Practice and Challenges of Distributed Leadership at Public Secondary Schools of Dessie City Administration

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ABSTRACT--- *The objective of this study was to describe the extent to which leadership is distributed in Public Secondary Schools of Dessie City administration and to investigate perception differences between teachers and principals on the extent of the leadership distribution. Quantitative methodology was employed and data was collected from 102 teachers and 20 principals working in six public secondary schools at the city administration using a questionnaire that has seven dimensions of the aspects of leadership which was prepared for the purpose of the study based on literatures and other questionnaires used in previous studies. While principals were selected based on their availability, teachers were selected using simple random sampling. Descriptive statistics like Percentage and weighted mean were employed to analyze the collected data after it was inserted to SPSS version 20. Based on the analysis of the data, it was found that leadership is distributed moderately in the selected public secondary schools. Moreover, there were some observed perception differences between teachers and principals on the extent of leadership distribution. While principals tend to be positive on every dimensions of leadership distribution, teachers on the other hand were observed to be less positive. It was also found out that lack of commitment to participate in leadership activities and the inability to demonstrate responsibility on the teachers' side were found to be the main challenges to distribute leadership. On the other hand failure to empower, initiate and encourage teachers to make significant contribution, failure to show high professional standards for teachers and not involving the teachers in decision making or initiating ideas from the top despite the meaningful contribution of ideas by teachers from the principals was observed to be main challenges to distribute leadership. It is recommended that initiating and involving teachers in leadership roles from the principals' side have to be strengthened to cultivate the best out of the teachers and to improve the performance of their school. On the other hand willingness and cooperation from the teachers side is recommended as it will pave the way for their future professional development and enjoy their extra role beyond teaching in addition to their contribution for their school success.*

Keywords--- leadership, Distributed Leadership, Teachers, principals

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1. INTRODUCTION

Effective school leadership is a basic tenet for successful school since the outcome of a school largely depends on the quality of leadership. While multiple theories of leadership exist, the education sector requires a less hierarchical approach that takes account of its specialized and professional context. Over the last decade the sector has explored new leadership approaches based on public and private sector models accompanied by an increase in managerial control, market competition, government scrutiny and organizational restructuring. These changes have increased the gap between academics and 'other' staff as academic autonomy has been reduced. In regard to this, Duignan (2006) voices a concern, "Many educational leaders leave themselves isolated and alone, taking primary responsibility for the leadership of their school. This constitutes a very narrow view of leadership and ignores the leadership talents of teachers, students and other community stakeholders".

Leadership in education requires a culture of sharing of energy, commitment and contribution of all who work there to be successful with their leadership responsibilities. In most organizations leadership has been seen as based on the authority or power given by the head teacher position - positional leadership. However, schools, as complex social organizations, depend on collaborative work to face challenges. As Elmore (2000) voices,

> Leadership of schools is beyond the capacity of any one person, or of those in formal leadership positions only, and should be distributed to engage the 'contours of expertise' in the school community, creating a culture that provides coherence, guidance and direction for teaching, learning and leadership.

The need for distribution of leadership within the school is not only a pragmatic issue of proportionally dividing the school leaders workload, it has the positive impact on the self-efficacy of teachers and other staff members by encouraging them to show leadership based on their expertise and by supporting collaborative work cultures (Day et al., 2009; OECD, 2012). This in turn is one of the most important conditions for a culture of improvement being at the heart of the school.

