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School Improvement Program Implementation Practices in Secondary Schools of South West Oromia Region: Teaching Learning Domain in Focus

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Abstract

The study aimed at investigating the teaching and learning domain implementation practices within the framework of f School Improvement Program. A concurrent mixed research design was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Respondents were randomly selected and included in the study. Questionnaires and document analyses were used to gather data for the study. A total of 410 questionnaires were distributed and 374 (91 %) were properly filled and returned. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for analyzing the data. It was found that professional development is poorly practiced; student-centered active learning methodologies are not well practiced while learning and evaluation activities are moderately practiced in support of student learning. Thus, the teaching and learning domain was not effectively implemented to improve student learning. It is recommended that the zone education offices should initiate need-based capacity development program and periodically provide on-the-job training for teachers and school leaders to develop their professional knowledge and skill.

Keywords: Assessment; Curriculum; Instruction; Learning; School Improvement; Teaching

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, organizations throughout the world operate in a very complex and competitive work environment. Like other institutions, educational institutions also operate in a changing and dynamic work environment. Educational institutions are important social institutions that support and promote the overall development of society by producing skilled and well-informed citizens. It is well recognized that producing of skilled and competent manpower demands providing quality education in society.

Providing quality education is a means and a foundation for ensuring sustainable economic growth and development for the nations (Ayalew, 2009; UNESCO, 2014). School improvement program (SIP) is one of the educational reforms in schools that were introduced to enhance the quality of education and effectiveness. The program requires schools to engage in an overall

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change process that will help them maximize student achievement by providing quality education (MOE, 2010).

School improvement is understood as a distinct approach to educational change that aims to enhance student outcomes as well as strengthen the school's capacity for managing change (Hopkins, 2001). It is a deliberate and planned effort to provide support for the school in improving learning conditions that sustain learning among students (Barth, 1990; Gray, 2011). School improvement is aimed at improving student achievement and is concerned with how the process of changing schools becomes more successful in achieving goals and sustains improvements in student learning outcomes (Barth, 1990; Hopkin, 2001).

These days, the government of Ethiopia has been giving much attention and investing more resources in education to improve the quality of education (MOE, 2010). One of its investments is introducing and effectively implementing a school improvement program to improve the quality of education in secondary schools. The Ministry indicates that schools, irrespective of their levels of education, must improve their basic functions through implementing the four domains of SIP (i.e., teaching and learning, active community participation, creating conducive learning conditions; and improving school leadership and management (MOE, 2010). Even though SIP has the above-stated four domains, this study attempts to investigate the extent to which the teaching and learning domain is effectively implemented to improve students' learning in secondary schools of South West Oromia Zones.

2. Problem Statement

School improvement programs are mainly initiated to improve students' academic achievement. This requires integrating different activities and collaborating efforts of different stakeholders in school affairs. In schools, the leaders and teachers need to have adequate theoretical knowledge, skill, and experience in the areas of the school improvement components in general. They must be capable enough in linking the schools' internal structures, strategies, capacities, and processes coherently to improve student achievements (Marishane,2011). Thus, strengthening leadership and teachers' capacities in schools is critical in providing learning opportunities and enhancing students' academic achievement.

UNESCO (2014) reported that in sub-Saharan African countries, the academic achievement of secondary school students was low because of poor school organization and school management, inadequate teacher training on subject mastery and pedagogical skills, poor school facilities, lack of instructional materials, and absence of an attractive school climate. Moreover, it was revealed that some students completed secondary education without having the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Sumara & Rajani, 2006). The above problems revealed that adequate emphasis was not given to the quality of education in secondary schools.

In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education recently recognized the problem of quality of education in secondary schools and shifted its focus to improving the quality of education by introducing a school improvement program (MOE, 2010). The program has been practiced in secondary schools since 1999 (MOE, 2010). However, within this short period, a lot of problems that hamper its effectiveness were identified. According to the Ministry of education low leadership and teacher's competence, confidence and commitment, lack of collaboration among stakeholders, resistance to the SIP reform, absence of teamwork, and proper planning, monitoring, and evaluation of the program were some of the problems which affect the effectiveness of the SIP in secondary schools of Ethiopia (MOE, 2010).

