the programme (Learning and Teaching; Safe School Environment; Leadership and Management; and Community Participation)?

3. What major challenge affects school principals in implementing SIP in government secondary schools in the Hawasa city administration?

1.4. Objective of the study

The study had the following objectives.

1.4.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to investigate the practise and challenges of school improvement programme implementation in Hawassa city administration secondary schools with particular emphasis on perception, practices, and challenges.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

In order to fulfil the above-mentioned broad aim, some specific objectives needed to be addressed. Specifically, therefore, the research would see to it that

1. To explore teachers' and school leaders' perceptions about SIP in government secondary schools in Hawassa city administration.
2. To examine the implementation of SIP with respect to four domains of the programme in the schools under study (learning and teaching; safe school environment; leadership and management; and community participation).
3. To identify major challenges that affect school principals in implementing SIP in government secondary schools in the Hawassa city administration.

1.5. Significance of the Study

1. It may provide information for educational officials and secondary school principals on how SIP activities are being implemented in the schools.
2. This might enable educational officials and school principals to identify the weaknesses and strengths observed in implementing SIP and, in turn, to take corrective measures.
3. It might also serve as a basis for other researchers in conducting scientific inquiry into the area under investigation.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

School improvement programmes are critical for raising student achievement. However, even in Hawassa city administration, investigating the practises and problems of SIP at all levels of the educational system and in all regional states was challenging issues. The study was confined to an assessment of the practises and problems of implementing SIP in secondary schools in Hawassa city administration since it was very difficult to handle efficiently and come up with an optimal outcome in such a big region. There were eight sub-city administrations and 19 secondary schools under the Hawassa city administration. Only government secondary schools were included in the study. Four governmental secondary schools were chosen for the study out of the total number of governmental secondary schools in the city administration. The sample study included principals, vice principals, teachers, supervisors, pupils, and the school improvement program committee.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

If all the teachers from the city's secondary schools were included in the research, it would be more fruitful. Due to time and cost restrictions, however, the student researcher was only willing to concentrate on a few of the schools and teachers. As a result, the research may fall short of providing real conclusions that address the city's overall SIP activities.

Chapter two

Review of related literature

2.1 Concepts of School Improvement

School improvement has been identified by a number of academics as a method of educational change. Hopkins (2005) proposed the most common and well-acknowledged concept of school improvement. He characterised school improvement as "a different approach to educational transformation that improves students' results while also strengthening the ability of the school to manage improvement projects." Hopkins went on to say that school improvement is about concentrating on the teaching and learning process, as well as the environment that supports it, in order to increase student achievement. Van Velzen offers another definition of school improvement (in Sammons, 1994). He defined school improvement as a systematic and ongoing effort aimed at changing learning environments and other comparable factors inside a school or schools with the ultimate objective of more effectively achieving educational goals. In general, school improvement is a type of educational reform that aims to enhance learning circumstances and school capacity in order to attain high levels of achievement among students.

2.2. **The Domains of School Improvement Program**

The SIP domains are essential topics on which the programme is supposed to engage in order to enhance students' learning outcomes (MoE 2007). There are four domains, all of which are interrelated. Each one has three sub-domains as well as a number of standards and indicators.

2.2.1 Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning domain, which includes sub-domains such as teaching work, learning and assessment, and curriculum, is primarily concerned with teachers' tasks and responsibilities. First and foremost, teachers must organize, prepare adequately, and present learning activities. Teachers must have sufficient academic and professional expertise to do this. Furthermore, they must use proper teaching strategies that support the teaching of large and diverse classrooms. Teachers are also concerned about the production and use of instructional aids made from locally accessible resources. As a result, in order to place teachers in these roles, their appointment (assignment) will be done in such a way that their qualifications are compatible with the level of teaching. Appropriate training will be offered to them (MoE. 2007).

Teachers must perform regular and continual assessments to ensure that pupils have gained enough knowledge. Teachers should deliver classwork, homework, brief quizzes, and individual or group projects on schedule. They must keep track of pupils' grades and provide comments as quickly as possible. They must create tutorials for low achievers, hold talks with parents, and review and improve their teaching techniques based on the pupils' results.

Furthermore, in order to improve the teaching and learning process, teachers should attempt to incorporate active learning in the classroom. They should encourage pupils to actively participate in learning activities and organise educational trips and field visits. This allows pupils to apply what they have learned in class into practice. Finally, teachers must accept and respect individual differences among their students in terms of age, gender, learning ability, and special needs in all of their activities (MoE, 2007).

2.2.2 School Leadership and Administration

In our setting, school leadership is comprised of principals, vice principals, and school committees comprised of teachers, students, parents, and other community members, as well as educational

leaders at various levels outside of schools. These entities will be at the forefront of the school reform initiative. Because the primary responsibility for school failure and the obligation to offer alternative remedies rests with the school leadership, the school leadership should be organised in a decentralised manner. Aside from that, the leadership will receive sufficient and timely assistance and training (MoE, 2007)

2.2.3 Parent-Community and School Relations

Parents, community members, and non-governmental organisations all play an important role in the success of school improvement. As a result, several actions to promote the engagement of these important stakeholders have been identified. Parents' engagement is warranted since they have school-aged children. As a result, they must have a conversation with school leaders about concerns such as student discipline, dropouts, and involvement. Teachers and school principals are encouraged to engage parents to monitor their children's progress and to visit schools on a nearly daily basis. Furthermore, parents, other community members, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) will be provided with a structure through which they may contribute financially or in kind to the development initiative. because the government cannot provide all of the inputs required for effective teaching and learning on its own. Different mechanisms will be established in this regard in order to raise parental awareness and, as a result, promote their sense of ownership over educational issues.

