Original Research

Understanding School Governing Bodies' Perceptions of Quality Education and Underlying Processes: The Case of Chasa Primary School, Nekemte, Ethiopia.

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Abstract	Article Information
The purpose of the study was to explore primary school governors' perceptions of quality education and their views of key processes that underlie it. Qualitative case study design was employed. Seventeen persons make the population of the study: eight school governing board members and nine parents-teachers association members. Twelve members of the school governing bodies, four core leaders and eight committee members were purposely selected and included. Multiple personal interviews, focus group discussion and document review generated qualitative data. Analysis emphasized on summarizing, re-summarizing, searching for themes and connecting threads. The findings show that the school governing bodies' understanding of good quality primary education is fairly similar to experts' definition; Out of the five quality inputs, except school feeding, all the remaining were put in place. However, out five underlying processes, only one key process that is having relevant curriculum and pedagogy was found to be practical. Absences of four crucial underlying processes, making the process incomplete, have negatively affected quality primary education. Out of the five key underlying education quality processes, only one, which is the existence of structured pedagogy and relevant curriculum, was found practiced. Students' individual and team effort was one of the five key elements of quality singled out as important, which differs from the model. Based on the findings, to make educational process comprehensive, the following recommendations are given to the school's governing bodies: 1) create a local forum where parents, teachers and interest group discuss about quality education and the processes that might lead towards it; 2) promote adult and non-formal education to build the capacity of parents; 3. Strengthen the link between home, school and community; and 4. install assessment system at grade level that can indicate individual students' progress.	 *Corresponding Author:* Asfaw Keno E-mail: kenowerka@yahoo.com

INTRODUCTION

Good quality primary education is widely believed to be important because it has multiple functions including: improving agricultural productivity, transferring necessary knowledge and skills, imparting basic cognitive skills, promoting values, norms and beliefs that keep society together, promoting human right and reducing social inequality (Aghion, Meghin, & Vandenbussche, 2006; Hanushek & Wößmann, 2008; Lucas, 1988; Mankiw, Romer, & Wei, 1992; Nelson & Phelps, 1966; Oduro, Dachi, &Fertig, 2008; Romer, 1990). However, the concept good quality education is an elusive one and not well understood. In agreement, Oduro, Dachi and Fertig (2008) pointed out that "attempts

to define 'educational quality' are legion, as the very concept of 'quality' is an evasive one" (p. 3). In an effort of indicating what a quality education constitutes, UNICEF (2000) emphasized the provision and existence of five dimensions:

healthy, well-nourished and ready learners; healthy, well-furnished facilities and safe environment; relevant curriculum; the process in which trained teachers apply learner-centered teaching method and effective assessment techniques in classroom and school teaching; and outcomes that include knowledge, skill and attitude founded on the rights of the whole child, and all children, to survival, protection, development and participation" (p. 2).

Further, UNESCO (2008) have singled out some common elements of quality education including "…to cover certain basic knowledge, values, competencies and behaviors that are specifically attuned to globalization but reflect the beauty and richness of our diversity expressed in different forms of belief, spirituality, culture and language" (p.9). Absence of complete coincidence on the aspects of the nature of good quality education shows the elusive nature of the concept, non-uniformity of the necessary strategies needed to ensure it and complexity of processes that underlie.

Noting processes that ensure good quality primary education remained the point of inquiry. One main assumption was that good quality primary education is believed to be obtained from effective primary schools. Schools are said to be effective when students' achievement are above (or up to) the set standard. Scanlo, Earley and Evans (1999) had shown the existence of clear association between effective schools and effective governing bodies. Several studies (Jadal, 2012;McCrone, Southcott & George, 2011; Mestry, 2007;Ofseted, 2011; Perry,

2011; Wylie, 2007) noted the positive associations between effectiveness of school governing bodies and school effectiveness. Perry (2011) also noted that effective governing bodies have clearly defined roles and responsibilities, good communication with the principal, an effective chair and regular performance monitoring. Governors having a clear understanding of their role (and limits) and strategic responsibilities is believed to be the key to effective governance (McCrone, Southcott, & George, 2011). In line with this, Ofseted (2011) documented that governors' having absolute clarity about their roles and responsibilities is the main characteristics of effective schools in UK. Obviously, in effective schools, the school governances focuses on students' academic achievement; and in response, students' performance is noted to be better (Bolívar-Botía& Bolívar-Ruano, 2011; Castagno, 2008; Hughes, Chen, & Kwok, 2008; Peters, 2008).

As there are diverse ways of defining quality education, there are several alternative ways of measuring same including average academic achievement in national exams, average scores in standardized tests, average achievements in Mathematics and Science subjects. Some studies (Hanshek & Wößmann, 2008; Michaelowa, 2001; Oduro, Dachi & Fertig, 2008; Willims, 2000) indicate that good quality education is signaled better by academic achievement. More specifically, Willms (2000) pointed out that quality primary education can be measured using standardized test achievements in literacy and numeracy. Michaelowa (2001), further, distinguished that learning achievement is the most obvious indicator of education quality. Hanushek and Wößmann (2008) noted that the measure of quality of education is a simple average of the mathematics and science scores over international tests and

can be interpreted as a substitute for the average educational performance of the whole labor force. Thus, it can be understood that quality education indicators have multiple dimensions like proficiency in literacy, numeracy, basic skills, relevance of curriculum and effective leadership.

