Original Research

Instructional Leadership Role in Enhancing Students' Academic Achievement: Challenges and Opportunities in Selected West Shewa Zone Public Secondary Schools, Ethiopia

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Abstract	Article Information
Instructional leader's involvement in enhancing students' academic achievement plays a paramount role in fostering students' learning. The purpose of this article was to assess the instructional leadership role in enhancing students' academic achievement: challenges and opportunities in selected west Shewa Zone public secondary schools. To this end, mixed research methods and an explanatory sequential mixed research design were used. For the quantitative part, an closed-ended questionnaire was prepared and administered to 140 secondary school teachers and analyzed by using statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, and independent t-test with the help of SPSS version 20. For the qualitative part, interviews were used to collect the necessary data from 32 participants. The result showed that instructional leaders failed to: develop and communicate shared visions and missions for their own staff, coordinate curriculum related issues, work on teachers' professional development, and create a conducive learning environment so as to enhance students' academic achievement. The study therefore recommends that secondary school instructional leaders at all levels should work in developing and communicating shared visions and missions for their staff, coordinate curriculum-related issues, work on teachers professional development, and create a conducive learning environment so as to enhance students' academic achievement.	
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INTRODUCTION

While various educators have given different definitions of instructional leadership, the most commonly accepted definition states that instructional leaders are people who efficiently manage their schools and classroom activities in order to raise students' academic achievement (Hansen & Làrudsóttir, 2015; He et al., 2024). Despite the fact that different educators have given different definitions of the term, the most commonly accepted definition states that instructional leaders are people who efficiently oversee their schools and classroom activities in order to raise students' academic achievement (Hansen & Làrudsóttir, 2015; Bellibaş et al., 2020; He et al., 2024).

However, Ansaah et al. (2024) saw the role that instructional leaders should play in improving students' academic performance as those who spend a significant amount of

time developing a community of learners, exchanging strategies for making decisions, upholding the fundamentals of learning time, supporting and rerouting resources, and fostering and sustaining a collaborative environment. As a result, the role given to instructional leaders as an agent to enhance students' academic achievement appears to be viewed differently by different scholars and remains a debatable issue among researchers.

Although the role expected of instructional leaders in enhancing students' academic achievement was viewed differently by different scholars, in this article the role expected of instructional leaders in enhancing students achievement is equated with teachers' ability in: developing the school's mission and vision, managing curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, monitoring student progress, and motivating teachers for their work. In addition, in this article, the concept of instructional leadership is used to conceptualize the kind of interaction that can be held in between secondary school supervisors, directors, and secondary school teachers so as to enhance students' academic achievement.

Ethiopia has launched a number of programs aimed at improving the status of instructional leaders and increasing students' academic achievement. According to the 1994 Ethiopian Educational Policy, for example, school administrators used techniques like active learning and continuous assessment to significantly improve students' academic performance and learning processes (Alemayehu & Saio, 2022)

In order to support students' academic success, the policy also places a strong emphasis on instructional leaders' ability to manage the learning processes, establish a supportive learning environment, and ensure that the curriculum materials meet high standards (Gomiole et al., 2024). In order to preserve an orderly environment for instruction, Ethiopian educational policy also requires instructional leaders to forecast instructional goals, set high academic standards, keep abreast of legislation and policies pertaining to education, monitor the quality of instruction, and uphold student discipline (Totoba, 2020).

Even though the majority of academics concurred that instructional leadership is essential to raising students' academic performance, most schools hardly ever use it (Basten & Honingh, 2024). For instance, the majority of school administrators were caught acting like politicians by spending a significant amount of time on political matters instead of focusing primarily on the educational processes occurring in the classroom (Gardner-McTaggart, 2020). To put it another way, school administrators typically fell short of fulfilling their roles as community builders, instructional and curricular leaders, assessment specialists, and educational visionaries (Kim & Lee, 2020). According to Meier (2007), the average leader dedicates only 11% of their time to activities linked to instructional leadership, whereas 62% of their time is spent on management tasks. A number of factors have been mentioned as to why instructional leadership is not given as much attention, including inadequate training, time constraints, an increase in

workload, and erroneous beliefs about principals' roles in the educational process (Berku, 2024; Dagnew & Asrat, 2019).