2.2.4 Safe and Healthy School Environment

According to MoE (2007:29), the safe and healthy atmosphere of schools improves students' learning outcomes. As a result, a greater effort is made in the school improvement programme to keep our schools safe and healthy. The school atmosphere must be safe, in which students may learn without fear of rape, physical harassment, or abduction; in which students' discipline is maintained; and in which a good and seamless teacher-student connection exists. Classrooms, textbooks, references, libraries, science kits, laboratory chemicals, sports supplies, plasma TVs, and ICT centres will also be made available. Infrastructure and sanitary services such as water supply, electricity (where available), and toilets will be provided. To summarize, the four domains listed above are the primary topics on which the school reform programme focuses. The teaching and learning domain is given special focus among the four domains since it primarily influences the performance of schools in enhancing students' learning outcomes (MoE, 2007).

1.7 Research Design and Methodology

1.7.1. The research design

According to Quirk (1979), the objective of the study determines the design and methods of research. The goal of this study was to look at the present methods and obstacles to implementing school improvement programmes in Hawassa city administration government secondary schools. As a result, a descriptive survey methodology was chosen since it is suited for obtaining an accurate justification of existing practices and main challenges identified throughout the performance of the School Improvement Program.

1.7.2 The research methodology

This study fell into the two broad categories of quantitative and qualitative research.

1.7.3 Sources of Data

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Teachers, principals, PTA members, school board members, student council members, and Hawassa city administration education department Expert were the primary data sources. The secondary sources of data were collected from secondary schools' official documents, reports and more relevant documents.

1.7.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

From the total number of teachers in the four schools, the sample size intended for this study was selected using a simple random sampling technique because, this sampling techniques gives every member of the population an equal chance of being selected for the study. Using the list of teachers' names from the work attendance sheet, samples of respondents were randomly selected until the required number of samples was obtained from each secondary school included in this study.

Table 3.2: Summary of Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Respondents		**Population**	**Sample size**		**Responded**		**Sampling techniques**
			Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**	
Teachers		455	175	38%	155	88.57%	Simple random
Educational Leaders	Principals and V/Principals	12	12	100%	11	91.67%	Purposive
	Members SIPs committee	24	24	100%	21	87.50%	Purposive
	PTA members	20	20	100%	18	90%	Purposive
	Inbuilt supervisors from the schools	28	28	100%	25	89.29%	Purposive
	Experts from Education Office & CRC Supervisors	8	8	100%	8	100%	Purposive
	Total	92	92	100%	83	90.21%	Purposive
Grand total		547	267	48.81%	238	89.13%	

Furthermore, 28 members of the students council were chosen for focus group discussions from each of the secondary schools participating in this study using purposive sampling approaches. Because

members of student councils found in schools understudy were involved in the implementation of SIP; they would have detailed information about the implementation and challenges of SIP from all other students; focus group discussions were chosen as a data gathering technique from that group of respondents. This supported the researcher in gathering important data for the study and triangulation. Additionally, considering Principals and V/Principals, members of the school improvement committee, PTA members, school Internal Supervisors, professionals from the Education Office, and CRC Supervisors are directly responsible for the implementation of SIP at the schools researched, they were all chosen using a purposeful sampling tactic and included in the study to complete to the questionnaire. Furthermore, two officials, one from the Hawasa city administration education department and one from the Tula sub-city education office, were chosen for interviews using the purposive sampling technique because their numbers are small and their positions are important in describing issues related to SIP practices in city government secondary schools. As a result, 175 (38 percent) of the schools' teaching staffs were chosen as a sample size for this study out of 455 total. The selected sample size was then proportionally dispersed to each secondary school participating in this research, as shown in Table 3.1. Furthermore, all school board members, PTA members, administrators and vice principals, and members of student councils identified in the secondary schools included in this study were chosen as a sample from each school.

Table 3.1: Population and Sample Sizes of the Study by Schools.

Name of sample Secondary Schools	Population	Sample Size
Alamura Secondary School	119	67
Tabor Secondary School	124	18
Halade Secondary School	113	63
Tula Secondary School	99	27
Total	455	175

1.7.4 Instruments of Data Gathering

A questionnaire, interviews, and document analysis were used to gather the necessary information for the study.

1.7.5 Procedures of Data Gathering

The questionnaire, which was originally written in English, was translated into "Amharic" for clarification. The questionnaires were distributed and collected by the researcher and of his colleagues. The researcher instructed his respondents on the goal of the study and how to fill out the questionnaire items thoroughly and with acceptable attention. During the interview, the researcher took notes to capture the officials' comments. Furthermore, a checklist for document analysis was created, and certain SIP-related documents were examined.

1.7.6. Validity and Reliability Test

To ensure data quality, the questionnaire developed for this study was validated and evaluated for dependability at the pilot level before being employed as a data collecting tool.The validity of the instruments was first examined by Language expert who judged the items on their appropriateness

and clarity of content. The questionnaire's dependability was then examined in a pilot study. During the pilot test, the questionnaires for this study were delivered to 32 randomly selected respondents from Gamato secondary schools who were not included in the study's sample. Cronbachs alpha coefficient was determined for all portions of the questionnaire to assess its reliability. In terms of the acceptability of Cronbach's alpha scores, most authors recommended 0.67 or higher (Kothari, 2004) & Cohen et al., (2007:506) proposed that Cronbachs alpha be used with the following guidelines: >0.90 = very high reliable; 0.80-0.90 = extremely reliable; 0.70-0.79 = reliable; 0.60- 0.69 = moderately reliable; and 0.60 = lowly dependable or undesirable. As a result, the computed Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all questionnaire questions was determined to be at (0.838). This demonstrated that the questionnaire's reliability level was extremely satisfactory.