Even if defining and describing the constituents of good quality education remained evasive, and measuring it is difficult, interestingly, accessing good quality primary education to all have been a benevolent goal for all nations' of the world longsince the declaration of human right (see article 26 in UN, 1950), which forced all nation states and their respective functionaries to further the expansion of education. The good intention that seeks to maintain quality in the context of quantitative expansion has made educational quality a topic of intense interest in developing countries (Leu & Price-Rom, 2006).

To coordinate local efforts and ensure quality, the government of Ethiopia has installed decentralized educational management system that authorized primary school governing bodies with a power to rule over every aspect of educational activities of schools under their jurisdiction (MoE, 2001). The government of Ethiopia has also developed a general education quality strategy document, which discusses the issue of quality education with respectto competence and adequacy level of teachers; adequacy of student texts, other teaching aids, library and laboratory; students-teacher ratio; relevance of the curriculum, employing student-centered teaching method, issuing primary education with mother tongue, using information communication technology, reducing drop outs and repetition and decentralizing educational organization and management (MoE, 2007, p.5 - 11). As to my knowledge, all these points raised by the

policy document are worthy in defining and evaluating quality education. In the same document six general education quality improvement strategies were spelt out including: 1) promoting teachers' development program; 2) supporting school improvement program; 3) furthering civic and ethical education program; 4) improving the relevance of curriculum; 5) expanding the information communication technology services; and 6) improving educational management, practice and organization (MoE, 2007, p. 12). However, there is little or no information on what (and how) primary school governors are doing to ensure quality primary education in Ethiopia. This report is an exploration of primary school governors' perspectives on the concept quality education and key processes underlying it, which is a result of the qualitative inquiry that I conducted in a public urban primary school located in the western Oromia regional state, Ethiopia, from October 2015 to February, 2016. Addressing the issue of good quality primary education and the underlying processes is important because quality education has a capacity to enhance economic growth; reduce inequality (Oduro, Dachi, &Fertig, 2008); and promote human right.

2. Statement of the Problem:

Different aspects of school governance were examined using diverse methodological approaches (the quantitative, mixed and the qualitative approaches with their respective methods). Three quantitative studies (Wylie, 2004; Xaba, 2004; James, Brammer, Connolly, Fertig, & Jones, 2011) examined the current status of school governance in New Zealand, perception of educators on the effectiveness of school governing bodies in South Africa and the relationship between school performance and school governance

in England, respectively. Three other studies employed mixed approaches (McCone, Southcott, & George, 2011; Pery, 2011; Wyk, 2004) and examined the current school governance model, the issues of school governance, and educator members' perception of the role of school governing bodies, respectively.

Many studies employed qualitative approach to explore different aspects of school governance (Bagarette, 2012; Botha, 2012; ETI, 2005; Jadal, 2012; Khuzwayo, 2007; Mistry, 2006; Mokoena, 2011; Ofested, 2011; Quan-Baffour, 2006;Rangongo, 2011; Xaba, 2012). The focus of several studies from South Africa was to explore the role and relationship between members of school governing (Bagarette, 2012; Botha, 2012; Khuzwayo, 2007; Mestry, 2006; Quan-Baffour, 2006; Rangongo, 2011; Xaba, 2012). However, Mokoena (2011), from South Africa, explored the participation of rural schools in decision-making from members. Near the same period, Jadal (2012) investigated the role of village education committee in India. What is known from literature, then, is that school governing bodies have irreplaceable roles in defining and ensuring quality primary education(Bagarette, 2012; Botha, 2012; ETI, 2005; Jadal, 2012; Khuzwayo, 2007; Mestry, 2006; Mokoena, 2011; Ofested, 2011; Quan-Baffour , 2006; Rangongo, 2011; Xaba, 2012).

Three qualitative studies from Europe emphasized on school governance framework and outcome (ETI, 2005; Ofested, 2011; Tikly, 2011). ETI (2005)'s emphasis was to create school governance that stands for the best interest of learners. Ofested (2011)documented the characteristics of effective governing bodies. Tikly (2011) developed a framework for quality education in low income countries. He explored theoretical and methodological aspect of good

quality primary education and attempted setting framework for quality education in low income countries. Interestingly, Tikly'(2011) education quality model provided the working definition of good quality primary education, identified five necessary inputs , and correspondingly, five necessary processes for ensuring good quality education in sub-Saharan Africa and recommended mixed approach to employ.

In Ethiopia, some studies investigated perceptions of different stakeholders about their views of quality education (Amare, Daniel, Derebssa, Wanna, Barrow, Leu ,& Price-Rom, 2006; Asefa, 2017; Tsegabirhan, 2013; Tadesse & Maeregu, 2014).Amare, Daniel, Derebssa, Wanna, Barrow, Leu and Price-Rom (2006) explored the perception, experience and practices of principals and teachers about quality education and quality teaching in four regions of Ethiopia. Their findings indicated that teachers and principals defined and discussed education quality around issues of educational inputs, processes, and outputs. However, Amare et. al.'s (2006) study did not involve the school governing bodies. Tsegabirhan (2013) investigated the delivery of primary education in Ethiopia. His finding showed that the existing institutional arrangements were effective in creating access but not quality. Tsegabirhan (2013) used secondary data generated by Ministry of Education and did not address primary school governors.