In the setting of Ethiopia, intellectual achievement among students was occasionally declining. The Ministry of Education in Ethiopia declared that just 3.3% of all students who took the 2021/22 grade 12 national test were able to receive at least half of the passing mark (350). For instance, it was noted that student achievement in public secondary schools in the west Shewa Zone decreased between 2021 and 2022. According to the zone annual test feedback report, the percentage of pupils enrolled in secondary schools in the west Shewa Zone decreased from 89.01% in 2021 to 24.21% in 2022. This demonstrates that there has been a periodic decline in the proportion of children who were promoted to secondary schools. According to the Yirdaw (2016), national learning evaluation report, one of the key elements that significantly impacted these student accomplishments had to do with the instructional leadership practices used by school principals. The following issues were brought up in order to analyze instructional leadership role in enhancing students' academic achievement: challenges and opportunities in selected west shewa zone public secondary schools, Ethiopia and forwarded the following leading questions;

- To what extent does an instructional leader role that enhances students' academic achievement is evidenced in selected west Shewa public secondary schools?
- What are the challenges of implementing instructional leader's role in selected west Shewa public secondary schools so as to enhance students' academic achievement?
- What are the opportunities of implementing instructional leader's role in selected west Shewa public secondary schools so as to enhance students' academic achievement?

Because of this, this article focuses on instructional leadership roles related to the school's mission and vision, curriculum and instruction management, positive learning environment promotion, professional development for instructional leaders, student progress monitoring, and teacher motivation rather than examining factors like learner psychological readiness, family educational background, and teacher background in enhancing students' academic achievement. The research's findings were intended to assist curriculum designers and legislators in understanding the value of instructional leadership as a strategy for raising academic achievement among students in public secondary schools in the west Shewa zone.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design and participants

In this article, a mixed research method and explanatory sequential mixed research design were used. First of all, because both qualitative and quantitative research methods are insufficient on their own to address the study problems under consideration, mixed research methods were employed. Second, since the researcher first gathered and examined the quantitative data and then, depending on the conclusions drawn from the quantitative data, gathered and examined the qualitative data, the researcher has employed

an explanatory sequential mixed study design.

Sample size determination and Sampling procedure

The target population of this study involves eight secondary schools, 216 teachers, eight secondary school supervisors and directors, and 16 vice directors. Initially, eight secondary schools were chosen at random from a total of eighteen secondary schools by a simple random sample procedure. Following the selection of the sample secondary schools, 140 teachers were selected from 216 teachers with the help of simple random sampling technique. In addition with the the usage comprehensive sampling technique the researcher picked 24 (100%) directors (eight directors and 16 deputy directors) and eight (100%) cluster school supervisors from eight secondary schools. A comprehensive sampling strategy was chosen because the number of people who took part in the procedure was less.

Data analysis Procedure

In an attempt to collect data, questionnaires were carefully prepared, adopted, and summarized from a review of literature and used as the main source of data gathering instruments. Therefore, both open- and closed-ended questions were employed. Besides the questionniare, a structured type of interview was prepared based on the assumption that it helps to get information that cannot be gained through questionnaires.

Once the data was collected, the collected data was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. For the quantitative part, frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation, and one-sample t-tests were used.

For the qualitative part, the collected data were transcribed and narrated in words.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to provide an answer for the first and second research questions (to what extent do the dimensions of instructional leadership roles in students' academic achievement are evidenced in selected west Shewa secondary schools? and What are the main challenges facing school leaders in practicing instructional leadership roles to improve students' academic achievement in selected west Shewa public secondary schools?), the researcher attempted to assess different key variables with the help of a questionnaire as the instrument.

Accordingly, in each of the key variables, teacher respondents were asked to rate different variables. Therefore, items that involve a scale of 1-5 Where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree were prepared and administered for teachers. All items were set to elicit the practices and challenges of a school leader's role in students' academic achievement. The mean score of each of the samples for all of the indicators was compared with the mean score (M = 3.0). The total scores for each category were calculated by summing responses for all items. A one-sample t-test, comparing each total categorical mean score to the mean score (M = 3) from a hypothetical categorical normal distribution was conducted for each of the seven categories.

To what extent do the dimensions of instructional leadership roles that enhance students' academic achievement is evidenced in selected west Shewa secondary schools?

To answer the above mentioned research question, the research were tried to analyzed six key variables (see Table 1). Analysis of teacher respondent means scores for each of the six-item indicators for the level of implementation of instructional leadership roles in enhancing students' academic achievement had a mean score less than 3.00, or (M = 2.30, *SD = 0.98),* indicating that all the six dimensions of instructional leadership roles as a variable to enhance students' academic achievement were perceived to be unimplemented in selected west Shewa Zone public secondary schools. As a result, west Shewa zone instructional leaders are advised to practice all the six dimensions so as to enhance students' academic achievement. From all the six key variables, "*leaders role in developing mission and shared vision*" (*M*

= *2.08*, SD = 0.79) appeared at the last stage, and school leaders are expected to emphasize for its practice

When the seven dimensions of school leadership roles in students' academic achievement were compared to the mean score (*M = 3.0*) from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated the differences between the normal distribution and sample mean scores for all of the seven indicators were statistically significant at *p* < .05.