1.7.7 Methods of Data Analysis

To analyse the data obtained from different sources, various methods of data analysis were employed based on the specific nature of the data. As a result, the collected data was checked, classified, arranged, and organised according to their characteristics and the study's specific objectives, and then prepared for analysis. In order to analyse and interpret the raw data, the quantitative data was tabulated and processed using a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS V-20). The analyses of quantitative data were conducted using descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviations, and ranges. Besides, t-test results were used to analyse the presence of significant differences between two groups of respondents' responses regarding each item of the questionnaire. The results of quantitative data were organised and presented in tables and figures for analysis. Besides, the qualitative data obtained through interviews, open-ended questions of the questionnaire, FGD, and from secondary sources (official documents) were discussed in conjunction with the analysis of the quantitative data. This helped the researcher as supplementary data for triangulation and validation purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the analysis and interpretation of the data were presented, divided into four parts on the basis of basic research questions. The first part of the chapter presents background information on the respondents. In the second part, issues related to the perception of SIP were discussed. The third part presents the practises of SIP, which emphasise the preparation and readiness of the schools for SIP implementation. This part contains the major aspects of the study objective. In the fourth part, major challenges that affect SIP implementation were presented. To achieve these goals, data was gathered through questioners, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The questionnaires were first delivered to a total of 267 respondents (175 secondary school teachers and 92 educational leaders) drawn from four Hawasa city administration secondary schools.

A total of 238 (89.13 percent) of the distributed questionnaires were properly filled and returned (155 or 88.57 percent of teachers and 83 or 90.21 percent of educational leaders). The remaining 29(10.86 percent) respondents did not correctly complete and submit the questionaires. As a result, the data analysis and interpretation in this chapter relied on properly completed and returned questionnaires. Furthermore, the findings of interviews with Heads of Education Offices and focus group discussions with the Student Council were included in the data analysis and interpretation. Furthermore, data acquired on SIP from secondary sources was used for the analysis and interpretation reported in this chapter.

In terms of gender, as shown in Table 4.1, 110 (70.97 percent) of secondary school teacher responders and 75 (90.36 percent) of leaders are male. Female respondents make up only 8 (9.64%) of the leaders and 49 (29.03%) of the teachers. This demonstrates that the number of female teachers in both categories was much lower than the number of male responses. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (27.31 percent and 26.89 percent) were between 41 and 50 years old, respectively. Aside from these 49 (20.59 percent) respondents, the age range was 31-40. The remaining instructors and leaders who took part in this survey were all under the age of 30.

According to Table 4.1, the majority of teachers (141, or 90.97 percent) and leaders (57, or 68.67 percent) who participated in this survey had a bachelor's degree level of education. Furthermore, five (6.02 percent) of the leaders and nine (5.81 percent) of the teachers held master's degrees. In this regard, MOEs and regional education bureau requirements for secondary school education (MOE, 1995) state that a first degree is the minimum prerequisite for teachers to work in a secondary school. As a result, the data in table 4.1 revealed that more than 90% of the teacher responses were graduates with the necessary level of certification to work in secondary schools in the Hawasa city administration.

Regarding job experience, 18 (11.61%) teachers and 10 (12.05%) leaders have less than five years of experience. Furthermore, 21.55 percent of teachers and 16.28 percent of leaders serve for 6-10 years. Furthermore, those who served for 11–15 years account for 10.97% of teachers and 16.87% of leaders. Furthermore, about one-fourth of teachers (32.5 percent) and 18 (21.79% of leaders) served for 16–20 years. Furthermore, many teachers (67.23 percent) and leaders (25.12 percent) have worked for more than twenty years.

In general, the statistics in table 4.1 reveal that the majority of respondents were males over the age of fifty, had a bachelor's degree, and had worked for more than fifteen years. This suggests that the responders were mature, educated, and experienced. As a result, it is reasonable to believe that the respondents delivered honest and forthright replies.

4.2. Respondents Perceptions on School improvement program

In this section, data obtained from teachers and school leaders about the overall concepts of the school improvement programme now being implemented in Hawasa city administration government secondary schools was presented and analysed.

Table 4.2: Respondents Perceptions about School improvement program

No -	Items	Teachers		Leaders		Total		t-test	P-Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	School improvement is about putting in place a set of well-tested processes for identifying the developmental needs of	3.95	0.95	4.11	0.96	4.00	0.96	1.23	0.22

	each school								
2	School improvement programs should focus on how schools improve student achievements	4.23	0.89	4.29	0.98	4.25	0.92	0.50	0.62
3	Creating an appropriate structure, developing a sound plan and designing a well-established system of communication are the major areas of preparation and readiness to implement a SIP successfully	3.83	0.95	3.86	0.95	3.84	0.95	0.18	0.86
4	For success of SIP, understandings of the features of each phases of the program by all stakeholders are always indispensable	3.65	1.06	3.58	1.20	3.63	1.11	-0.48	0.63
5	In school improvement doings the involvement of parents/community in school governance and decision- making should be considered as success factor.	4.17	1.01	4.20	0.96	4.18	0.99	0.28	0.78
6	Well trained and committed teachers are always required for successful implementation of SIP at any school levels	4.12	1.10	3.81	1.37	4.01	1.21	-1.93	0.06
7	The core intention of school improvement program is student achievements in terms of learning outcomes	4.25	0.88	4.22	0.87	4.24	0.87	-0.29	0.77

8	Successful implementation of SIP constantly needs competent, committed and informed school leaders at the frontline	4.13	0.98	4.18	1.07	4.15	1.01	0.38	0.71
Overall Perceptions		4.04	1.00	4.03	1.08	4.04	1.03	-0.22	0.98

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

Concerning perceptions of school improvement programmes, both teachers and leaders were asked to complete a questionnaire with the eight questions indicated in Table 4.2 and indicate their degree of agreement. As a result, the results in the table demonstrate that both teachers and leaders had a greater degree of agreement (M = 4.04, SD = 1.03). Furthermore, the mean score obtained for both teachers' and leaders' replies, as shown in the table, indicates that they have a better understanding of the concepts of the school improvement programme for all eight items.