Although there are many attempts through research to understand quality education, the roles of governing bodies and processes that ensure quality, yet, some issues remained unresolved. For example, the findings of some studies about the roles of governing board showed inconsistent results (Bagarette, 2012; Botha, 2012; ETI, 2005; Jadal, 2012; Khuzwayo, 2007; Mistry, 2006; Mokoena,

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2011; Ofested, 2011; Quan-Baffour, 2006; Rangongo, 2011; Xaba, 2012).

The concept good quality primary education, the necessary inputs and important processes that can ensure it are not equally understood by members of school governing bodies who determine the strategic direction of schools. Even understanding is absent partly because the concept 'quality education' is vague and processes that underlie are complex; and partly because of absence of sufficient dialogue. Consensus has not been created among members of school governing bodies on the definition of good quality primary education, the necessary educational inputs to focus on and the important processes needed to be carried out in order to ensure quality education. As a consequence, the school governing bodies are not placing quality in school missions, have not installed mechanisms that control quality.

2.1. Purpose and research question

With the purpose of exploring the perception of primary school governing bodies about the concept good quality education and processes that underlie it, the following research questions guided the study:

1. How do primary school governors perceive quality education? 2. How are the key processes underlying good quality education described by the primary school governors? 3. How do the members of primary school governing bodies view the roles of school governing board and that of school management have in ensuring quality education?4. What happened to educational quality/outcomes the last three years?

2.2. Main Objective of the Study

The principal objective of the study was to explore primary school governors'

perceptions of the concept quality education and to understand the subjects' perspectives on key processes (teaching learning, home and community situations) underlying quality education.

2.2. Theoretical Framework: Social justice capability approach or EdQual model.

The social justice capability framework (Tikly & Barett, 2011), which is also called EdQual model, is chosen as the study's theoretical framework for this study for two reasons. First, it is a philosophical approach developed for Africa and other low-income countries. Second, it emphasizes on building individual and societal capabilities. Theoretical framework was used in the study as a standard against which to contrast the perception of members of school governing bodies of the school. The way the primary school governors conceptualized good quality education, the processes and strategies they considered to ensure quality education, the practices they had and the changes they made happen in the school were sought, documented and evaluated against the approach. The use of the model, in this study, was necessitated by the need to have focus and depth as it saves from wondering from one to several quality models.

Tikly and Barett (2011) noted that their framework is based on the capabilities work that assumes educational outcomes such as literacy, numeracy, basic scientific knowledge, autonomy, critical thinking and emotional intelligence as products of good quality education. They figured out those three principles of capabilities. These are:

> *Firstly, that education should be inclusive, which draws attention to the access of different groups of learners to quality inputs that facilitate the development of their capabilities and*

removal of economic, cultural and institutional barriers that impact on the learning of different groups. The second principle is that a quality education must be relevant, i.e. that learning outcomes must contribute to sustainable livelihoods and wellbeing for all learners, must be valued by their communities. The third principle is that education should be democratic in the sense that learning outcomes are determined through public debate and ensured through processes of accountability. (Tikly & Barett, 2011, p.5)

From this extract, it can be understood that the model emphasizes on accessing education to all segment of society without restriction, ensuring quality input, making education democratic and relevant and building the capability of learners.

The central focus of the framework is noted by same authors to be: "that good quality education arises from interactions between three overlapping environments, namely the policy, the school and the home/community environments" (Tikly & Barett, 2011, p. 13). According to Tikly and Barett (2011), creating a good quality education involves paying attention to 'closing three gaps': the implementation gap, the expectation gap and the learning gap (p. 13). The EdQual model further elaborates strategies that help to overcome these gaps as follows:

Overcoming the so-called "implementation gap" between national policy and its implementation at the school level requires engaging with the experiences and views of teachers and head teachers, ensuring that initial and continuing professional development opportunities are consistent with the

demands of new curricula and other initiatives, and providing support for schools in implementing and monitoring change. Closing the "expectations gap" between the outcomes of education and what parents and communities expect education systems to deliver requires paying attention to the relevance of the curriculum, listening to the voices of parents and of communities in national debates and developing greater accountability within the system. Addressing the "learning gap" that often exists between learning that takes place in schools and the home/ community environment requires focusing on the health and nutrition of learners and working with parents to create an enabling home environment to support learning. (p. 14)

The model defines good quality education (Tikly & Barett, 2011) as:

The one that enables all learners to realize the capabilities they require to become economically productive, develop sustainable livelihoods, contribute to peaceful and democratic societies and enhance wellbeing. The learning outcomes that are required vary according to context but at the end of the basic education cycle must include threshold levels of literacy and numeracy and life skills including awareness and prevention of disease. (p.12)

Finally, according to the EdQual frame work; there are five quality inputs and five key processes that determine educational outcomes in low income countries (Tikly & Barett, 2011). The quality inputs are: 1. suitably trained, experienced and motivated teachers; 2. head teacher training; 3. appropriate textbooks and learning materials; 4. investing in basic infrastructure and resources including ICTs; and 5. school

feeding, child health and early childhood development; whereas, the key processes underlying a good quality education include: 1. a national debate on education quality; 2. improved accountability and parent/ community voice; 3. effective assessment, monitoring and evaluation of quality; 4. a relevant and inclusive curriculum and pedagogy; and 5. School, home and community links.