Ayalew (2009) also stated that secondary schools have been facing challenges for a long time regarding the quality of education in enhancing student's academic achievement due to a

shortage of facilities, shortage of qualified teachers, poor leadership and management, absence of attractive learning environments, and unsatisfactory parents and local community involvement. A review of empirical studies revealed that there was a shortage of empirical studies on school improvement programs in secondary schools of Ethiopia in general and the teaching-learning domain. According to Derebessa, the practical aspects related to school improvement programs were not well researched even though research is being done on the problem. The Ministry of education also recognized that school improvement was the least studied and most misunderstood area in the secondary education system in Ethiopia and remain limited in scope and pervasiveness (Abebe, 2012). However, there were few published and unpublished MA studies (Abera, 2013; Habtamu, 2014; Lemessa, 2016) conducted on the practices of school improvement programs at the zone level.

Even though there were even more studies conducted on SIP in general, to the knowledge of the researcher, there was no study conducted specifically on the effective implementation of the teaching and learning process within the context of SIP in secondary schools. This shows that there is lack of empirical studies on the problem under investigation. Thus, the west Oromia secondary schools are not exceptional from the above SIP-related problems identified in secondary schools of Ethiopia concerning the implementation of SIP programs in general and the teaching-learning component. Therefore, conducting the study on the problem is timely and important to acquire an adequate and in-depth understanding of the problem. To achieve its purpose, the current study is guided by the following basic questions: a) To what extent the teaching and learning components of SIP (Continuous professional development, Teaching, curriculum, learning, and evaluation) are effectively implemented in secondary schools of South West Oromia zones? And b) What are the major challenges which affect the effective implementation of the teaching-learning components of SIP in secondary schools of South West Oromia zones?

3. Conceptual Development

Providing quality education to children is a global agenda and improving the teaching and learning process is critical in ensuring the quality of education. In the process of ensuring the quality of education, the process of teaching and learning plays a significant role in schools. Teaching and learning are one of the four domains of school improvement programs (MOE, 2010). This domain consists of three elements and five standards that need to be effectively implemented to improve students' learning in schools (MOE, 2010).

Teaching: Teaching is the first element which consists of two standards namely: continuous professional development and Active Learning (MOE, 2010). According to the Ministry of Education, teachers' professional development includes consideration of the extent to which schools place a priority on attracting, retaining, and developing the best possible teachers (MOE, 2008; MOE, 2010). Active learning is the second standard under the teaching element of the teaching and learning domain of SIP. Scholars in the field have found that the traditional teaching methods were extremely inefficient and were not relevant for all students to enhance their learning. To address the limitations, the Ministry of Education strongly encourages all teachers to use a range of active learning methods such as class discussion, think pair share, learning cell, collaborative learning group, and class games in the classroom (MOE, 2010).

Learning and Evaluation: It is the second element which consists of two standards. The first standard demands teachers to achieve measurable improvements in student results which can be measured in terms of students' results (MOE, 2010). Student results could be understood as what students of different ages know, understand, and can do in the subjects of the curriculum. The

assessment method is the second standard which demands teachers to use different assessment methods and use the result to provide additional support for poorly performing students. The use of different assessment methods should be used to fully understand what students are learning in the classroom. Group assignments, individual projects, quizzes, and tests are examples of students' assessments that can be used to assess students learning progress at different times (Chalchisa, 2012).

The curriculum: Is the third element that focuses on understanding the curriculum in terms of students' age, relevance, and integration. It encourages teachers to develop and use supplementary materials in the classroom to improve student learning (MOE, 2010). To improve student learning and enhance its relevance to society, the government has been continuously revising and implementing the new curriculum. It also demands schools to develop a coherent, sequenced plan for curriculum delivery that ensures consistent teaching and learning expectations and a clear reference for monitoring learning across the year levels (MOE, 2010). It is also designed to be responsive to national and international economic realities (MOE, 2008). In general, this study attempts to investigate the implementation practices of teaching and learning domain within the context of school improvement programs in the secondary schools of South West Oromia zones.