Table 1

Dimension of the instructional leadership role that foster students' academic achievement

Item	M	SD	T
1. Leader's role in developing mission and shared vision	2.08	0.79	.000
2 Leader's role in coordinating curriculum	2.25	0.82	.000
3. Principal role in teachers, professional growth	2.19	1.05	.000
4.The roles of principals in monitoring students' progress	2.44	1.02	.003
5. Principal role in creating a conducive environment	2.33	1.01	.000
6. Principal role encouraging and motivating teachers	2.57	1.09	.000
Grand mean	2.30	0.98	.000

Comparison *M* = 3.0 *p = < 0.05, *N* = 140: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree*

Findings in terms of the six dimension of instructional leadership roles in enhancing students' academic achievement

An analysis of the six dimensions of an instructional leadership role has been tried to be analyzed and each result was presented as follows**.**

Dimension 1: Leaders role in developing mission and shared vision in enhancing student's achievement.

The mean average of all items (items 1-4) towards the implementation of a leader's role in developing mission and shared vision as a dimension of instructional leadership role received a disagreement response (*M* = 2.08, SD = 0.79), indicating that this

dimension was perceived to be unimplemented by the school principals in West Shewa Zone public secondary schools. As a result, instructional leaders failed to involve different stakeholder groups in goal setting and failed to allocate the necessary resources for the attainment of these goals. The mean for item 1-"*developing school mission, goal, and vision*" (*M = 1.63, SD =.650*) received the minimum value in terms of its implementation.

Instruction leaders should not only increase their efforts in developing school

mission and vision in collaboration with teachers, but they should also strive for the allocation of the necessary resources for its realization.

Also when the four items of instructional leadership roles were compared to the mean score (*M* = 3.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated the differences between the normal distribution and sample mean scores for all of the 4 indicator items were statistically significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table 2

Leaders' role in students' academic achievement in the areas of developing mission and shared vision

No	Items	N	M	SD	Sig.
1	Developing school mission, goal, and vision for the improvement of students' academic achievement	140	1.63	.650	.000
2	Involve teachers and concerned stakeholders in developing school mission and objects	140	2.04	.790	.000
3	Allocate adequate resources for the implementation and achievement of school vision and goals.	140	2.31	.889	.000
4	Participate in staff discussion to achieve the school mission	140	2.36	.833	.000
	Grand Mean		**2.08**	**0.79**	**.000**

*Comparison M = 3.0 *p = < 0.05 N = 140: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree**

Dimension 2: Leaders role in coordinating curriculum as a mechanism to enhance students' academic achievement.

Means for almost all items indicated the respondent's disagreement with the implementation of a leader's role in coordinating curriculum as the main component to enhance students' academic achievement (*M = 2.25, SD = 0.82*). In relation to this dimension, instructional leaders failed to: coordinate different stakeholders, motivate teachers, develop a timetable, provide adequate facilities, and

conduct classroom supervision so as to implement the curriculum as the main mechanism to enhance students' academic achievement. As a result, they need to perform all those listed activities as their major task to ensure that curriculum materials are effectively implemented. Item 6: "*facilitate leadership practices in the classroom instructional supervision*" (*M = 2.02, SD = 0.99*), received the minimum mean value.

Therefore instructional leaders should coordinate curriculum related issues such as: developing programs and timetables,

motivating teachers for curriculum implementation, coordinating different stakeholders for curriculum implementation, and practicing classroom activities.

In addition to the above analysis, when the six items of instructional leadership roles were compared to the mean score ($M = 3.0$)

from a hypothetical normal distribution, one-sample t-test results indicated the differences between the normal distribution and sample mean scores for all of the 6 indicator items were statistically significant at $p <.05$.

Table 3

Leader's role in students' academic achievement in the areas of coordinating curriculum

	Items	N	M	SD	Sig.
1	Developing different programs and time tables that improve the instructional improvement in the school	140	2.51	.947	.000
2	Motivates teachers to appropriately implement the school curriculum	140	2.21	.075	.000
3	Coordinates different groups (parents, students, teachers, and community members) for curriculum implementation.	140	2.41	.996	.000
4	Provides adequate school facilities that enable to facilitate the teaching-learning process	140	2.34	1.01	.001
5	Takes most of their time to follow whether the educational activities are carried out following the plan or no	140	2.04	.95	.001
6	Facilitate leadership practices in the classroom instructional supervision	140	2.02	.99	.000
	Grand mean	140	2.2	0.8	.000

*Comparison M = 3.0 *p = < 0.05 N = 140: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree**

Diamension 3: The role of instructional leadership in teachers' professional growth as a mechanism to enhance students' academic achievement.

The average rating for items 1 through 6 varied from 2.07 to 2.39, indicating that participants had differing opinions on every element included in the characteristics of principals' roles in teachers' professional development. When compared to the other items, item 6—which "encourages teachers to evaluate their practices"—received a minimum mean value, meaning that it was practiced at the minimum level.

Because of this, school administrators must work as hard as possible to support teachers in their efforts to grow as professionals by allowing them to participate in in-service training, assess their methods, and share experiences with other schools.