3.0. The Research Methodology and Methods Used

Qualitative research approach, specifically case study was employed appropriately as the study seeks meaning people give to human problems (in this case quality primary education and processes that underlie it) in a natural setting (Creswell, 2007). Case study was applied as it helps to investigate a bounded system using multiple tools of detailed data collection (Creswell, 2007).

3.1 Population, Sampling Technique, Sample Size and participants

As the study aimed at exploring the perception and understanding of school governing bodies on quality primary education, eight members of the school governing board members and the nine parent teachers joint committee members, make the total population of the study 17 persons (out of which five are teachers). Four core leaders (the school principal (TSP), the school governing board chair (SGBC), the parent teacher association chair (PTAC), and teacher, who is a member of the school governing board (TST) were included in the study purposively. These informants were selected because of their influential leadership and membership role in the school governing board. Eight members who served in the committee for more than two years were purposefully selected out of the

remaining 13 members and included in focus group discussion. Those members who have two years and above service in the governing body are assumed to have better (and homogenous) experience to share than novice.

3.3. Method of Data Collection

Multiple personal interviews, focus group discussion, and document reviews were used as methods of data collection. Data regarding the context was collected from multiple sources: using interview guide and document analysis while data regarding perception and understanding of subjects was collected mainly using multiple personal interview. Interview is a widely used tool to access people's experiences and their inner perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of reality. Interviewing is the best approach than observation for individuals who share a particular trait (in this case being member of school governing bodies) but do not form sociological groups (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

3.4. Procedures of Data Collection

After having prepared semi- structured interview guide (which was narrowed after every interview), a letter from Educational Planning and Management department of AAU that asks official support for my study was collected and submitted to Chasa primary school director, went to research site and visited the school, found the school director, introduced myself to him, submitted the official letter and briefed him/her with the purpose of my study and secured permission. The next step was to hang around, select informants, negotiate and obtain their written and signed consent; introduce myself and the purpose of the research, try to build trust and establish rapport with each of the four participants before running the interview as per the advice of Fontona and Fery (2005).

Eventually, after written consent of participation was obtained, I have conducted individual, face-to-face verbal interchange, semi structured interviews with each of the four participants; for a length of about 90 minutes in two sessions with a principal and a teacher, and for about one hour with each committee chair persons to create a narration as suggested by Fontona and Fery (2005).

I have protected the identity of my informants by using pseudo names right from the beginning. With the permission of subjects, audio tape was used to record our conversation, while actively listening to the subject's response during interview sessions; I probed for deeper understanding and also took note. Personal reflections were written after every interview session. After completion of the interview program, careful verbatim transcription of the audio-recorded data (56 pages of word document) was done.

3.5. Data Presentation

I read, re-read several times the data (interview and focus group transcripts, field notes and my memos) and got it edited. Then, similar items were collected together under the same category and organized under six different themes (see the finding section). Perspectives held by subjects that included shared rules, norms and their ways of thinking about quality primary education and underlying processes were used as basis for categorizing. In this report, data is presented by making a statement and illustrate the statement with several examples keeping the evidence separate from summaries as mentioned by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) to illustrate that my abstractions are grounded in what subjects have narrated.

3.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Analysis was started while in field by summarizing it and continued afterwards by answering questions: what is important in the data? Why is it important? What can be learned from that? So what? Together with searching linkage between themes and categories, repeated data reduction, was done. Data reduction was done by summarizing what was in the data. This is appropriate as data analysis in qualitative research involves summarizing data in a dependable and accurate manner. Actually, multi stage process of organizing, categorizing, synthesizing, analyzing, and writing about the data were undertaken while reading and re- reading, memoing, describing, classifying and interpreting as mentioned by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009) .The analysis was extended by contextualizing the result in existing literature and also linking with a theory as indicated by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2009).

4.0. Findings

Seven non-educators and five educators, in sum 12, members of a primary school governing body were included in the study. All the seven non-educators have educational level ranging from grade 9 to diploma indicating that all the members of the governing bodies have completed the primary course of education. Only one member (8.33 %) was female. The finding that shows very low female participation in the primary school governing body is the correct reflection of local communities' male dominated decision-making practice, which I believe needs improvement(Table 1).

Table: 1

Respondents Characteristics by age, sex, level of education, role and service year

	Participant	Sex	Age in years	Level of Education	Role in Governing Body	Year service in the governing Body
1	The village chief administrator (SGBC)	M	32	12	Chairperson	five years.
2	The primary school director (TSD)	M	40	Diploma	Secretary	Served for three years
3	The parents-teachers joint committee chair (PTJC)	M	58	College education	PTA Chairperson	eight years
4	The school teacher (TST)	M	34	B.Ed Degree	Board member	for five years
5	Representative of women association(RWA)	F	34	12	Board member	for three years
6	Representative of youth association(RYA)	M	25	12	Board member	for three years
7	Parent 1 from schools governance board (PGB)	M	50	8	PTA member	for three years
8	Parent 1 from PTA(P1PTA)	M	45	12	PTA member	for three years
9	Parent 2 from PTA(P2PTA)	M	55	9	PTA member	for three years
10	Teacher1 from PTA(T1PTA)	M	30	Diploma	PTA member	for three years
11	Teacher2 from PTA(T2PTA)	M	35	Diploma	PTA member	for three years
12	Teacher3from PTA(T3PTA)	M	40	Diploma	PTA member	for three years