According to Alma (2013) the main reasons for the increasing support of distributed leadership in the education sector are three fold. First, the notion of distributed leadership has a descriptive power: It captures the forms of practice implicit in professional learning communities and communities of practice. It is difficult to envisage how communities of practice operate unless leadership and other organizational components are distributed. A second reason for the interest in distributed leadership resides in its representational power, in the fact that organizational structure and basis of schooling is changing. In many countries there is a growing recognition that the old organizational structures of schooling simply do not fit the requirements of learning in the 21st century. A new and more complex approach to schooling that require a leadership practice that are lateral than vertical and for leadership that crosses organizational boundaries. Consequently, distributed leadership offers a way of thinking about leadership practice that accommodates new organizational forms and structures. A third reason for the interest in distributed leadership is its normative power: it reflects current leadership practices in schools. As Harris (2004) explains, the model of the singular leader is gradually being replaced with leadership that is premised upon teams rather than individuals, with greater emphasis being placed upon teachers as leaders. Consequently, the term distributed leadership captures and reflects the evolving models of leadership in many schools encompassing multiple sources of influence and guidance (ibid).

Distributive leadership, according to some other scholars also (Gronn, 2000; Marshall, 2006) takes in to account contexts, situations, environments and contingencies in which leadership occurs and focuses on the development of individuals as well as organizational contexts in which they are called to operate while acknowledging the traditional leadership which focuses on traits, skills and behaviors of individual leaders.

Despite this, however, the actual processes and practices by which leadership is distributed and the implications for leadership practice and development in Schools have received relatively little attention. Therefore, this study will try to assess the practice of distributed leadership in public secondary schools of Dessie City Administration.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Distributed leadership acknowledges a broader perspective of leadership activities than just the leadership of school principals. A distributed perspective in school frames leadership practice as a product of interaction among leaders, followers and the situations (Spillane, 2006). It tries to find out the interrelations of people and their situation through a wider lens where the individual knowledge and skill is measured as a matter of practice. The educational development purpose of a school is related to individual knowledge and learning which could be fulfilled through the practice of distributed leadership. Distributed leadership has been interpreted in many different ways, but incorporates many of the concepts outlined above such as teachers as learners, influence over colleagues and contribution to school climate and culture whether or not in formal positions of leadership.

To develop teachers as leaders, mentoring and coaching is needed in different levels of their professional life. Mentoring and coaching for leadership development is well established in many countries through a number of ways including peer support, counseling, socialization and internship (Bush & Jackson, 2002).

Leithwood, Strauss, Sacks, Memon and Yashkina (2007) highlight two key conditions necessary for successful leadership distribution. First, leadership needs to be distributed to those who have, or can develop, the knowledge or expertise required to carry out the leadership tasks expected of them. Second, effective distributed leadership needs to be coordinated, preferably in some planned way.

There are some researchers which conducted study about distributed leadership and its link with teachers' organizational commitment and academic optimism. Hulpia and Devos (2010) explored the link between distributed leadership and teachers' organizational commitment through semi-structured interviews with teachers. They found that teachers were more committed to the school when school leaders were highly accessible and encouraged their participation in decision making. Another study conducted by Leithwood, et.al. (2009) also examined the relationship between distributed leadership and teachers' academic optimism and found out that there was a significant association between planned approaches to the distribution of leadership and high levels of academic optimism. Mulford's (2002) comprehensive study of leadership effects on student learning describes that, "student outcomes are more likely to improve when leadership sources are distributed throughout the school community and when teachers are empowered in areas of importance to them" (as cited in Harris 2008). Harris (2008) notes that "Both teacher and student morale levels improved where teachers felt more included and involved in decision making related to the school development and change".

Despite that according to Spillane (2004) and Harris (2009) empirical research on distributed forms of leadership is still at its early stages and the available empirical evidence about it is not abundant in the education sector. Moreover according to Bolden et al (2009) whilst the literature increasingly claims that leadership in schools is widely distributed, how it works in practice is little understood and studied. There is therefore an apparent paucity of research regarding the distributed approach within the school context.

To improve the quality of education at schools, the government of Ethiopia had designed General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP) in which School Improvement Package (SIP) is one of its components. Having school leadership as one of its domain, SIP states that effective school leadership should involve all stakeholders: Teachers, parents, community and Students (MoE, 1999 as cited in Mitiku, 2014). The fifth Education Sector Development Program (ESDP V) which is prepared as a strategy of the education sector for five years (2015 – 2020) also states that Ethiopia has planned to create a school in which teachers are expected both to teach and lead in the coming five years as indicated in (MoE, 2015). It emphasizes the leadership role to be played by teachers to improve their school. However, there are not enough researches conducted to investigate how teachers are contributing for the improvement of their school by participating in the leadership role.