When the mean score (M = 3.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution was compared to the six items of an instructional leadership role in teachers' professional development roles, the results of a one-sample t-test showed that the differences between the sample mean scores and the normal distribution for each of the six

indicator items were statistically significant
at p <.05.

Table 4
Leaders' role in students' academic achievement in the areas of teacher's professional development.

Items	N	M	Sd	T	Sig.
1 Develops criteria's for teachers professional growth	140	2.39	1.221	-1.83	.00051
2 Takes definite steps to aid teachers professional growth	140	2.20	1.074	-4.45	.000
3 Encourages teachers to collaborate with surrounding schools for experience sharing.	140	2.16	1.001	-4.06	.000
4 Groups of staff receive in-service training to create a spirit of cooperative working atmosphere	140	2.10	.991	-3.76	.000
5 Organizes and plan professional skill development program for teachers	140	2.24	1.085	-3.2	.002
6 Encourages teachers to evaluate their practices	140	2.07	.934	-5.2	.000
Grand mean		2.19	1.05		

Comparison $M = 3.0$ *$p = < 0.05$ $N = 140$: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree*

Dimension 4: The roles of instructional leaders in monitoring student's progress in order to enhance students' academic achievement

Means, for all items, indicated that the dimension of principals in monitoring students' progress perceived to be unimplemented by the west Shewa Zone public secondary schools (*M = 2.44, SD = 1.02).* As a result, instructional leaders should increase their strive in collecting information on students achievement and make regular meetings with students' parents in order to discuss students' progress.   Item 1—

"regularly *collects classroom information on student achievement*" (*M = 2.16, SD = 1.07*) received the minimum mean value, implying that it needs attention by school leaders to improve these practices.

When the mean score (M = 3.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution was compared to the five items of a leader's role in tracking students' progress, the results of a one-sample t-test showed that the differences between the sample mean scores and the normal distribution for each of the five indicator items were statistically significant at p <.05.

Table 5

Results leaders' role in monitoring students' progress.

	Items	N	M	Sd	Sig.
1	Regularly collects classroom information on student achievement	140	2.16	1.077	.000
2	Use test/exam results and grade reports to assess the academic progress of students	140	2.58	1.011	.001
3	Regularly meets teachers to discuss students' academic progress	140	2.48	.978	.000
4	Regularly talks with parents regarding students' academic progress	140	2.52	1.028	.000
5	Analyzes of standardizing exam results (National exams) to see the performance of the school about other schools	140	2.46	1.02	.000
	Grand mean Value	140	2.44	1.02	

Comparison $M = 3.0$ *$p = < 0.05$ $N = 140$: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree*

Dimension 5: Principals role in creating a conducive environment

The average rating for each of the items 1 through 7 ranged from 2.54 to 2.14 and showed that there were general disagreements among the respondents that elements of "*principals role in creating conducive environment (M = 2.44, SD = 1.02*) failed to be implemented in the selected secondary schools of West Shewa Zone. Item"5—"Promotes *a culture of trust between school leaders and teaching staff" (M = 2.14, SD = 0.97),* received the minimum mean value. As a result, school leaders are expected to strengthen their strive towards the promotion of a culture of trust between school leaders and teaching staff.

The mean score (M = 3.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution was compared to the seven items of a leader's role in tracking students' progress. The results of a one-sample t-test showed that the differences between the sample mean scores for all seven indicator items and the normal distribution were statistically significant at p <.05.

Table 6

Instructional leader's role in students' academic achievement in the areas of creating a conducive learning environment

	Items	N	M	Sd	Sig.
1	Establishes conducive atmosphere in which staff, parents, and students are encouraged to works as a team exists in our school	140	2.33	.992	.000
2	Creates a positive environment in which good working relationship exists between the staff	140	2.31	1.003	.000
3	Advocates school environment conducive to student achievements.	140	2.39	.993	.000
4	Provides support in building collaborative cultures between teachers	140	2.21	.973	.000
5	Promotes a culture of trust between school leaders and teaching staff	140	2.14	.910	.000

6	Establishes a productive working relationship with the community	140	2.40	1.13
				.000
7	Assists teachers who encounter teaching problems to feel free and perform their task	140	2.54	1.08	.000
	Average mean Value		2.44	1.02	0.000

*Comparison M = 3.0 *p = < 0.05 N = 140: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree**

Dimension 6: Instructional leader's role in students' academic achievement in the areas of encouraging and motivating teachers

The average rating for all of the items ranged from 2.74 to 2.43 and showed that there were general disagreements among the respondents that the elements of instructional leaders role in encouraging and motivating teachers failed to be implemented (M = 2.57, *SD = 1.09).* Item 4—"recognizes *good teaching among teachers*" (*M = 2.43, SD = 1.06*) received the minimum mean value. As a result, due attention should be given by instructional leaders to provide a means by which teachers receive incentives so as to motivate them, and thereby students' academic achievement can be enhanced.