When the perceptions of the two groups of respondents were examined, no significant difference was found between teachers and leaders in indicating their perspective of SIP for the eight elements given in the table. Furthermore, the results of the t-test calculated for each item listed in Table 4.2 and the overall perception of the respondents (t (1555,83) =-0.22; P = 0.98 > 0.05) confirmed that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of understanding about school improvement programmes between teachers and leaders. That is, teachers and leaders replied to things similarly.

However, among the eight items of perception, both groups of respondents rated item number two, which stated that „school improvement programmes should focus on how schools improve student achievements (M = 4.25, SD = 0.92); item number seven, „the core intention of school improvement programmes is student achievements in terms of learning outcomes (M = 4.24, SD = 0.87); item number five, „in school improvement activities, the involvement of parents/community in school governance and decision-making should be considered as a success factor (M=4.18, SD = 0.99); and item number eight, „succes (M=4.18, SD = 1.01) from first to fourth level in ranking orders. As fifth and sixth levels, both teachers and leaders perceived that: "well trained and committed teachers are always required for successful implementation of SIP at any school level (M = 4.01, SD = 1.21); and school improvement is about putting in place a set of well-tested processes for identifying the developmental needs of each school (M = 4.00, SD = 1.23).

Moreover, items number three and four were rated seventh and eighth. As a result, teachers and leaders perceived that; "creating an appropriate structure, developing a sound plan, and designing a well-established system of communication are the major areas of preparation and readiness to successfully implement a SIP (M =3.84, SD =0.95); and "understanding of the features of each phase of the programme by all stakeholders is always indispensable (M =3.63, SD =1.11). In general, the overall results clearly indicated that secondary school teachers and leaders in the study area have better theoretical knowledge and understanding of school improvement programmes. Moreover, there is no significant difference between teachers and leaders in perceiving SIP.

4.3. Preparation and Implementation of SIP

This part comprises the practices of SIP with regards to preparation and readiness of schools; and the actual implementation of the program in the schools understudy.

4.3.1. Preparation and Readiness of Schools

Table 4.3: Extent of Preparation and Readiness of the Schools for SIP Implementation

No.	Items	Teachers		Leaders		Total		t-test	P-Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Preparation of the plan is participatory: involving PTAs, SIC, teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders	2.21	1.07	2.27	1.15	2.23	1.09	0.39	0.69
2	Plan is prepared on the basis of school's self-evaluation.	2.54	1.00	2.72	1.06	2.61	1.02	1.30	0.19
3	Plan is clear, simple & understandable	2.97	0.89	3.16	1.01	3.03	0.93	1.49	0.14
4	Plan is in alignment with the vision of the school	3.28	0.82	3.41	0.84	3.32	0.83	1.18	0.24
5	Plan addresses high priority needs	2.61	1.12	2.69	1.17	2.63	1.13	0.52	0.60
6	Plan represents an attempt to improve the performance of all students	2.46	1.03	2.67	1.07	2.54	1.05	1.48	0.14
7	Objectives of the plan reflect progress towards improvement	3.20	0.74	3.40	0.80	3.27	0.77	1.91	0.06
8	Actions steps for implementation are based	2.44	0.92	2.53	0.92	2.47	0.92	0.73	0.46

	on proven strategies								
9	Strategies are designed to achieve objectives of the plan within the established timeline	2.46	1.07	2.52	1.00	2.48	1.05	0.42	0.67
10	Evaluation mechanisms are well established	2.34	1.00	2.59	1.02	2.42	1.01	1.86	0.06
11	Continuous monitoring mechanisms are clearly defined	2.33	0.82	2.52	0.87	2.39	0.84	1.65	0.10
12	Evaluation reports are always used as an input for subsequent years planning.	2.48	0.97	2.64	0.98	2.53	0.97	1.22	0.23
13	Plan addresses all the domains of SIP.	2.34	1.00	2.53	0.92	2.41	0.98	1.42	0.16
14	Structures required at school level are in place for SIP implementation	2.46	0.97	2.59	1.00	2.51	0.98	0.94	0.35
15	The program is well communicated among school society	2.41	1.13	2.54	1.07	2.45	1.11	0.90	0.37
16	All organs of the school knows their role on SIP implementation	2.35	0.85	2.59	1.18	2.44	0.98	1.77	0.08
17	Resources required for the program are readily available	2.20	0.73	2.42	1.07	2.28	0.87	1.88	0.06
	Overall Results	2.53	1.00	2.69	1.06	2.59	1.02	4.74	0.73

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

The primary areas of preparation and preparedness for effectively implementing a SIP include creating an acceptable organisation, having a sound strategy, and constructing well-established

communication mechanisms. Taking these factors into account, seventeen questions related to school preparation and readiness for SIP implementation were presented to respondents for grading on a five-point scale (5 for very high, and 1 for very low). The majority of the items focused on SIP implementation strategies, aims, objectives, organisation, and communication channels.

As indicated in table 4.3, teachers and leaders working at the secondary school level did not agree on all issues. The overall mean score of respondents' replies was 2.59 (SD = 1.02). Furthermore, the greatest mean score of 3.32 (SD = 0.83) for item number four and the minimum mean score of 2.23 (SD = 1.09) for item number one indicated a lack of readiness for SIP implementation within secondary schools in the city.