As to the best knowledge of the researcher, there are two studies conducted by Dejene (2014) on the practice and challenge of distributed leadership at Addis Ababa University and Mitiku (2014) on the principals' distributed leadership practice in secondary schools of South west shoa zone. Dejene found out that though the academic staffs are aware about the features of distributed leadership, the practice of the leadership is approach is only moderate. According to him Lack of team work, loose tie among college deans, department heads and instructors and lack of shared responsibility among instructors were the major challenges that deter the practice of distributed leadership practice in Addis Ababa University. Mitiku on his part found out that the practice of principals' leadership practice to be inadequate and insufficient despite the willingness of the teachers to assume responsibility beyond their teaching role.

Believing that the distributed form of leadership is an appropriate form of leadership for Schools and the issue is not explored enough in the Ethiopian schools context, this study will try to examine the practice and challenges of distributed leadership at Public Secondary Schools of Dessie City Administration. My study is different from the above mentioned studies in its consideration of the main features and relations to be examined and study area, Dessie City administration.

To achieve the purpose of the study, the following questions will be addressed:

1. To what extent is leadership distributed at Public Secondary schools of Dessie City Administration?
2. What are the extent of the perceived differences between leaders and teachers in the extent of distributed leadership?
3. What are the challenges in practicing distributed leadership in the schools?

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of this study was to investigate the practice and challenges of Distributed leadership in Public Secondary schools of Dessie City Administration.

Specific objectives of the study include:

- To assess the existing Distributed leadership practices of public Secondary Schools of Dessie City Administration;
- To explore the challenges of Distributed leadership practices in the schools;
- To identify perception differences between leaders and teachers on the extent of the practice of distributed leadership; and
- Make a practical recommendations based on the findings of the study.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is organized in to three main areas: definition of distributed leadership, key concepts of distributed leadership and dimensions and conceptual model of the study.

Distributed Leadership

Different scholars had defined or explained the term 'distributed Leadership' indifferent ways. Harris (2004), for example, defined it as "a form of collective leadership in contrast to the traditional leadership premised upon an individual

managing hierarchical systems and structures". According to Bennett et al (2003) it is defined in different ways such as dispersed leadership, vertical leadership or shared leadership. Gronn (2000) also states that distributed leadership represents leadership in discourse. One thing that is clear is that it represents a shared leadership activity and collaborative leadership practice (Harris, 2007).

According to Ton et al (2013), the key concepts of distributed leadership can be grouped around four categories:

1- Distributed leadership practice: Distributed leadership is about leadership activities and decision making exceeding the formal positions. It is expressed in cooperation, sharing expertise and knowledge, initiating, responsibility and accountability.

2- Roles and tasks of the formal school leader and staff:

a. The formal school leader: the responsibility of the school leader is to provide guidance and direction, acknowledge abilities, and encourage professionals to share knowledge, to make decisions and to show initiative. These tasks and related responsibilities are necessary to strengthen the engagement and empowerment of the professionals.

b. Staff: professionals have a reciprocal responsibility to substantiate this by showing initiative and actively participate and contribute and take their responsibility (Bennett et al., 2003).
3- Cultural and formal school features: An open climate, trust, learning organization, respect, high standards, common values and a shared vision. Although cultural distribution seems to be the advanced model of distributed leadership, formal structures are not the opposite of distributed leadership because they could be helpful in distributing leadership. On the other hand, if formal structures suppress decision making and responsibilities throughout the school then widespread leadership opportunity is obstructed.

4- Autonomy as a necessary condition: To make distributed leadership possible in schools, sufficient influence and a sufficient amount of autonomy is necessary in order that people can make their own policy choices. This can be seen as an important condition of distributed leadership practice.