4. Research Design and Methodology

Research design is a detailed plan which shows how the research will be undertaken (Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). It is the conceptual structure that links the philosophical assumptions to specific methods within which the research is conducted (Creswell, 2003). It is a blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data and includes an outline of what the researcher will do from the beginning up to the final analysis of the data (Kothari, 2004).

Mixed methods research design was used to conduct this study. The use of a mixed method enables the researcher to apply both quantitative and qualitative approaches to gather data at a time during the study and helps to minimize the limitations of using any single method (Creswell 2003; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009). It also helps to complement the weaknesses of one method with the strengths of the other method and ensures the strengths of both methods which provide strong bases for conclusions and discussions based on findings (Creswell, 2003; Wiersma & Jurs, 2009).

Thus, a cross-sectional survey research design was used to assess and describe the perceptions of respondents on the practices of teaching and learning domain which consists of three elements in the context of school improvement programs in the secondary schools of South West Oromia Zones. The method also enables the researchers to assess and describe the extent to which the teaching-learning domain with the context of SIP is effectively practiced in secondary schools of South West Oromia zones in a broad and wider magnitude (Cohen and Manion, 1994).

To conduct this study, primary and secondary data were gathered from multiple sources. The use of multiple sources of data and research methods is important to explore the research problems from different angles (Cohen & Manion, 1994). Multiple sources of data gathering also increase the credibility and dependability of the data since the strengths of one source compensate for the potential weaknesses of the other (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It also enables the researchers to generate rich data and is believed to enhance the validity of the study. Primary data were collected from teachers and school leaders (principals, vice principals, unit leaders, and department heads) of sample secondary schools of South West Oromia Region. Secondary data sources were gathered from various documents on the problem under study.

In South West Oromia, there are seven Zones. Out of these seven Zones, three (43%) namely Jimma Zone, Ilu Aba Bora Zone, and South West Shewa Zones were selected using simple random sampling. A simple random sampling technique was also used to select twelve (12) secondary schools from the three sample zones. To determine the optimum sample size for the study, Yamane (1967) cited in Israel (2013), a sample size determination formula was applied to select 290 teacher respondents.

Among these, 120 school leaders (principals, vice principals, unit leaders, and department heads) were purposely selected and included in the study. A proportional simple random sampling method was also employed to select 290 sample teachers from twelve sample secondary schools. In general, a total of 410 respondents were selected from three Zones, and questionnaires were distributed to sample respondents. Out of these, 374 (91.23%) questionnaires were filled and returned for analysis.

Questionnaires and document analysis were used as data gathering instruments. The same questionnaires, which consist of both closed and open-ended items were developed and distributed to all respondents to gather data for the study. In addition, relevant documents were consulted and used for analysis. A questionnaire that consists of Likert-type items was prepared and pilot tested in Jiren Secondary School which is one of the non-sampled secondary schools in Jimma town. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient was calculated to measure the extent to which the questions in each construct were measuring similar concepts. The analysis of the pilot study data indicated that the sub-scales of the questionnaire have items with good internal consistency which also measures the variables. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient obtained from the pilot test ranged from 0.724 to 0.834, showing strong consistency between items (Funk, 2007). The result revealed that the instrument used in this study was reliable to gather data on the perceptions of respondents on the practices of teaching and learning domain of school improvement programs.

The data gathered through a closed-ended questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) version 20 computer software. The collected data were coded, entered, cleaned, and analyzed. Both descriptive and inferential statistics such as percentages mean scores, standard deviation, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were used. Throughout the analysis, the 0.05 level of confidence was used to test whether there are statistically significant differences between teachers and school leaders and among secondary schools in the zones. The qualitative data gathered from open-ended questionnaires and documents were used to substantiate and triangulate the quantitative data. Depending on the results of the analysis, interpretations and necessary discussions were made to clarify the issue. Finally, the major findings of the study were reported, and conclusions and its implication were discussed.