Source: own

4.2. The context: The school and the Students Homes

The primary school under inquiry, presented here under a pseudo name Chasa primary school, is a public school, located in the western part of Oromia regional state, Ethiopia, is under operation for 40 years. Currently, the school is constructed and furnished with seats, desks and blackboards by the generous support obtained from donors (subjects do not know) through the coordination effort of one national church's development office. Except for the irregularity of water supply services and shortage of books in library, the school under inquiry has a well-built school structure; latrine of good standard for teachers and students, in both cases separate for males and females; and clean and safe compound. The school had 40 teachers in the academic year 20014/15; out of which 13 of them have bachelor degree level training, 23 have diploma and also pursuing first degree in evening, summer and distance program and only two senior teachers have certificate level training indicating that the qualification level of teachers is by far above the national requirement that demands diploma level training for primary school (MoE, 2007, p.17). The students' teacher ratio in Chasa primary school in 2015 /16 was found to be 40.65:1, when compared to MoE (2008) the national student teacher ratio data (p. 6), which was 57.9, indicates the existence of

sufficient number of teachers both in terms of qualification and specialization.

Most of the parents of the school under inquiry are poor. They get their living from daily labor income. They often do agricultural works (like tilling, digging, cultivating, weeding, harvesting, herding and etc.); some are involved in making charcoal, collecting and moving fire wood to towns for sales, which is arduous to the individual, non-friendly to the environment, and the gain from such work is also very low. Some poor parents of the school under investigation live in a town and get their earnings from hauling and transporting goods, winnowing grains, doing road side trading and so on, which indicates that their occupation is irregular kind and attracts very low income. The homes of most of the school's students (those that come both from rural and urban setting) is inconvenient for studying as it lacks necessary materials for reading and writing like benches, light and food. The poor illiterate parents provide very limited support at home.

4.3. Subjects' Definition of the Concept Good Quality Primary Education

To capture the school governing bodies' perception of good quality primary education n, focus group discussion (FGD) and interview was conducted with members of the governing bodies. Eight persons were drawn from SGB and PTA for FGD. When asked how they define good quality primary education, each expressed his/her understanding as follows:

T1PTA: It is that which enables learners show behavioral change. It includes well prepared lessons, which are delivered properly and assessed timely up to the standard.

T2PTA: It is the result of quality input and quality teaching processes. Qualified teachers, quality curriculum and employing active teaching.

PGB: Good quality education, for me, is the one that creates interest to learn in students. It is applicable to work life. It must enable student to read, write and do arithmetic correctly.

RWA: I agree with what T1PTA suggested about behavioral change. Good quality education must help children show respect for girls and women. It, off course, need to enable student read, write, and comprehend.

T3PT A: The concept quality education is a difficult one to express. It is not as simple as good quality clothe or good quality grain. We use our sense organs like seeing and touching to judge the quality of materials like cloth and grain. But we cannot use seeing or touching to tell the quality of education. I think it is better defined in terms quality input and quality process. The quality input starts from having qualified teachers and sufficient text books. When taught by well qualified teachers from well-developed textbooks, applying active teaching method to disciplined and motivated students in classroom, such education is of good quality for me.

Parent 1PTA: I totally agree to what T3PTA has said.

RWA: I agree with what the teachers and parents have suggested. In the meaning of good quality education, I think the concept of being peaceful, productive, respect of the rule of the law must be incorporated. A citizen who is provided with good quality education must be productive and respectful.

From this FGD excerpt, one can see that members of the school governing body define good quality primary education in terms of input, process and outcome. They emphasized the importance of capabilities in judging the quality of primary education. For detail, four core leaders who have better experience were interviewed. The school director (TSD) noted the absence of clear understanding of the meaning and value of quality education in her/his locality. S/he said:

The community has not understood the importance of good quality education. What they are doing at length is only sending students to schools. Most parents, for example, do not supervise the education of their children, they do not check whether children do their homework or not." (TSD)

In agreement, the village chief extends the argument that quality education is not well understood by the community as well by some educators. The school governing board chair (SGBC) added: "The meaning given to quality education, leave alone the community, is not clear among our school leaders and teachers" (SGBC). The notion that says parents and local community members have not well understood the meaning and value of quality primary education and as a result not doing proper things to their children implies that awareness creation might generate difference.

Even if the meaning and value of good quality education is claimed to have been not well understood in the village community, when asked, the school governing board's chair and the school teacher (TST) suggested their own respective definitions of good quality primary education as follows:
We can define quality education as the education that enables students read, write,

comprehend and numerate. Primary school students between grades one to four who received good quality education can read, write, add, subtract, multiply, divide and comprehend…. (SGBC)

Quality primary education is education that makes a student capable at her/his level…. In grade one, students are first taught their mother language alphabets, followed by letter combinations, reading and then writing; nearly by the end of first grade, students will be able to write their names,… distinguish basic skills of arithmetic; and start learning from their natural environment through field observation and doing practical activities in class rooms individually as well as in group. (TST)

The two subjects' statements can be synthesized together and provide their understanding of good quality primary education. It can be said that subjects perceive good quality primary education as the kind of education that makes students capable to read, write, numerate, comprehend, describe and explain the phenomenon in their environment, be ethical and be able to make necessary adjustment to their corresponding surroundings. From this one can understand that both educator and non-educator governing body members of the primary school under investigation express good quality education in terms of capability and proficiency.