Conceptual model of the Study

Based on the findings from review of literatures by Ton et al (2013), seven dominant factors of distributed leadership were selected for a closer look at within this research:

1. **Organizational structure**: the formal school structure provides everyone with the opportunity to participate in decision making; there is agreement about leadership roles; informal leadership and professional development are facilitated.

2. **Strategic vision**: a shared vision with common values for all, where ownership by both staff and pupils is found important and creating a learning organization is one of the school goals.

3. **Values and beliefs**: underlying values typical for the culture of schools are mutual respect, confidence and high expectations. In such schools mistakes aren't punished, but are seen as a learning opportunity.
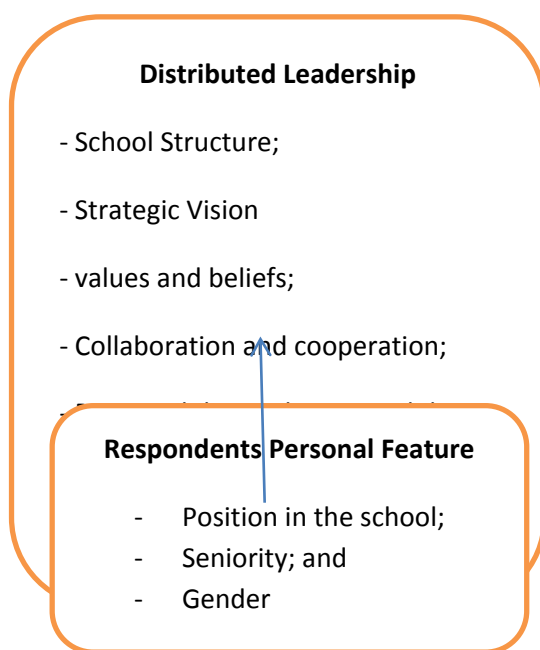
4. **Collaboration and cooperation**: in schools it is self-evident for staff to work collaboratively in order to improve school results, achieve the collective ambition and to solve problems. Knowledge is shared with one another.

5. **Decision making**: professionals in the school have sufficient space to make their own decisions related to the content and organization of their work. There is confidence in professionals to make informed decisions and everyone is involved with decisions about the school's ambition and expectations.

6. **Responsibility and accountability**: professionals are kept and feel accountable for their performance. In these schools it is common to give feedback to one another to help colleagues and improve the school with professionals expressing their opinion regardless of their formal position.

7. **Initiative:** based upon their level of expertise everyone is expected to contribute their own ideas and come up with initiatives.

Based on the above seven factors and the research questions, the following basic model was developed to guide the study. The model is originally used by Alma (2013) and was modified for the purpose of this research.

Distributed Leadership

- School Structure;

- Strategic Vision

- values and beliefs;

- Collaboration and cooperation;

Respondents Personal Feature

- Position in the school;
- Seniority; and
- Gender

Research Model of Distributive leadership

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1. Research Design

Descriptive survey research design was employed to meet the purpose of the study. The study design was selected because the study demands a large set of data to be collected to meet the objectives of the study in describing the practice of distributed leadership of secondary school principals.

5.2. Research Area

Dessie City Administration was the study area for of study. It was selected purposefully as the researcher had prior experience in the city administration as a teacher, the data collection would be manageable besides getting quality data for the purpose.

5.3. Samples and Sampling Methods

The population of the study was composed of public secondary school principals and teachers employed in Dessie city administration. The sample, therefore, were teachers and principals selected from the public high schools in the city administration. Principals were selected based on availability sampling and teachers were selected using simple random sampling. Out of the nine secondary schools, six schools were considered for the study as three of the schools started teaching students only in this academic year (2016/2017). The sample schools included Memher Akalewold, Hote, Nigus Michael, Karagutu, Tita, and Kidame Gebeya Secondary schools.