The process of getting access to the schools began by requesting permission formally, in writing, through the official channels. The first step the researcher took regarding this matter was to write and explain in detail the purpose of the study and the data-collection methods to be used to the target schools to get permission to conduct the research. After the permission was obtained, individual respondents were identified; and informed consent was made with each respondent participating in the study. Participants were informed as the data are used only for academic purposes and the anonymity of respondents is maintained.

Measures

The same type of questionnaire which consists of 26 items that assessed the variables of teaching and learning domain of school improvement program was designed and employed. Besides, six to seven items corresponded to four dimensions of teaching and learning domains were designed

and used a five-point Likert-type response scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree; respondents evaluated the implementation practices of the four dimensions of teaching and learning domains., i.e., continuous professional development, curriculum, teaching method, and learning and evaluation. To determine the extent to which these dimensions are effectively implemented in secondary schools, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement on a five-point scale. The value three (3) was considered as a hypothesized mean against which the mean rating of respondents is checked for their significance using the independent sample t-test. This means that if the mean ratings of the respondents are significantly higher than the hypothesized mean, then it can be assumed that the level of practice is high with the issue and vice versa.

5. Results and Discussion

This section deals with the result and discussion of the data gathered from sample respondents. The section begins with discussing the general background information of sample respondents and then proceeds to the presentation and discussions of the results of the study on the teaching-learning domain of SIP program implementations in secondary schools of South West Oromia. To gather adequate data for the study, a total of 410 questionnaires were distributed to sample respondents of government secondary school teachers and school leaders. Out of these, 374(91.23%) questionnaires were filled in and returned for analysis. Specifically, data were gathered from 276 (95.2%) teachers and 98 (81.6%) school leaders found in the secondary schools of three zones. In general, 114 (29.9 %) respondents were from the South West Shewa zone, 130 (34.1%) from Jimma, and 130 (34.1%) were from the Ilu Abba Bora zone.

5.1 Background Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents and analyzes the background information of respondents. It describes the sex, age, educational background, and experiences of respondents. Frequency counts and percentages were used for analysis.

Table 5.1: Background Information of Respondents

	Respondents		
Items	**Category**	**Counts**	**%**
Sex	Male	291	77.8
	Female	83	22.2
Age	20-25 years	21	5.61
	26-30 years	133	35.6
	31-35 years	75	20.1
	36-40 years	69	18.5
	>40 years	76	20.3
Educational Background	Diploma	18	4.8
	First Degree	309	82.6
	Masters	43	11.5
	Other	4	1.1
Experiences	< 5 years	44	11.8
	5-10 years	107	28.6
	11-15 years	90	25.7
	16-20 years	46	12.3
	>20 years	87	23.3

As can be seen from Table 5.1, 291 (77.8 %) of the respondents were male and the remaining 83 (22.2%) were female, implying that females are underrepresented both in teaching and leadership positions in government secondary schools of South West Oromia. In terms of age, the data show that majority of respondents, 353 (94.4 %), are above 26 years of age. Similarly, the data reveal that majority of respondents, 330 (88.2 %), served more than five years in the profession, demonstrating that they had adequate experiences and are believed to provide relevant information for the study. Regarding educational background, the majority 309 (82.6%) of respondents hold a first degree and 43 (11.3%) respondents had a second degree, implying that majority of the staff members have the required academic qualification (minimum of the first degree to teach in secondary schools) set by Ministry of Education.

5.2 Teaching-learning Domain of SIP Implementation Practices

This section attempted to discuss the practices and challenges of teaching-learning domains of the SIP program in secondary schools of South West Oromia Zones. It begins by discussing the perception of teachers and school leaders on the practices of the dimensions of the teaching and learning domains of SIP followed by an analysis and interpretation of data on the difference that exists among the three zones of teaching-learning practices.