When the mean score (M = 3.0) from a hypothetical normal distribution was compared to the seven items of a leader's role in tracking students' progress, the results of a one-sample t-test showed that the differences between the sample mean scores and the normal distribution for each of the seven indicator items were statistically significant at p <.05.

Table 7

Instructional leadership role in students' academic achievement in encouraging and motivating teachers

	Items	N	M	Sd	Sig.
1	Encourages leadership to emerge from teachers	140	2.56	1.095	.01
2	Encourages the use of innovative teaching methods	140	2.56	1.041	.000
3	Recognizes the good teaching among teachers.	140	2.43	1.060	.000
4	Delegates some of his instructional leadership tasks to teachers	140	2.74	1.090	.000
5	Discusses instructional related policies and issues with staff	140	2.53	1.109	.001
6	Experiments with suggestions made by teachers and other staff members	140	2.54	1.115	.000
7	Provides incentives for teachers	140	2.69	1.181	.000
	Grand Mean	140	2.57	1.09	

*Comparison M = 3.0 *p = < 0.05 N = 140: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree**

What are the main challenges facing school leaders in practicing instructional leadership role to enhance students' academic achievement in selected west Shewa zone public secondary schools? (Research question 2)

In this article in order to answer the above question respondents were asked to answer factors related to principal, teacher, students,

and community & Parents' and the result were presented as follows.

Principal, Teacher, student and community related variables

In this article, strive has been made to assess principal teacher, student, and community-related factors that hinder instructional leaders from practicing their roles so as to enhance students' academic achievement. Item-2 for principal related variable "*volume of administrative tasks(overloaded)*' *(M=3.52,SD=0.58),*Item-1for teacher related variable *"lack of commitment and uncooperative attitude on the parts of teachers*" (*M= 3.16, SD=0.94,* item-3 for teacher related variable *"teachers are not completing the syllabus in time*" ((*M= 3.12 SD*=1.0), Item-2 for student related variable "*Lack of motivation*" *(M=3.12, SD=0.54)* and item-2 for community related variable "*attitude*

of parents towards academic achievement" *(M=3.09,SD=0.99)* were rated as an agreed response indicating that they were factors that hinder school leaders to practice their instructional leadership role to increase students' accademic achievement. Therefore, the West Shewa Education Office should strive to help instructional leaders so that they: increase their commitment, complete the syllabus on time, motivate students, and involve parents in academic-related affairs.

To compare the difficulties faced by instructional leaders in relation to principals' responsibilities, an independent sample t-test was used in each instance. We may conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the means of the two groups because the computed p-value for each item was less than 0.05.

Table 8

Principal, teacher, student and community related factors

	Variables	Respondent	N	M	Sd	Am & S		Sign
		Teachers	140	1.71	.715			
1	**Principal related variables** Poor recruitment and selection	Leaders	24	2.42	1.01	2.06	.86	.000
2	Volume of administrative tasks(overloaded)	Teachers	140	3.38	1.00	3.52	0.85	.000
		Leaders	24	3.67	.702			
3	Lack of understanding and agreement about who makes decisions.	Teachers	140	1.93	.819	2.23	0.92	.000
		Leaders	24	2.54	1.02			
1	**teacher related** Teachers' lack of commitment and uncooperative attitudes	Teachers	140	2.74	1.09	3.16	0.94	0.000
		Leaders	24	3.58	.881			
2	Inadequate number of trained teachers	Teachers	140	2.53	0.1	2.9	1.0	.000
		Leaders	24	3.33	1.09			
3	Teachers not completing syllabus in time	Teachers	140	2.54	1.11	3.1	1.0	.000
		Leaders	24	3.71	1.04			
1	**Student related** Strikes or high students' indiscipline	Teachers	140	2.28	1.03	2.85	1.0	.000
		Leaders	24	3.42	.97			

			N	M	SD	M	SD	Sig
2	Lack of motivation	Teachers	140	2.24	.98	3.12	.54	.00
		Leaders	24	4.00	1.10			
3	Chronic absenteeism	Teachers	140	2.45	1.04	.79	0.91	
		Leaders	24	3.13	.79			0.000
1	**Community related** Lack of parents' commitment to their children's education	Teacher	140	2.36	1.04	2.97	1.05	0.000
		Leaders	24	3.58	1.06			
2	An attitude of parents towards academic achievement	Teachers	140	2.43	1.04	3.09	0.99	0.000
		Leaders	24	3.75	.944			
3	Income status of parents and community	Teachers	140	2.24	1.03	2.81	1.01	0.000
		Leaders	*24*	*3.38*	*1.0*			

Comparison M = 3.0 *p = < 0.05 N = 140&24: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree 3 = undecided 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree*

Interviews were used to look more closely into the primary obstacles and opportunities that prevent instructional leaders from carrying out their tasks. The following pseudonyms were employed, as shown in Table 9, to protect the confidentiality of participants in both cases: R1-R8 for supervisors, P1-P8 for school directors, and y1-y16 for vice directors.