4.2. Subjects View of How to Ensure Good Quality Education

In the second part of FGD, participants' perception of essential processes that ensure good quality education was discussed. When they were asked, "In your opinion, what processes are important to ensure the provision of good quality primary education?"

members of school governing body that were included in FGD said the following:

T1PTA: as I pointed earlier, good lesson preparation, proper lesson delivery using appropriate teaching method and timely assessment are essential processes to ensure the provision of good quality education.

T2PTA: Well, the first important process to me is preparation of relevant curriculum followed by preparation of qualified teachers. The school management has to make sure that well qualified teachers offer lessons using active teaching method.

PGB: I think the essential process of learning starts from home. Parents have to feed and nourish their kids well so that the child will remain active in the class. Second there must text books to learn from. Classroom instruction and student's attendance is also worth mentioning. Follow up from both teachers and parents are also necessary. Additional tutorial and parental support is another thing I want to raise.

RWA: Having a role model. When schools hire female teachers, and these female teachers are good teachers, girls follow their foot step and learn well. The second important thing I want to remind you is the importance of '*raayaa barnoota'*, in Afaan Oromo, means students' team work, which will make them as disciplined and effective as an armed force. Five students when organized into a team, they will show better effort and achieve better.

T3PTA: Laughing, said I have finished this part earlier. Having qualified teachers, sufficient text books, applying active teaching method, having disciplined and motivated students in classroom is essential processes. To this, as PGB said,

parental involvement in home learning is very important.

P 1PTA: The follow up made by school management and supervisors is also crucial.

RYA: as pointed by P1PTA, complying to laws and orders is important.

P2PTA: Obtaining support for the poor and vulnerable is important. This will reduce dropout.

From the governing bodies FGD, one can learn that the members perceive that having qualified teachers, relevant curriculum, adequate lesson preparation and proper lesson delivery employing active learning and continuous assessment methods; having a school climate where laws and order are maintained; having well fed, healthy and motivated child; augmented with parental support at home and peer support in school are the essential processes to ensure good quality education.

To explore further how core leaders of school governing bodies perceive the underlying process of good quality education, personal interview was conducted. The four core leaders were asked what they think are essential processes to ensure good quality primary education.

According to the school governing board chair, the school teacher and the principal, teachers' qualification level, their competence and readiness are the major aspects of ensuring good quality education. The village chair recognized: "Good quality education comes from the qualification level of teachers. Diploma and degree holding teachers teaching in primary schools are said to offer good quality education, whereas low quality education is given by teachers with certificate and less educational levels". The school

teacher also noted: "To offer good quality education, the first thing to correct is the views and attitudes of teachers towards quality education. The second is to improve teachers' competence. The two need to match together". To these, the school director added: "To ensure quality education, the major role is played by the teacher. If the teachers' competence, capability and outlook are accurately combined together; then s/he can deliver good quality education".

Besides capability of teachers, the three above mentioned subjects underlined also the importance of textbooks, reference books and educational materials.

The other important factor is the availability of textbooks and technically fit materials. But the determinant factor is the readiness of teachers. (SGBC)
Students need to have sufficient books. The school must be furnished with necessary materials like blackboards, library etc. (TST)
Besides, students also have to follow their teachers and textbooks by linking the lessons they learn with existing local situations. (TSD)

Added together, the subjects understanding of mechanisms that help to ensure quality education incorporate varied elements. Teachers' capabilities, which include their subject matter knowledge, their proficiency in pedagogy and their attitude towards the profession and learners is considered by subjects as the main constituent of quality process. Proper utilization of textbooks, reference books and other educational materials were also considered to have contribution to quality education.

4.6. Subjects' view of the Roles of school governing board and school management
The School Governing Boards' Role in Quality Education

According to the school governing board chair, the school governing board, which is the highest governing body of the school, is found to be non-effective, shaky and not strong as there is frequent coming in and going out of members to and from the school board.

The [school governing] board lacks strength as it had no sufficient training….Moreover; members of the board who represent a segment of the community are frequently substituted by another. As a consequence, the board does not know its role to better extent; usually the school director prepares an agenda and calls for meeting whenever students or teachers make disciplinary problems. (SGBC)

The school governance board chair further noted that the board does not communicate the school board's works to higher organs, which implies that the school board receives no (or) little support from higher officials to dispatch to the school management.

We do not report about the specific school situations to the village council…. And, there is no direct relationship between the school board and education offices. The school governing board and the district/ municipal education office are connected to each other through the school director as education offices get reports of works of the board from school directors". (SGBC)

The school governing board, which is the highest governing body of the school,

presided over by the village chief, consists of four out of seven members drawn from community while the remaining three(a principal and two teachers) are from the school, governs the overall work of the school. It is found to be not-effective as its members do not know their roles and responsibilities. The school governing board makes involvement in planning and decision-making of the school but has not made quality education the mission of the school.