5.3 Continuous Professional Development Practices

Continuous learning leads to the continuous professional development of professionals which enables them to keep up with best practices (Aslam, 2011; Guskey, 2000). It involves learning experiences of staff members designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of professionals that enhance performance (Guskey, 2000). It helps to develop school leaders and teachers as well as the institutional capacity of schools to improve the quality of services they provided to stakeholders.

Secondary schools need to create and provide continuous learning opportunities to school leaders and teachers to continuously update and develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It provides rich learning opportunities for teachers and school leaders through upgrading and updating professional knowledge, skill, and attitude to remain competitive and provide better services to their stakeholders. The engagements of school leaders and teachers in professional development activities have a substantial impact on improving the quality of education through improving the competence of teachers, improving classroom practices, and improving students' academic achievement. Table 5.2, discusses the extent to which continuous professional development is practiced in secondary schools of South West Oromia.

Table 5.2: Independent Sample T-test for the Mean Ratings of Respondents Regarding Continuous Professional Development Practices

Independent sample t-test							
Items	**Current position**	**Mean**	**SD**	**t**	**df**	**Sig (2 tail)**	**Mean difference**
Continuous Professional Development Practices	Teachers	2.72	.355	1.348	372	.178	.0583
	School Leaders	2.66	.400				

The variable level analysis was also carried out using an independent t-test to analyze the extent to which the professional development activities were effectively practiced supporting student learning in secondary schools of South West Oromia Zones. To this end, seven items were aggregated to measure professional development practices based on results of inter-item

correlation and factor analysis of data. As can be seen from Table 5.2, the mean ratings of teachers (M=2.72, SD=.355) and school leaders (M = 2.66, SD =.400) reveal that the overall professional development practices are below average in government secondary schools of South West Oromia zones. The data also show that statistically, there was no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and school leaders regarding poor continuous professional development practices t (372) = 1.348, p =.178) in secondary schools of the zones.

The qualitative data also show that teachers and school leaders lack the willingness and commitment to engage in continuous professional development programs collaboratively and actively. Moreover, the data revealed that the engagement of school leaders and teachers in conducting action research, sharing professional experiences, knowledge, and skill, and attending short-term and off-the-job training and development opportunities were very limited in secondary schools of the zones. The implication is that teachers and school leaders are not exposed to current and emerging teaching and leadership theories and practices to effectively teach students and lead their schools. The above data also imply that teachers and school leaders did not update and develop continuously their professional competencies (leadership, subject matter, and pedagogical skills).

Table 5.3: One-way ANOVA on the Perception Differences of Respondents Regarding Continuous Professional Development Practice across Zones

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.256	2	1.628	12.766	.000
Within Groups	47.310	371	.128		
Total	50.566	373			

One-way ANOVA was also computed to examine the extent to which professional development practices differ among the three zones. The data reveals that there are significant differences among the three zones as perceived by respondents, F (2,371) = 12.766, p =.000). The results of Post hoc analysis showed that a difference exists between Ilu Aba Bora (M=2.96, SD=.216) and South West Shewa (M= 2.98, SD=.179) on the one hand, and between Jimma (M=2.95, SD=.219) and South West Shewa (M= 2.98, SD=.179) zones on the other.

In general, the overall findings of the study show that continuous professional development activities are poorly and insufficiently practiced in the three zones. Even though the practice is below average, the participation of professionals in CPD practice is relatively better in secondary schools in the South Shewa zone as compared to secondary schools in the other two zones. Next, the relevance and integration of curriculum practices were discussed in Table 5.4.

5.4 Curriculum Relevance and Integration Practices

A curriculum is what teachers teach and states the competencies, learning standards, or learning objectives students are expected to meet. It indicates what all students must master before completion of the grade level. It is about the knowledge and skills students are expected to learn (ESDP IV, 2010). Curriculum also prescribes what students should know and be able to do at each grade and within each subject area. Table 5.4 discusses the extent to which the secondary school curriculum effectively integrates what students should learn and meets the expectations and standards set to improve the quality of education.