Table 9

Participant pseudonyms

SUPERVISOR PSEUDONYMS	DIRECTOR PSEUDONYMS	VICE-DIRECTOR PSEUDONYMS
R1, R2, R3…R8	P1, P2, P3…P8	Y1,Y2,Y3…Y16

Face-to-face interviews with 32 participants— eight supervisors, eight directors, and sixteen vice directors—were used to gather data from directors and supervisors.

Table 10

Themes and sub themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Instructional leaders related factors	1. Factors related to instructional leaders workload 2. Factors directly related with instructional leaders
Teacher related to factors	1.Factors external to teachers 2.Factors directly related with teachers

Instruction leadership related factors that hinder the implementation of instructional roles in enhancing students' academic achievement.
Sub-theme-1 Workload related factor that hinder instructional leaders to practice their role

When asked to clarify challenges affecting instructional leaders' ability to practice their role in enhancing students' academic achievement, respondents indicated that instructional leader's workload was one of the major factors.

R1:*"Most school leaders are given not only to work on the instructional processes but also they are most of the time delegated to work on political issues."*

P3:*"Instructional leaders are very loaded and even sometimes confused to identify the kind of jobs they are employing for and, as a result, unable to play the role expected of them in order to enhance students achievement."*

R5:*"If instructional leaders fail to play the governmental line politics, their fate is to be fired from their position, and they will be automatically replaced by the one that effectively plays a political role, and as a result, they cannot effectively perform instruction-related activities."*

Governmental bodies should give due attention to assist instructional leaders and reduce the political job given to them so that instructional leaders should exert their fullest potential on the teaching-learning process in order to enhance students' academic achievement.

Sub-theme-2 Factors related to the instructional leaders them selves

Y1:"Most instructional leaders *lack the ability to promote a culture of trust between school* leaders and teaching staff, which can worsen the smooth relationship between the two parties."

R7: *Most instructional leaders lack the necessary knowledge and skill to provide important feedback for teachers."*

P5:*"Instructional leaders failed to communicate transparently with teachers on academic issues as they are devoting much of their time on political issues."*

Education officers should give educational opportunities and different trainings for instructional leaders to enhance their understanding of the different ways they can provide feedback for teachers.

What are the opportunities in practicing school leadership roles in order to enhance students' academic achievement in west Shewa zone secondary schools? (Research question-3)

Face-to-face interviews with 32 participants—eight supervisors, eight directors, and sixteen vice directors—were used to gather data from directors and supervisors. Following collection, the data was arranged into themes and sub-themes, which are shown in the table below

Table 11
Themes and sub themes

THEMES	SUB-THEMES
Opportunity in practicing instructional leaders role	1. Role related to teaching learning process 2. Role related to motivational issues 3.Role related to professional development

Sub-Theme 1-Instructional leader's role related to teaching learning process

The data collected from participants reveal that instructional leaders should give due attention to the teaching and learning processes so as to enhance students' academic achievement.

Y15: To properly monitor teachers' daily activities, instructional leaders should become knowledgeable about the new curriculum's

implementation, as well as the subjects, goals, and methods of assessment that instructors employ in the classroom.

R8: Since political issues can be handled by other government employees, instructional leaders should aim to spend less time on them and instead concentrate on matters pertaining to instruction.

R3: "To improve student accomplishment, instructional leaders should involve the community more in children's education." Therefore, instructional leaders should have an in-depth understanding of the curriculum and minimize their efforts to work on political issues and maximize their efforts to work on teaching and learning processes.

Sub-Theme 2-Instructional leader's role related to motivational issues.

Information gathered from respondents through interviews reveals that instructional leaders should work on teachers motivational issues so as to increase students' academic achievement.

P6: "In order for teachers to work as effectively as possible on teaching and learning issues, instructional leaders should establish a favorable working environment for both them and themselves."

Y-11: "In order to motivate teachers to put forth their best effort in raising students' academic achievement, instructional leaders should find various incentives for teachers."

Instructional leaders should motivate teachers by creating a conducive learning environment and by finding different incentive schemes so that teaches increase their willingness to work effectively on the teaching and learning process.

Sub-Theme 3-Instructional leader's role related to Professional development.

Instructional leaders and teachers professional development was the third key opportunities mentioned to enhance students' academic achievement.

R8- "In order for teachers to foster a sense of teamwork and improve academic performance, instructional leaders should establish the culture of a professional learning community among them."

Y1- "Practicing the role of instructional leadership enables instructional leaders to effectively guide teachers and provide teachers with important feedback."

P7- "Instructional leaders should meet with teachers on a regular basis, gather best practices, and be able to share these best practices with other teachers."