Accordingly all the twenty two principals in the six schools were considered for the study. Out of 479 teachers, 110 were selected using simple random sampling. Out of the total 132 distributed questionnaires, 122 (92%) were returned. 8 teachers and two principals did not return back the filled questionnaire.

5.4. Instrument of Data Collection

Data was collected using a questionnaire prepared based on the selected seven dimension for examination indicated in the model of the research and Used by Alma (2013) as it contains more dimensions than used by other researchers (See Appendices A and B). Though the questionnaire was found to incorporate different aspects of distributed leadership, some important adaptations were made to the Ethiopian School culture by replacing difficult vocabularies (questions 1, 2, 10, 14, 28, 34, 37, and 38) and trying out some copies if respondents can understand the question.

The questionnaire contains 7, 5, 4, 6, 6, 6, and 4 items under the dimensions of organizational structure, vision, values and beliefs, collaboration and cooperation, decision making, responsibility and accountability, and initiatives respectively. The questionnaire was graded as "Strongly agree"=5, "agree"=4, "neutral"=3, "disagree"=2, and "strongly disagree"=1. In order to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, as a minor readjustment was made to the tool, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability was calculated separately both for the whole scale and for each of sub-level and the total coefficient of reliability of the scale was found to be Alpha=0. 95. Hence, the item has got a high degree of reliability for use in the study context. The names, number of items and coefficients of reliability of the four sub- levels are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Dimensions and Values Associated with the Questionnaire

Dimensions of Distributed Leadership	Number of the Items	Coefficient of Reliability (Alpha)	The Maximum and Minimum Points
Organizational structure	7	0.83	7-35
Vision	5	0.84	5-25
Values and beliefs	4	0.86	4-20
Collaboration and Cooperation	6	0.90	6-30
Decision Making	6	0.85	6-30
Responsibility and Accountability	6	0.76	6-30
Initiative	4	0.92	4-20
Total	38	0.95	38-190

5.5. Method of Data Analysis

In the analysis of the data, the SPSS for Windows package version 20 program was used and out puts such as mean values and standard deviation were employed to describe the perception of teachers and principals about the practice of distributed leadership in their school.

6. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

In this section, the data obtained via the questionnaire is presented. The data were collected from six public secondary schools in Dessie city administration. The questionnaire was handed given to a total of 110 teachers and 22 principals. Out of the 132 distributed questionnaires, 122 of the questionnaires were handed back. These were coded and entered into the SPSS program version 20 and the output is presented as follows.
Demographically all the 20 principals were males in which 4 (25%) of them are MA holders and the rest 16(75%) are BA holders. Whereas out of the 102 teachers, 27 (26.5%) of them are females and 75 (73.5%) of them are males. 6 (5.8%) teachers have MA and 96 (94.2%) are BA graduates.

To begin with, Table 2 below presents the perception of teachers and principals about the practice of distributed leadership aggregated by sub-levels. The data are presented in such a way that perceptions can be compared along the sub-levels of distributed leadership. For the purpose of the analysis the mean values are interpreted as follows. When the calculated mean value is less 15; the performance is considered low performance; when it is between 15and 25 the performance is considered moderate performance; and when the calculate is mean 25 or better it is considered as a high performance. In all tests a significant level of $p \leq 0.05$.
As indicated by Table 2 below, the practice of distributed leadership in the schools is moderate in the dimensions of organizational structure, vision, collaboration and cooperation, decision making and responsibility and accountability (M= 22.82 and 24.4; 16.11 and 17.45; 20.62 and 22.1; 21.19 and 21.05 and 22.49 and 23.65 respectively as witnessed by teachers and principals). Whereas, as witnessed by both teachers and principals, the practice of distributed leadership in terms of values and beliefs and initiatives was found to be low (M= 13.04 and 13.95; and 13.01 and 12.90 respectively for the two dimensions).
When we take a close look at the dimension of distributed leadership in the school, the aspect of organizational structure (M= 22.82 and 24.4 by teachers and principals) found to highly exercised than the others. This may indicate the tendency of the school leaders to assign responsibilities according to structure and their adherence to formal leadership exercise. But for effective distributed leadership exercise leaders also have to come out of the organizational