Table 5.4: Independent Sample T-test for the Mean Ratings of Respondents Regarding Relevance and Integration of Curriculum

Items	Independent sample t-test						
	Current position	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig (2 tail)	Mean difference
Curriculum Relevance and Integration Practices	Teachers	3.059	.393	.983	372	.326	.0455
	School Leaders	3.013	.396				

The analysis was also carried out at a variable level to examine the extent to which the secondary school curriculum is relevant and integrates what students should learn and be able to do in secondary schools of the zones using an independent sample test. For analysis six items that measure the relevance and integration of the curriculum were aggregated based on the results of inter-item correlation and factor analysis of the data.

The result in Table 5.4, shows the mean ratings of teachers (M=3.06, SD=.393) & school leaders (M = 3.01, SD =.396) found to be almost average implying that the relevance of the curriculum to the needs and developmental level of students as well as an integration of the knowledge and skill that secondary schools should learn is not to the expected levels of respondents. The result further shows statistically there no significant difference exists between perceptions of teachers and school leaders regarding the practice of moderate integration and relevance of the curriculum in supporting students learning, t (372) = .983, p=.326) in public secondary schools of West Oromia Region.

The qualitative findings also revealed that the subject matter knowledge, skills, and learning experiences included in the curriculum did not adequately consider the age and developmental stages or levels of students and the specific context of the community in which students are learning, the local contexts of the schools. The above data imply that what has been organized as learning experiences and taught as a body of knowledge and applicable skills that students are exposed to learn are less relevant or appropriate to the needs of secondary school students. It also demonstrates that integration and linkage of the curriculum to the real life of students and its responsiveness to different learning needs and abilities of students are weak. On top of this, the preparation and provision of supplementary learning materials to support student learning is not satisfactory in the secondary schools in the Southwest Oromia zones.

Table 5.5: One-way ANOVA on the Perception Differences of Respondents Regarding the Relevance and Integration of Curriculum across the three Zones

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.163	2	1.082	7.182	.001
Within Groups	55.835	371	.150		
Total	57.999	373			

One-way ANOVA was carried out to examine the extent to which secondary schools in South West Oromia differ in terms of relevance and integration of curriculum practices. The result revealed that significant differences exist among the three zones as perceived by the respondents, F (2,371) = 7.182, p =.001). The results of Post hoc analysis revealed that differences exist between Ilu Aba Bora (M=3.05, SD=.432) and South West Shewa (M= 2.94, SD=.381) as well as between Jimma (M=3.14, SD=.346) and South West Shewa (M= 2.94, SD=.381) zones. Even

though the overall curriculum integration practices are average in the zones, the practices are low in secondary schools of South West Shewa as compared to the other zones.

5.6 Teaching Methods Implementation Practices

The effective use of teaching methods engages students in the learning process and helps students to develop problem-solving and critical thinking skills of learners (MOE, 2010). Scholars state that implementation of active learning methods enables students to engage in their learning; and make the classroom more interactive and participatory that ensure the most advantageous learning for all the students (Osula & Ideboen, 2010) Effective teaching and learning also demand the use of different methodologies and strategies to meet the demands of learners.

Table 5.6: Independent Sample T-test for the Mean Ratings of Respondents Regarding Use of Teaching Methods Practices

Items	Independent sample t-test						
	Current position	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig (2 tail)	Mean difference
Teaching Method Practices	Teachers	2.97	.442	-.521	372	.603	-.0274
	Leaders	2.99	.459				

As the result in Table 5.6 above shows, the mean ratings of teachers (M=2.97, SD=.442) and school leaders (M = 2.86, SD =.459) were found to be low implying that the student-centered active learning methodologies are not well practiced in secondary schools of the zones. The result of the study indicates that statistically there exists no significant difference between the perceptions of teachers and school leaders on the prevalence of poor active learning methods, t (372) = -.521, p =.603). The qualitative findings also show that secondary school teachers frequently use the usual traditional teaching methodologies in the classroom.