The School Management's Role and Quality Education

The school teacher recognized the important role school management plays in ensuring quality education as:

In ensuring quality education, school management has a great role including preparing seats, providing clean classrooms, textbooks, library, and in creating conducive environment….The director is diploma holder majoring social science; has a good capacity in coordinating works, focuses on learning, makes class visits, frequently calls the school curriculum committee and members of student council for consultation whenever s/he observes certain kind of irregularities. (TST)

To this, the school director also added:

The points of our focus are improving students' score and ensuring student discipline…. We emphasize on improving students' performance on exams, their ethical conditions and participation in developmental activities". (TSD)

Although the school principal is not trained in school administration, her/his emphasis on students' achievement, order maintenance, and creation of suitable teaching learning environment had positive

contribution to quality education. To add up, subjects underscored the following elements to be better strategies to enhance good quality education: 1. teachers competences and readiness; 2.efforts student make to follow strictly teachers' instruction and textbooks; 3. school governing bodies' valuing quality education as the mission of the school; and 4. the school management's focus on student achievement and discipline; however, not recognized the need for having professional school principal.

4.7. Subjects' view of the changes made since two years

Documents were referred to document changes made in the school for the last two years. Access has increased dramatically. The total number of students enrolled to the school under investigation has increased from 1548 in the year 2015/16 to 1626 in 2016/17. This is 5.04 percent increase in a year. The other finding from document was about eighth grade national exam result of students. The average mark for all subjects grew from 62 to 70. Document review has also shown an impressive reduction in failure. The number of fails was 142 in the academic 2015/16, which dropped to 78 students a year later.

The school teacher was asked, during the interview session, what major changes he noticed has happened in the school the last three years? He noted the shift made in instructional method recently from traditional lecture method to learner centered. He said: *In the past, we used to employ the lecture method. Beginning from last year, academic year 2013/14, after we have received training on active learning approach, we are*

employing a teaching–learning process that fully involves students. (TST)

The school director described as at length the radiant progress made afterwards as follows:

After employing active learning teaching approach and continuous assessment technique, with provisions of supplementary lessons and additional tutorials, we have made great improvement in student achievement. Students' average mark which was 62 in the year 2015/16 has increased to 70 in the academic the year 2016/17. We also have managed to reduce the total number of failures in the school (from grades one through seven) from 149 students in the year 2015/16 to 78 students in academic the year 2016/17 …. We have managed to restore back our first rank out of all primary schools in the town in student achievement. Two of our seventh grade students (one female and one male) scored 100 each in mathematics and natural sciences. They won medals from regional government." (TSD)

From the views of both the teacher and the principal it is noted that there was an application of active learning pedagogy in the school and raise in the average marks of students. However, still there is a challenge. When asked if it means that the better learning and improved achievement was a gain for all students and all grades? The school teacher tells the existence of some students who are non-readers and non-writers in grades one to four. S/he said, "There are some non-readers and non-writers in grades one to four. They are not many…." To this, the school director adds: "There are some students who cannot read and write in the first cycle of the primary school where only a person teaches students of one section all subjects". Both

evidences confirm the existence of some students who are non-reader and non-writers in lower cycle of the school.

According to the school teacher, students' lack of proper devotion to learning and some teachers' absenteeism resulted in the existence of some non-readers and non-writers. When asked why do some students lack learning motivation? S/he noted: "Students of grade one; for example, are kids and usually fond of plays and as a result may not concentrate on learning…There are some teachers who come late to school and waste time". To this, the school director added that absence of grade-level assessment mechanism, free promotion of grades one to four students without testing proficiency level, and instructional time wastage because of teachers' absenteeism contributed to the existence of non-readers and non-writers. S/he said:

There is a well-developed standard to check against the competence level of students of every grade …. The problem is we have not installed the mechanism to regulate literacy and numeracy...teachers[of grades one to four] teach same section students all subjects and allowed free promotion of children without confirming the child's mastery of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. There was a notion that says a student fail is a teachers fail. For the fear of not being said a failure, all teachers of grades one to four allow free promotion of all students to next grade.... One can ask a question, why shouldn't management take measures when teachers fail to meet this goal? The management of school also shares the failure, mainly the assistance directors." (TSD)

In summary, according to both the school director and the governor

teacher, instructional time wastage because of teacher absenteeism, un installment of grade level assessment mechanism, free promotion of non-qualified students to next grades mainly from grades one to four and less students' dedication might have resulted in the existence of non-readers and non-writers in *Chasa* primary school.

5. Conclusion

Chasa public primary school governing bodies perceive good quality primary education as the kind of education that makes students capable to read, write, numerate, comprehend, describe and explain the phenomenon in their environment, be ethical and able to make necessary adjustment to their corresponding surroundings. The subjects' definition and understanding of quality education nearly matches with that of the Edqual's working definition (Tikly & Barratte, 2011) showing that the primary school governors' understanding of the meaning of quality primary education is much close to that of leading experts' in the field. However, general consensus has not yet been created about the meaning of the concept by all stakeholders. It is not well mapped and communicated signifying the absence of adequate policy dialogue at local level. As there is adequate knowledge within members about good quality primary education, the school management is advised to facilitate local level discussion on the issue of quality education, make the issue an agenda, which will help to create consensus and improve stakeholders' involvement.

Some non-reader and non-writer students existed in the lower grades of the primary cycle (grades one to four). The existence of

low proficiency in literacy and numeracy was attributed to: instructional time wastage because of teacher absenteeism; wrong implementation of grades one to four promotion policy; un installment of effective students' achievement assessment; poor student discipline to some degree; and littlie/ none parental supervision to students' learning as most parents are illiterate.