Table 2: Extent of Distributed Leadership Practice in Public High Schools of Dessie Town

NO	Organizational Structure	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)
1	Tasks and responsibilities are hierarchically decided by the professionals in our school	22.82	24.4
2	At our school there are formally agreed leadership roles		
3	Teachers make decisions within predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability		
4	The school structure formally provides everyone with opportunities to participate in decision making		
5	The formal structure in our organization facilitates informal leadership at all levels in the organization		
6	At our school we have regular consultation meetings		
7	The school supports professional development/opportunity		
	Vision		
8	At our school we have a shared Vision	16.11	17.45
9	At our school we have common values for all		
10	Teachers take ownership of their own tasks and activities		
11	Students take ownership of their own tasks and activities		
12	Strategic development as a learning organization is one of our school goals		
	Values and Beliefs		
13	Mistakes are seen as a learning opportunity	13.04	13.95
14	Colleagues have confidence in each other's abilities		
15	There is mutual respect among the teachers in our school		
16	At our school we set high standards for teachers		
	Collaboration and Cooperation		
17	We work collaboratively to deliver school results	20.62	22.1
18	We express our opinions on a regularly basis		
19	We share our knowledge and experiences with one another		
20	We help one another to solve problems		
21	We are provided sufficient time to collaborate with our colleagues on work related issues		
22	In our School we cooperate with each other to achieve the collective ambition		
	Decision making		
23	I can make my own decisions related to the content of my work	21.19	21.05
24	I can make my own decisions in how to organize my work		
25	I can make my own decisions regarding my professional development		
26	I can make my own decisions on a sufficient range of aspects in my work		
27	In our School it's common that everyone is involved with decision making		
28	Although the professionals in our organization have the opportunity for input, the decisions are still made from the leaders at the top		

	Responsibility and accountability		
29	I am accountable to my superior for my performance	22.49	23.65
30	I am kept accountable		
31	I feel responsible for my performance		
32	We can take responsibility without asking		
33	We share collected responsibilities for each other's behavior		
34	All staff are encouraged to express their opinion (regardless of their formal status)		
	Initiatives		
35	Initiatives and ideas mainly come from the leaders at the top	13.01	12.90
36	There is sufficient amount of freedom to contribute your own ideas to improve the work		
37	Professionals have to take the initiative and responsibility due to a lack of direction and lead		
38	All tasks are assigned to the professionals based upon the level of expertise		

N=102 for teachers and N=20 for principals

Structure and assign responsibilities based on the experience and interest of teachers. This will result in effective performance and as initiative mechanism to make teachers contribute for the success of schools. On the other hand, out of the seven dimensions, the initiative aspect was witnessed to be performed at lower level (M=13.01 and 12.90 by teachers and principals). This is directly related with the high adherence to organizational structure and not giving enough chance for teachers to play part to contribute for the success of the school. If initiatives mainly come from the top and teachers re not given enough chance to contribute their own idea based on their expertise, the real practice of distributed leadership fails to exist. In general as five aspects of distributed leadership are practiced moderately, we can say that the practice of distributed leadership in the public secondary schools of Dessie City Administration is Moderate or Medium.

Tables 3-9 disaggregate the data presented in Table 2 for closer and further scrutiny of the practice of distributed leadership under the seven dimensions item by item so that specific points can be illuminated. Mean values are calculated by items instead rather than by clusters as is the case in Table 2. For purpose of the analysis, the following criteria were used for mean values: < 2.50= inadequate performance; 2.51-3.50= moderate performance and 3.51-5.00=High performance. Significant mean differences with a minimum mean difference of 0.3 are described as perception differences between teachers and principals.