The above data demonstrate that student-centered active learning strategies were not adequately practiced in these secondary schools. The data further imply that the traditional teacher-centered teaching method which did not satisfy the different needs of students has been mainly practiced by teachers in the secondary schools. The data also further imply that the teaching-learning strategies in secondary schools did not sufficiently meet curriculum standards and the learning needs of secondary school students. The finding contradicts with MoE framework which states effective teaching and learning demands the application and use of various teaching and learning strategies to address the demand of students (MoE, 2010).

Table 5.7: One-way ANOVA on the Perception Differences of Respondents Regarding Teaching Methods Practiced across the three Zones

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.955	2	1.978	10.418	.000
Within Groups	70.420	371	.190		
Total	74.375	373			

One-way ANOVA was carried out to examine the extent to which secondary schools in South West Oromia differ in terms of the use of different teaching methods to meet the different learning needs of students. The results revealed that significant differences exist among the three zones as perceived by the respondents, F (2,371) = 10.418, p =.000). The results of Post hoc

analysis revealed that differences exist between Ilu Aba Bora (M=2.91, SD=.488) and South West Shewa (M= 3.13, SD=.343) as well as between Jimma (M=2.90, SD=.452) and South West Shewa (M= 3.13, SD=.343) zones.

In general, the findings of the study show that the use of student-centered active learning methods is below the standard set by MoE implying that students are not well engaged in their learning and are dependent on the teacher. Participatory and self-learning strategies are not taking place in secondary schools to initiate and encourage students to take responsibility for their learning. In short, in secondary schools, active learning methods were not practiced in line with the direction of the Ministry of Education. As opposed to a student-centered teaching approach, teachers have been practicing the teacher-centered method of teaching which did not motivate, engage, and respond to the different needs of learners.

5.7 Learning and Evaluation

The Ministry of Education stipulates that teachers must achieve measurable improvements in student results and a range of assessment methods must be used in each grade to assess student learning. The plan, within which evidence-based teaching practices are embedded and to which assessment and reporting procedures are aligned, must develop concerning the school curriculum to provide a shared vision for curriculum practice, and the teaching and learning process in line with the curriculum must be shared with parents and communities (ESDP IV, 2010).

Table 5.8: Independent Sample T-test for the Mean Ratings of Respondents Regarding Learning and Evaluation Practices

Items	Independent sample t-test						
	Current position	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig (2 tail)	Mean difference
Learning and Evaluation Practices	Teachers	3.15	.324	.276	372	.783	.0106
	Leaders	3.14	.331				

As shown in Table 5.8 above, both teachers (M=3.15, SD=.324) and school leaders (M = 3.14, SD =.331) agreed that learning and evaluation activities are moderately practiced and support student learning. The result further depicts statistically there exists no significant difference between perceptions of teachers and school leaders regarding average learning and evaluation practices, t (372) = .276, p= 783) in secondary schools of South West Oromia.

The qualitative findings also show that secondary school teachers lack adequate training in using different learning assessment techniques within and out of the classroom (e.g., self-assessment, individuals, peers, groups, etc.). Moreover, they lack the motivation, knowledge, and skills of developing effective learning and assessment tools to assess student learning progress effectively and continuously. Lack of instructional resources like laboratory equipment and chemicals, reference materials, plasma TV, globes, etc., support system, incentives, and many students within the class are also among problems that affect the use of continuous and different learning and assessment mechanisms in secondary schools of sample zones.

The above result shows that continuous learning assessment was not adequately practiced achieving measurable improvements in student results and improve the quality of learning. Weak participation of students in the assessment of their learning, limited provision of extra teaching support based on the assessment result for underperforming students, weak alignment of learning and assessment practices with the designed curriculum or standards set by MoE. Besides,

constructive and timely feedbacks were not adequately provided to improve the academic achievement of students and improve the quality of learning in secondary schools of South West Oromia zones.