Instructional leaders should effectively develop professional learning communities and able to share well practices among teachers so as to enhance students' academic achievement

DISCUSSION

This article's primary goal was to determine how instructional leadership might improve students' academic progress in particular public secondary schools in Ethiopia's west Shewa zone, as well as the opportunities and challenges that this presents. The six crucial functions of instructional leaders that Pleinen (2022), identified as a critical variable that improves students' academic success were addressed for this reason. Monitoring student achievement, overseeing curriculum and instruction, encouraging professional development for teachers, creating a mission and vision, motivating teachers, and encouraging professional development for teachers are some of these crucial factors.

Below was a discussion of each of the six dimensions.

1. Developing shared vision and mission

The analysis of the data revealed that, in order to improve students' academic performance, instruction leaders in public secondary schools in the west Shewa Zone were unable to create and convey the school's common missions and visions with various stakeholder groups.

This result matches the one observed in earlier studies. Ansaah et al. (2024), explaining the familiarity of most instructional leaders in developing school missions and visions, viewed the importance of preparing and communicating school vision and mission for different stakeholders so as to enhance students' academic achievement. In support of this viewpoint, Lazonick et al. (2022) also clarified that instructional leaders are advised to develop the school's mission and vision in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders, hold the necessary discussions with these stakeholders, and allot sufficient resources for its implementation if the goal is to improve students' academic achievement.

2. Managing curriculum and instruction

The results of the study showed that curriculum-related issues were not being coordinated by instructional leaders, especially when it came to developing programs and schedules, motivating teachers to implement the curriculum, assembling different stakeholders to do so, and conducting classroom supervision.

The study's findings corroborated those of Rubab & Yousuf (2022) and Lazonick et al. (2022), who hypothesized that most instructional leaders lack the capacity to supervise the use of curriculum resources.

Organizing different groups (parents, students, teachers, and community members), developing lesson plans and schedules, motivating teachers, providing suitable facilities, adhering to educational activities, and supporting instructional practices are all things that they consider instructional leaders should be able to do.

3. Promoting teacher's professional development

The analysis of data showed that instructional leaders in public secondary schools in west Shewa Zone did not focus on professional development for teachers as a means of improving academic achievement among pupils. According to the study, for example, instructional leaders were unable to complete tasks such as creating criteria for teacher development, exchanging experiences with nearby schools, helping instructors with in-service training, and encouraging teachers to evaluate their own work.

This result is consistent with that of Salo et.al. (2014), who felt that instructional leaders were not doing enough to support teachers' professional development. They suggested that instructional leaders help teachers enhance their practices by providing them with necessary resources, coaching, and mentoring.

Similarly, DuPlessis (2013) clarified that instructional leaders are supposed to establish standards for teachers' professional development, encourage teachers to work together and communicate with the community, locate opportunities for teachers to receive in-service training, and motivate teachers to assess their own practices.

4. Monitoring student's progress

It was established by the data analysis results that instructional leaders did not keep track of

students' progress. They did not, for example, gather data on student development, consult with teachers regarding students' progress, or examine the exam's criteria.

Rubab & Yousuf (2022) provided an explanation for the inefficiency of most instructional leaders in tracking students' progress. According to Rubab & Yousuf (2022), instructional leaders are expected to routinely gather data on students' academic performance from the classroom, meet with teachers and parents to discuss students' academic progress, and analyze exam results to standardize instruction.

These findings further support the idea of Cherutoi et al. (2024) and Meier (2007 in that they proposed instructional leaders should collect the necessary information through different techniques such as examination, project work, and tests to identify the existing difficulties and strengths in the teaching-learning process so as to enhance students' academic achievement.

5. Promote a positive school climate and teacher motivation

From the studied data, it is also obvious that instructional leaders at west Shewa public secondary schools failed to establish suitable learning environments for teachers, parents, and students and were unable to encourage teachers for their work.

According to Eisenschmidt et al (2019), instructional leadership bears the obligation of ensuring that learning is made engaging. According to Bereku (2024), instructional leaders should determine ways to inspire teachers by fostering a collaborative school climate and favorable working conditions.

According to Carraway & Young (2014), instructional leaders are in charge of encouraging teachers, examining their lesson plans and work logs, keeping an eye on their timeliness, and reviewing their instructional records.

In order to improve students' academic progress, instructional leaders have made an effort to identify and evaluate the barriers to their practice in the second stage.

Thus, the study found that instructional leaders were impeded from carrying out their role in improving students' academic achievement by an abundance of administrative tasks (overloaded), an inability to foster a culture of trust between school leaders and teaching staff, a lack of knowledge and skill to provide critical feedback for teachers, and a lack of transparency when communicating with teachers.