The fact that the school has not put the grade-level assessment mechanism into effect and have not implemented the first cycle primary level promotion policy implies that teacher's, assistant principals and the school's principal have poor understanding of (or less commitment to) the education and training policy directives. In line with Tikly and Barrette(2011), to overcome the implementation gap at school level, the municipal education office is advised to help the school governing bodies to fixviews and experiences of teachers and vice principals, provide training to teachers and school governing board members, and support the school principal in implementing and monitoring change.

The conclusion that says instructional time wastage has contributed to the existence of non-readers and non-writers in the school under study also fits with existing literature. UNICEF (2000), for example, documented that, "… efficient use of school time has a significant impact on student learning" (UNICEF, 2000, p. 13). UNESCO (2011) also further noted that "real teaching time matters…. Teacher absenteeism and time spent off task during lessons can significantly reduce the number of hours that children are actually taught" (p. 104). The school management and its governing bodies have to seek local level mechanisms to overcome teacher absenteeism as; otherwise, it can greatly affect quality education.

In line with the conclusion that says low parental involvement made home learning minimal in Chasa primary school, Epstein (2011) noted that parental expectation and home support greatly influence students' achievement. Besides classroom instructions, the vital role of parental involvement in improving students 'achievement was noted by UNICEF(2000) as: "higher levels of parental involvement that includes parents reading to young children is associated with higher test scores and lower rates of grade repetition in primary school"(p. 5). Cognizant of the role parents could play in helping students do their home works, Tikly (2010) advices empowering parents through adult education. However, little or none was done in the school under investigation to help parents improve their education and their home environments. The schools under scrutiny and its governing bodies have to encourage all parents who have not completed primary education to attend adult education. The school and governing bodies need to ensure that parents are informed to make their homes suitable for learning. Encourage the provision of necessary materials like chair, bench, books, and also, assigning space and time for home learning have to be emphasized. Strengthening home –school link possibly through teachers' going to students' home, visit parents and talk about the education of their student child. Further research on how to promote adult education and empower parents seems to me worthy.

The school governing bodies at Chasa primary view the following elements to be better strategies to enhance good quality education: 1. teachers competences and readiness; 2. proper utilization of text books, reference books and other educational materials; 3. efforts student make to follow strictly teachers' instruction and textbooks; 4. school governing bodies' valuing quality education as the mission of the school; and, 5. the school management's focus on student achievement and discipline. The school's parents-teachers' joint committee and the school's governing board make active involvement in planning, decision-making and evaluation of Chasa primary school activities, however, they have not yet made the issue of quality their major value. Members of the school governing bodies of the school under examination do not think that the school governing bodies have major roles in ensuring quality education. They consider quality issue as the duty and concern of educators only.

The governing bodies of the school under study are found to be shaky and not effective. Members of the school's governing bodies lack thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The conclusion that says existence of non-effective school governing bodies contributes to low quality education in the school under study matches with existing literature. As absence of "… clearly defined roles and responsibilities of governing bodies" (Balarin, Brammer, James, & McCormack, 2008); and "lack of common and shared vision" (Balarin et al., 2008) are features found to be the elements of non-effective school governances. The school governing bodies of Chasa primary school need to regard quality education as the school's mission.

Magnificent progress (student average mark has increased from 62 percent in the year 2009 /10 to 70 in 2010/11, similarly, number failures decreased from 149 in the year 2009/10 to 78 in 2010/11) was noticed in the school under study in terms achievement. The school governing bodies credited the school teachers, students and

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the principal for the contribution they made. Firstly, employment of the student-centered active learning approach and continuous assessment method in classroom instruction and also provision of supplementary classes by teachers; second, students improved discipline as well better individual and organized student effort; and thirdly, the school principal's focus on test achievement, discipline and creation of suitable learning environment are believed by the school governing bodies to have effected these radiant progress.

Employing the social capability model (Tikly, 2011), this paper explored the perceptions and views of primary school governing bodies on quality education and underlying processes, and reports the attempts made by school governance to ensure quality without compromising massive expansion. From theoretical framework perspective the following conclusion can be drawn: Absence of sufficient policy dialogue at local level on education quality; absence of meaningful parental involvement in the teaching-learning process; lack of strong home support for learners; and absence of effective assessment system were identified to be the four underlying process that seem to have negatively affected good quality education in Chasa primary school. Out of the five key underlying education quality process indicated by the framework, only one, that is, the existence of structured pedagogy and relevant curriculum is pertinent to Chasa primary school. Besides, the existence of some quality inputs like trained and experienced teachers and appropriate textbooks were found to be applicable to quality education at Chasa primary school. Except that it fails to give explanation about the contribution of students' organized and guided effort by

schools on quality, Edqual's quality framework is found to be better in defining quality education by clearly showing critical inputs to provide, indicated the underlying key processes to ensure quality and also identified mechanisms to evaluate quality.

The study revealed that though most major educational processes and major inputs are missing, still magnificent progresses are made in the primary school under inquiry. Existence of structure pedagogy, textbooks, trained teachers and students organized efforts were indicated to have been the motor of improvement. Though not indicated in the model, students team learning and effort had room in the school's performance.

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