Besides, the data in the table indicated that, among seventeen items listed in the table, only five of them were rated above the overall mean score (M = 2.59). However, the remaining twelve items were rated below the calculated overall mean illustrated in the table. Among these, the following items were rated the least mean score: Item one (the extent of plan preparation is participatory; M = 2.23, SD = 1.09); item seventeen (the extent of programme resources is readily available; M = 2.28, SD = 0.87); item eleven (the extent of continuous monitoring mechanisms is clearly defined; M = 2.39, SD = 0.84); item thirteen (the plan addresses all SIP domains; M = 2.41, SD = 0.98); item ten (the extent of evaluation mechanisms is well established; M = 2.41, SD = 0.98); The above statements indicated that: the plan was not prepared in a participatory manner; the resources needed for the programme were not readily available; the continuous monitoring mechanisms were not clearly defined; the contents of the plan did not address all domains of SIP; the plan's evaluation mechanisms were not well established; and all organs of the school were not properly aware of their role in SIP implementation.

In regard to this, the findings of an interview with two officials from the Hawasa city education department revealed a lack of preparation and preparedness among government secondary schools for SIP implementation in the city. They claimed that the strategy was not developed with the participation of all key stakeholders. To construct the plan, schools did not conduct self-evaluation. Only school directors prepare and present to the school board at the start of each academic year. They also stated that student and parent involvement was not at the desired level. The actions associated with SIP planning imposed a tremendous strain on school leaders. Similarly, the FGD responses reflect comparable responses expressed by interviewers. This demonstrates that preparing for SIP implementation necessitates the work and dedication of school teachers and leaders to undertake self-evaluation and determine the main areas on which the school should place attention. Similarly, schools must prioritise the issue and finance appropriately for implementation.

In general, the preparation done by schools for SIP implementation seems inadequate, based on the judgments of teachers and leaders at the educational office and secondary school levels. Inadequacy of preparation was identified in areas such as involving stakeholders in the plan's preparation; developing appropriate monitoring and evaluation systems; allocating resources; addressing all domains of SIP in the plan; and having a proper understanding of their roles in SIP implementation among all organs of the school understudy. All of the above analyses suggest that stakeholder engagement in developing the school's strategic plan was insufficient. As a result, it is feasible to conclude that in secondary schools, the practises of planning SIP by including key stakeholders were poor, which hampered SIP implementation. As a consequence, it is impossible to correctly implement

the plan and acquire the efficient outcomes expected from the programme without conducting self-evaluation and identifying particular problem areas of SIP and difficulties connected to major domains of SIP.

4.3.2. Implementation of SIP

The answers of respondents to the implementation of SIP were reported in the tables reviewed in this subsection. Based on the SIP domains, the tables were separated into four groups for analysis: learning and teaching; creating a favourable learning environment; school leadership; and community participation. The table and graph depicted a summary of SIP implementation in the city's government secondary schools. The learning and teaching domain is the most important determinant of student progress because it reveals what is going on in the classroom. In reality, until it occurs in classrooms, not much significant and long-lasting change occurs in the learning and teaching process (Earl, 2003). This area is concerned with the actual interaction between teachers and pupils. Table 4.4 shows how respondents assessed the implementation of the learning and teaching procedures.

Table 4.4: Implementation of SIP Regarding Learning and Teaching

No	Items	Teachers		Leader		Total		t-test	P- Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Teaching Practice	2.89	1.20	3.01	1.12	2.93	1.18	3.047	0.174
2	Learning and Evaluation	3.06	1.09	2.89	1.12	3.00	1.10	-4.032	0.038
3	Curriculum	2.59	0.95	2.48	0.75	2.55	0.89	-0.924	0.356
TOTAL		2.95	1.16	2.94	1.11	2.95	1.14	-0.306	0.910

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

The assessment of respondent agreement on the implementation of school improvement programmes (SIP) related to the learning and teaching domain, as shown in Table 4.4, indicates that the mean score for items of teaching practise was rated higher than the remaining categories of the domain (M = 3.01, SD = 1.12). They have scored a mean value of 2.89 (SD = 1.12) for items relating to learning and assessment.

The curriculum received the lowest rating (M = 2.55, SD = 0.89). These findings indicate that, among the SIP learning and teaching domains, the extent to which curriculum materials have been revised and validated by teachers in terms of appropriateness of their contents, free of gender biases, relevancy to the context of the school, and maturity level of the students, has not been practised sufficiently in secondary schools in the city. In general, both respondents' overall mean scores were

determined to be above the moderate range, with an aggregated mean value of 2.95 (SD=1.14). As a result, the learning teaching domain is likely to have been applied moderately in all sample schools. Furthermore, the computed t-test results in the table reveal that teachers and leaders rate the listed things approximately same.

Table 4.5: Implementation of SIP Regarding Creating Favorable Learning Environment

No	Items	Teachers		Management		Total		t-test	P- Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	School Facilities	2.90	1.20	2.92	1.21	2.91	1.20	0.287	0.849
2	Student Empowerment	2.88	1.09	2.89	1.04	2.89	1.07	0.157	0.914
3	Student Support	2.94	1.20	2.93	1.15	2.93	1.18	-0.246	0.909
	TOTAL	2.92	1.17	2.919	1.139	2.92	1.16	0.066	0.879

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

Creating a positive learning environment is one of the four SIP domains that focuses on keeping the school environment safe and healthy for the teaching and learning process. A safe and welcoming learning environment makes school administrators, teachers, and students feel at ease while learning in their respective schools. A safe learning environment can help teachers and students reach their full potential for teaching and learning. In this context, the school improvement framework (MOE, 2007:6) recommends that schools build a learning environment capable of meeting the different requirements of pupils. In order to stimulate students' enthusiasm and the learning process, school classrooms should be orderly, accommodating, and appealing. Respondents were asked to score items and express their thoughts on the implementation of SIP on activities relevant to building a safe and favourable learning environment in each sample school based on the information provided above.