Table 5.9: One-way ANOVA on the Perception Differences of Respondents Regarding Learning and Evaluation Practice across the three Zones

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.831	2	.916	8.982	.000
Within Groups	37.818	371	.102		
Total	39.649	373			

One-way ANOVA was carried out to examine the extent to which learning and evaluation practices differ among the three zones. It was found that a significant difference exists among the zones as perceived by respondents, F (2,371) = 8.982, p =.000). The results of Post hoc analysis revealed that a difference existed between Ilu Aba Bora (M=3.06, SD=.363) and Jimma (M=3.17, SD=.298) zones and between Ilu Aba Bora (M=3.06, SD=.363) and South West Shewa (M= 3.23, SD=.288) zone. The above data show that even though the learning and evaluation learning practice is generally moderate in public secondary schools of the southwest Oromia region, the practice is relatively better in South West Shewa as compared to the other zones.

6 Major Challenges

In this section, the major challenges that affect the effective implementation of the teaching and learning domain of SIP in sample secondary schools of the zone were discussed. The data collected from respondents and documents show that lack of willingness and commitment of teachers to participate in continuous professional development practices, limited knowledge, skill as well as the absence of motivation and commitment to implement active learning methods and use of continuous and different assessment strategies, absence of incentives and performance reward systems in the school, large class size, lack of adequate learning resources, ICT infrastructure, and internet connectivity, inefficient and inappropriate utilization of available school resources, weak school and parent partnership were identified as major challenges that affect the effective implementation of the teaching and learning domain of SIP in secondary schools of South West Oromia zones.

Furthermore, weak institutional and management capacity; inefficient management and support systems; weak monitoring and evaluation systems in schools, weak collaboration among different stakeholders, absence of adequate and efficient school support system to improve students result and student learning were identified as challenges that affect the overall implementation of the teaching and learning domain in sample secondary schools of the zones.

7. Conclusions

The findings of the study show that secondary school teachers and school leaders lack the willingness and commitment to actively participate in continuous professional development programs to update their professional knowledge and skills. Moreover, they consider the program adds extra activities or loads and consumes their time. It was also found that teachers in sample secondary schools did not apply continuous assessment and active learning to improve student learning. They still prefer using teacher-centered traditional teaching methods which did not encourage students to actively engage in their learning; reduce the participation, contribution,

and role of students to improve learning and student results. From this, it can be concluded that the teaching and learning domain was not effectively implemented to improve student learning in the sample secondary schools of South West zones of the Oromia Region. Thus, the implication is that the implementation of the school improvement program did not adequately improve the teaching-learning process as it was planned and intended in secondary schools in the zones.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made to improve the teaching and learning process.

- It was found that active learning strategies and continuous assessment were not effectively practiced by teachers in the sample secondary schools of the zone. Because of the absence and insufficient continuous professional development programs and training on instructional skills and continuous classroom assessment techniques, and the absence of professional support systems that assist teachers. Thus, it is recommended that the zone education offices need to initiate need-based capacity development programs and periodically provide on-the-job training for teachers and school leaders to develop their professional knowledge and skills. Besides, to share their professional experience and enhance the professional knowledge and skill of teachers the Zone Education Bureaus (ZEB) and Woreda Education Offices (WEO) should network with secondary schools and their teachers to strengthen the collaboration among schools.
- Besides, secondary schools need to develop participatory learning-oriented school development policy and guideline which gives them direction for the identification of priority areas, allocation of resources, and assignment of teachers to different development programs. Thus, secondary schools need to formulate and communicate their school development policy, guidelines, and standards to provide continuous and consistent learning opportunities for teachers depending on their specific school contexts.
- Secondary schools need to establish strong curriculum review committees at the department and grade level that can coordinate and monitor the effective implementation of the curriculum and facilitate the curriculum review and evaluation process within the schools. School leaders should create partnerships with the community; establish a strong and continuous student learning support system, create a safe and conducive learning school environment, and build a system that provides recognition for teachers for innovative teaching and learning practices and better performance in improving student learning.
- Beyond this, it is recommended that the ZEB, WEO, and schools establish a strong system that enables them to ensure the alignment of curriculum, instruction, and assessment with standards set by MoE. And finally, research-based teaching and learning strategies and assessments need to be initiated and implemented to improve student learning in secondary schools in the zone.

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