These results were consistent with those of Carraway & Young (2014) and Salo et al. (2014), who found that the main obstacles to instructional leaders carrying out their roles in a way that would improve student academic achievement were their office workload, a lack of subject matter expertise, and a lack of trust between teachers and instructional leaders (since most teachers believe their methods are flawless).

Conversely, factors related to teachers, such as a lack of dedication, an uncooperative attitude, and an inability to finish the syllabus on time, were found to be impediments to instructional leaders carrying out their roles in a way that improves students' academic achievement in public secondary schools in the west Shewa Zone.

Likewise, the research validated that low student motivation and low family involvement

in the educational process are impediments to instructional leaders carrying out their duties in a way that improves students' academic performance. These results were also consistent with those of Salo et al. (2014), who hypothesized that the main obstacles preventing instructional leaders from carrying out their roles effectively are teacher-related factors like teachers' lack of dedication and uncooperative attitudes, as well as their inability to finish the syllabus on time.

In a similar vein, the article's findings aligned with those of Cherutoi et al. (2024) and Hallinger and Hosseingholizadeh (2019), who saw low motivation and low community involvement in kids' education as barriers to instructional leaders carrying out their duties.

Lastly, an attempt has been made in order to examine the opportunities that favor instructional leaders to exercise their tasks so as to boost students' academic progress. The study found that in order for West Shewa Zone public secondary schools to improve students' academic achievement, it is critical to keep instructional leaders up to date with the curriculum, minimize their workload, increase community involvement in their children's education, create a conducive learning environment, offer incentives to teachers, and develop the professionalism of instructional leaders.

The results were also consistent with the theories put forth by Parveen et al. (2023), who suggested that opportunities to support instructional leaders in raising student academic achievement included developing the profession of instructional leadership, improving the work environment that is conducive to learning, and encouraging active participation from a variety of stakeholders in the teaching-learning process. Parveen et al.

(2023) and Holsinger & Jacob (2009) explained that those leaders who are practicing instructional leaders' roles and make themselves up to date and motivate teachers for their work are able to enhance students' academic achievement. Holsinger & Jacob (2009) explained that those leaders who are practicing instructional leaders' roles and make themselves up to date and motivate teachers for their work are able to enhance students' academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

From the analyzed data, it was confirmed that instructional leaders in west Shewa Zone public secondary schools failed to develop and communicate schools shared missions and visions, manage curriculum and instructions, work on teachers professional development, monitor students' progress, create a conducive learning environment, and motivate teachers so as to enhance students' academic achievement. Governmental bodies should give due attention to the instructional leaders to create awareness in them so that they can effectively implement the above-mentioned variable in order to enhance students' academic achievement.

On the other hand, in this article it was confirmed that volume of administrative tasks (overloaded), inability to promote a culture of trust between school leaders and teaching staff, lack of knowledge and skill to provide important feedback for teachers, and lack of transparency while communicating with teachers were instructional leader-related challenges that hindered instructional leaders from implementing their role in enhancing students' academic achievement. Similarly, lack of commitment, uncooperative attitude, and inability to complete the syllabus timely were teacher-related factors that hindered instructional leaders from implementing their

roles so as to enhance students' academic achievement in west Shewa zone secondary schools. Ethiopian education policymakers should work on secondary school instructional leaders to work on teachers and other stakeholders to minimize the above challenges and be able to enhance students' academic achievement.

In this article, it is also confirmed that: making instructional leaders up-to-date with the curriculum, minimizing instructional leaders workload, increasing community involvement in the learning of their children, creating a conducive learning environment, providing incentives for teachers, and developing instructional leadership professionalism were some of the opportunities that enable west Shewa zone public secondary schools to enhance students' academic achievement. Instructional leaders and teachers should be aware of the importance of the above opportunities and use them effectively so as to enhance students' academic achievement.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the analyzed data the following recommendations were made:

Governmental bodies should give due attention to increase instructional leaders awareness so that they develop and communicate schools shared missions and visions, manage curriculum and instructions, work on teachers professional development, monitor students' progress, create a conducive learning environment, and motivate teachers so as to enhance students' academic achievement.

On the other hand, Ethiopian education policymakers should work on secondary school instructional leaders to work on teachers and other stakeholders to minimize volume of administrative tasks (overloaded), promote a

culture of trust between school leaders and teaching staff, enhance skill of provision of feedback for teachers and become transparent while communicating with teachers so as to reduce challenges that hindered instructional leaders from implementing their role in enhancing students' academic achievement.

Finally instructional leaders should use such an opportunity as: making themselves up-to-date with the curriculum, increase community involvement in the learning of their children, create conducive learning environment and provide incentives for teachers enhance students' academic achievement.

STATEMENT OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author maintains that no conflict of interest may affect or bias findings and their interpretation presented in this scholarly work.

ACCESSIBILITY OF DATA

The data set used in this endeavour of a research venture is readily available to the authors if a formal requisition is applied for, thereby ensuring access by anyone interested in the study of such.

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