Accordingly, as seen from the data illustrated in Table 4.5, among all items listed under this domain, the mean responses of respondents for items of school facilities was 2.91 mean score (SD =1.20), for items focused on student empowerment was 2.89 mean score (SD =1.07), and for items related to student support was 2.93 mean score (SD =1.18). This indicates that respondents rated the practises of creating a favourable learning environment below moderate. Moreover, from the results of the t-test calculated for items creating a favourable learning environment, it was seen that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups of respondents on rating the items. As a

result, teachers and leaders in each sample school may have similar perceptions of the practise of creating a favourable learning environment in their respective school.

Besides, an interview result obtained from an interview administered with Hawasa City Education Office officials regarding creating a favourable learning environment among government secondary schools found in the city also confirmed what was responded to by teachers and leaders of the schools understudy. They said that

> *"Keeping the safety of the schools and the activity of creating a favourable learning environment were done by school management on a regular basis with the support of different sector offices of the city administration. However, they argued that the effort made in this regard so far was not satisfactory. Furthermore, the data collected from focus group discussions with members of the students' counsel reported that their school environment was somewhat safe and healthy; it was relatively free from harassment and suited to teaching and learning activities"*

Table 4.6: Implementation of SIP Regarding School Leadership

No	Items	Teachers		Leaders		Total		t-test	P- Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Strategic Vision	2.48	0.99	2.49	0.87	2.48	0.95	0.217	0.913
2	Leadership behavior	2.61	1.02	2.77	0.93	2.67	0.99	1.355	0.097
3	School Management /Leadership	2.62	1.10	2.83	0.96	2.69	1.06	1.436	0.095
	TOTAL	2.58	1.03	2.72	0.93	2.63	1.00	0.983	0.175

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

School leadership has a vital role in the effectiveness of school improvement programs. Building leadership capacity is an important duty to carry out school improvement programmes properly. Supporting this idea, Harris and Linda Camber (2003:38-39) revealed that a school principal empowers others to lead and serves as a catalyst for change. Having a strategic vision, having proper leadership behaviors, and school management are key elements of the leadership and management domain in the SIP.

In this regard, the data in Tables 4.6 showed the summary of responses of respondents in relation to three elements of the leadership and management domain in the SIP. As can be seen from the table,

teachers and leaders rated strategic vision the lowest mean scores (M = 2.48, SD = 0.95) without significant differences between the two groups of the respondents.

Teachers and leaders rated leadership behaviour and school management/leadership with nearly identical mean scores (2.67 and 2.69, respectively) higher than items related to rated strategic vision. The overall ratings of teachers and leaders (M = 2.63, SD = 1.00) indicated that school leadership made almost no effort to successfully implement SIP in their respective secondary schools.

In addition to teachers and leaders, officials from Hawasa city Education Offices during the interview session also described insufficiencies in the excising practises related to strategic visions and the degree to which these plans were communicated in government secondary schools in the city. Similarly, during focus group discussion, members of the student council said they do not know the concept of the strategic vision and are not oriented in this regard. Overall, setting and communicating the essence of strategies and targets for SIP implementation were reported by both participants as issues that need to be improved.

Table 4.7: Implementation of SIP Regarding Community Participation

No.	Items	Teachers		Leaders		Total		t-test	P- Value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1	Partnership with parents	3.36	1.06	3.04	0.98	3.25	1.04	-6.12	0.006
2	Community Participation	3.11	1.13	3.20	0.98	3.14	1.08	1.03	0.512
3	Promoting Education	2.55	0.94	2.72	0.84	2.61	0.91	1.94	0.137
	TOTAL	3.16	1.10	3.02	0.97	3.11	1.06	-3.37	0.093

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

School community relations refers to a process of communication between the school and the community for the purpose of increasing citizen understanding of educational needs, practices, interest, and cooperation. It was shown that the participation of the community was a determining factor for the success of SIP (Barin, 2001). The data in Table 4.7 presented data collected regarding parents' and community involvement in the implementation of school improvement programs. Parents' and communities' willingness to serve the school and active involvement in the school improvement process is critical for the success of the program. School leaders in this respect should involve the community for better achievement of the desired goals of schools through the collaborative effort of stakeholders.

As to the data in the table, both groups of respondents rated all the items as moderate. According to the data in the table, the minimum mean score rated by teachers was 2.55 regarding promoting education, and the maximum was 3.36 regarding partnership with parents. In a similar manner, the rating results of the leaders were found in the range of 2.72 to 3.20 mean score. This was also supported by the aggregate mean score of 3.11 (SD=1.06), which is in the medium range. As a result, it appears that parents have not given the responsibility of their children's education to school teachers, though they are expected to have frequent interaction and contact and to follow up and support their children for better performance moderately. In addition to the participants' views, those obtained through FGDs for members of student councils also showed somewhat similar findings.

Table 4.8: Overall SIP Implementation Status in the Study Schools

N	Respondents	Mean	SD	t-test	P- Value
1	Teachers	2.87	1.14	1.12	0.68
2	Leaders	2.88	1.06		
Overall Results		2.87	1.11		

The data in Table 4.8 illustrates the summary of SIP implementation in the study schools. It presents overall results for the four domains in all the schools included in this study. According to the summary results of this table, implementation of SIP in secondary schools by Hawassa city administration was not efficient. It was found below the moderate level (M = 2.87; SD = 1.11). In this regard, no statistically significant difference in ratings of the current status of SIP implementation in their respective schools was found ($t(155, 83) = 1.12$, $p = 0.68 > 0.05$). However, when the status of SIP implementation was evaluated among the four domains, significant variation was observed.

4.4. Major Challenges of SIP Implementation

The implementation of SIP could be affected due to various factors. In this respect, Fullan (2001:89-90) noted that when a new initiative is introduced, it will undoubtedly cause difficulty for both individuals and school levels. Thus, for the success of the program, it needs to consider influencing factors prior to the implementation of the program. According to Anderson (1992:84), among others, resistance to change occurs due to a lack of awareness of the purpose of the intended change, a lack of knowledge and skills required to make the change, and a belief that the changes will have no effect on their students.

In addition to this, some of the problems identified by Khosa (2009) include that many schools are not transforming time, teaching, physical and financial resources into learning outcomes. Next, curriculum delivery is poor; teachers do not complete the curriculum and pitch their teaching on their own areas of interest rather than those demanded by the curriculum. Besides, district educational office support and monitoring processes are not inadequate and not effective. Moreover, it was indicated in a review of related literature that several factors are likely to affect the effective implementation of SIP. In line with this, both respondents, teachers, and leaders were asked to indicate to what extent those listed in table 4.9major challenges of SIP. Accordingly, the respondents provided their responses in the way

summarised in the table. Table 4.9 displayed the results of respondents' responses to the major challenges of SIP implementation confronting secondary school students. As can be seen from the table, seventeen factors were identified as challenges of SIP with moderate and above-mean scores.

Table 4.9: Major challenges of school improvement program implementation

No	Items	Teachers		Leaders		Total		T-test	P-value
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
1.	Lack of having properly prepared plan for SIP implementations	3.70	1.11	3.93	1.18	3.78	1.11	1.454	0.147
2.	Lack of proper understanding of SIP at school level	3.57	1.30	3.72	1.36	3.63	1.30	0.827	0.409
3.	Weak monitoring and evaluation system of SIP	3.59	1.38	3.67	1.53	3.62	1.38	0.450	0.653
4.	Lack of leadership capacity	3.63	1.34	3.57	1.32	3.61	1.34	-0.364	0.717
5.	Different organs of the school; not properly understanding their role in SIP	3.50	1.42	3.80	1.39	3.61	1.42	1.521	0.130
6.	Lack of sufficient stakeholders involvement in SIP	3.47	1.35	3.78	1.33	3.58	1.35	1.715	0.088
7.	Giving less attention for SIP	3.43	1.21	3.71	0.82	3.53	1.21	1.883	0.061
8.	Lack of supplies and resources required for SIP implementation	3.38	1.31	3.63	1.09	3.47	1.31	1.460	0.146
9.	Shortage of budget and low financial	3.43	1.34	3.51	1.37	3.45	1.34	0.436	0.664

	support								
10.	Resistance to change among some teachers and others	3.35	1.40	3.60	1.25	3.44	1.40	1.382	0.168
11.	Insufficiency of support from the local education authorities	3.43	1.36	3.37	1.36	3.41	1.36	-0.283	0.778
12.	Shortage of qualified teachers	3.15	1.39	3.12	1.49	3.14	1.39	-0.177	0.860

NB: Rating scales 1=Very Low, 2=Low, 3=Moderate, 4=High, and 5=Very High.

According to the data in this table, the following seven elements are the most prevalent problems impacting the proper implementation of SIP in the study schools: Lack of a properly prepared plan for SIP implementations (M = 3.78, SD = 1.11); a lack of proper understanding of SIP at the school level (M = 3.63, SD = 1.30); a lack of leadership capacity (M = 3.61, SD = 1.34); different school organs not understanding their role in SIP (M = 3.61, SD = 1.42); and a lack of sufficient stakeholder involvement in SIP (M = 3.58, SD = 1.35).

Moreover, the data of the table further indicated that, Lack of supplies and resources required for SIP implementation (M=3.47; SD=1.31); Shortage of budget and low financial support (M=3.45; SD=1.34); Resistance to change among some teachers and others (M=3.44; SD=1.40); Lack of professional development opportunities linked to the needs of the teachers to improve student performance (M=3.43; 1.50); and Insufficiency of support from the local education authorities (M=3.41; SD=1.36) were also identified as challenges of SIP implementation in the study schools next to the above stated seven factors.

However, issues related to the shortage of qualified teachers (M = 3.14, SD = 1.39); the absence of induction programmes for newly employed teachers (M = 3.24; SD = 1.46); and inappropriate interference of external bodies that create tensions and turbulence (M = 3.26; SD = 1.46) were identified as the least influential factors that influence the success of SIP implementation in government secondary schools in Hawasa city administration.

In general, the data in Table 4.9 show that leaders' competence, commitment, and effort in implementing SIP can greatly facilitate or hinder SIP's effectiveness in their respective school. On the other hand, the interference of local offices and the shortage of qualified teachers in the study area does not greatly affect the success of SIP in the study schools.

Moreover, interview responses obtained from officials of Hawasa City Education Office also identified similar factors as challenges to SIP implementation in government secondary schools in the city. They stated that lack of leadership competence, inappropriate programming, not properly scheduling for

SIP implementation, and lack of sufficient attention among school management and teachers were challenges of SIP in the study schools.

Finding, Discussion and results of Qualitative Data

The qualitative data collected through interview, FGD and from official documents were analyzed as follow.

Analysis of Data Collected through Interview

Two officials from the Hawasa City Education Office were interviewed. In terms of school preparation and preparation for SIP implementation, the interview results revealed a lack of preparation and readiness among government secondary schools in the city. As a result, the following actually happened: The plan was not developed with the participation of all relevant parties. To construct the plans, the individual schools did not conduct self-evaluation. Only school directors prepare and present to the school board for approval at the start of each academic year. On the contrary, student and parent involvement was below the needed level. Finally, arranging SIP activities was a significant strain placed on school leaders.

Similarly, regarding the implementation of SIP in relation to the four domains, officials stated that maintaining the safety of the schools and the activity of creating favourable learning environments were done on a regular basis by school management with the support of different sector offices of the city administration. However, they said that the efforts made thus far were insufficient. Furthermore, they noted deficiencies in current practises connected to strategic visions and the extent to which these goals were disseminated in municipal government secondary schools. Furthermore, the primary problems of SIP implementation noticed in the schools' understudy were stated by the officials as follows: These are: a lack of leadership ability, unsuitable programming, a failure to appropriately schedule SIP implementation, and a failure to pay adequate attention by school administration and staff.

Analysis of Data Collected through FGD

The FGD included 28 members of the student council. The conversation focused on several aspects of SIP. Students briefly responded to the following questions on school preparation and readiness for SIP implementation. The program was not prepared with the participation of all relevant parties. To develop the plan, schools did not conduct self-evaluation. Only school directors, out of all stakeholders, develop and present the plan for school board approval at the start of each academic year. Furthermore, student and parent involvement was not at the needed level, and preparing SIP events was a significant load placed on school administrators. Similarly, on the topic of SIP implementation in relation to the four domains, the students expressed their thoughts as follows:

Concerning the first category, they said that the school atmosphere was reasonably secure and healthy. Concerning the second domain, they claimed that the school was relatively free of harassment and well-suited to teaching and learning activities. Concerning the third area, the findings of the focus group revealed that school leaders are unfamiliar with the notion of strategic vision and are uninterested in it. Finally, kids who participated in the fourth domain said that parents have not

taken responsibility for their children's education to school instructors through PTA. because they are expected to have frequent engagement and contact with their children, as well as to follow up on and encourage their children's learning.

Analysis of Data Collected from official Documents

The document analysis was used to see to what extent the SIP was implemented in Hawasa city administration secondary schools (9–10) included in this study. For this purpose, the 2014/15 annual educational implementation report of Hawasa city administration educational office was used to compare the implementation of SIP with targets listed at regional level (Table 4.10).

Table 4.10: Data from Official Documents

Outcome targets of SIP	Plan (2021)	Implementation (2022)	
		Hawasa City	Sidama Region
Student Teacher Ratio	43.3:1	53:1	40:1
Student Section Ratio	40:1	62:1	59:1
% of Students Scoring at Least 50% in NLA	70%	40.71%	56%

Source: Hawasa city Administration Education department (June, 2022)

As illustrated in table 4.10, the 2014/15 annual report of Hawasa City Administration Educational Office showed that the student teacher ratio was 43; the student section ratio was 62; and students scoring 50% and above in grade 10 NLA were only 40.71%. Based on these indicators of quality education, the implementation of SIP in Hawasa city administration secondary schools (9–10) was much lower than the national target and even less than the average implementation of SIP at the regional level. From this, one inferred that SIP was not implemented as expected in the study schools.

Finding

1. The results of the study indicate that the conduct of self-assessment and prioritization of problems for the development of the strategic plan of the SIP was weak in the schools of study.

2. The study shows that the SIP plan was developed by individual school leaders or by a small number of people involved in the planning process. The involvement of stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) in the planning of the SIP was also weak.

3. The results showed that stakeholder involvement in the implementation of the SIP was not at the required level.

4. The results showed that the budget allocated to schools to implement the SIP is small and that the schools are insufficient to implement the SIP.

CONCLUSIONS

- The success of school improvement is related to school leaders' systematic planning, monitoring and evaluation process, which contributes to higher student achievement. Therefore, key stakeholders (teachers, students and parents) should also be encouraged to actively participate in the planning and implementation of the SIP and to keep this in mind at all times.

- As discussed in the literature, the central goal of SIP was to improve student performance therefore, in order to improve student academic achievement, school leaders must properly implement the school improvement agenda by raising awareness among stakeholders for collaborative planning to develop responsibility and accountability of all stakeholders, to implement and improve the four domains of SIP, perform ongoing monitoring and evaluation of SIP implementation, and identify challenges affecting SIP implementation.

- In this study, it has been observed that the overall process of SIP practises lacks a well-designed framework for SIP implementation; understanding of SIP at school level; weak monitoring and evaluation system; lack of leadership ability; Various organs in the school did not have a proper understanding of their role in the SIP; Inadequate stakeholder involvement in SIP and less focus on SIP implementation. This implies that low involvement of key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of SIP was the most challenging factor affecting achievement in secondary schools in the city administration.

- On the other hand, lower level of stakeholders involvement in SIP implementation, inadequate planning of the SIP process, lack of training on SIP implementation process, lack of leadership commitment to implement SIP, and lack of understanding of stakeholders at school level on SIP implementation were reported to be the challenges of SIP implementation at currently study area. These disappointing results confirmed that inadequate consideration was given to the importance of school improvement programmes among school leaders and other stakeholders.

5.3. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings obtained and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations were forwarded to improve the practise of SIP implementation in secondary schools.

- The findings of the study indicate that self-assessment and prioritisation of issues are weak in developing a strategic plan for SIP implementation. Therefore, school leadership should pay attention to participatory planning while developing strategic plans (such as teachers, students and parents) and building consensus among them for effective program implementation.

- The focus of SIP was to improve student achievement. Therefore, to improve the academic achievement of students, schools should properly implement school improvement programmes by creating awareness among stakeholders that will improve collaborative planning practices, Developing responsibility and accountability among all stakeholders to improve the implementation of the four domains of SIP.
- Studies show that SIP plans were developed by individual school leaders or that few individuals were involved in the planning process. Stakeholder participation in SIP planning was very low. To improve the challenges associated with the implementation of planning, all stakeholders should be involved in the planning process. To do so, school leaders are expected to mobilize stakeholders to actively participate in SIP planning in their respective schools.
- The findings of this study show that the budget allocation for the implementation of SIP is inadequate. Therefore, for the successful implementation of SIP, the government should allocate an additional budget for school subsidies. Furthermore, to address the challenges of finance and physical resources, schools should create income-generating systems by considering available school facilities and technical expertise to involve all school stakeholders.
- The SIP was not properly monitored and evaluated. Therefore, educational leaders and schools should pay attention to the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the successful implementation of SIP.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

There are no conflicts to declare.

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