Table 3: Summary of Level of the Application of Organizational Structure Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and Principals Respondents

NO	**Organizational Structure**	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	Tasks and responsibilities are hierarchically decided by the professionals in our school	3.48	3.40	0.08
2	At our school there are formally agreed leadership roles	3.53	3.80	0.27
3	Teachers make decisions within predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability	3.15	3.30	0.15
4	The school structure formally provides everyone with opportunities to participate in decision making	3.05	3.50	0.45
5	The formal structure in our organization facilitates informal leadership at all levels in the organization	3.18	3.05	0.13
6	At our school we have regular consultation meetings	3.31	3.85	0.54
7	The school supports professional development/opportunity	3.13	3.50	0.43

As can be seen from Table 3 above, there seems a disagreement between teachers and principals in some segments of the organizational structure aspects of distributed leadership. Teachers are negative than the school principals about the school structure in providing opportunity for everyone to participate in decision making, presence of regular consultation meeting and support of the school in professional development (mean difference greater than 0.3). This implies that teachers are provided with limited freedom to make decisions.

Table 4: Summary of Level of the Application of Vision Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and Principals Respondents

No	Vision	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	At our school we have a shared Vision	3.26	3.50	0.24
2	At our school we have common values for all	3.15	3.65	0.50
3	Teachers take ownership of their own tasks and activities	3.49	3.65	0.16
4	Students take ownership of their own tasks and activities	2.87	3.10	0.23
5	Strategic development as a learning organization is one of our school goals	3.34	3.55	0.21

There are two points worth getting attention from Table 4 above about the vision aspects of distributed leadership practice. First is that teachers perception about students taking ownership about their own tasks and activities is very low (M=2.87). Second a clear perception difference between teachers and students is also noted on the point of having common values in schools (Mean Difference of 0.50). While the principals have a strong perception of having common values in the school, the teachers do not believe strong as the principals. Though the statistical difference also narrowly fails to imply, the negative perception of teachers on students taking ownership of their responsibility and much improved positive perception of principals on the issue indicates a critical concern to be addressed and resolved.

Table 5: Summary of Level of the Application of Values and Beliefs Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and Principals Respondents

No	Values and Beliefs	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	Mistakes are seen as a learning opportunity	3.23	3.15	0.08
2	Colleagues have confidence in each other's abilities	3.27	3.15	0.12
3	There is mutual respect among the teachers in our school	3.47	3.95	0.48
4	At our school we set high standards for teachers	3.08	3.70	0.62

As can be noted from Table 5 above, statistically both teachers and principals do not differ in perception of two items. On the other hand the Mean differences of 0.48 and 0.62 on existence of mutual respect among teachers and setting high standard for the teachers in the school respectively show perception differences. The teachers show more of a negative perception on the two items than the principals. The very high mean difference of 0.62 between them on setting higher standard for teachers needs a critical attention from the leaders.

Table 6: Summary of Level of the Application of Collaboration and Cooperation Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and Principal Respondents

No	Collaboration and Cooperation	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	We work collaboratively to deliver school results	3.45	3.65	0.20
2	We express our opinions on a regularly basis	3.26	3.75	0.49
3	We share our knowledge and experiences with one another	3.51	3.80	0.29
4	We help one another to solve problems	3.64	3.75	0.11
5	We are provided sufficient time to collaborate with our colleagues on work related issues	3.38	3.65	0.27
6	In our School we cooperate with each other to achieve the collective ambition	3.37	3.50	0.13

Table 6 above shows more of a consensus in the perception between teachers and principals on most of the items in the dimensions of collaboration and cooperation aspect of distributed leadership. The only difference in perception between them is on the existence of expression of opinions on a regular basis (Mean Difference of 0.49). While teachers believe that the chance is very narrow, principals perceive that the practice is very wide. The statistical mean difference, however, implies that a due consideration is needed on the issue as distributed leadership is based on constant sharing of ideas between leaders and subordinates.

Table 7: Summary of Level of the Application of Decision Making Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and principals Respondents

No	Decision making	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	I can make my own decisions related to the content of my work	3.74	3.70	0.04
2	I can make my own decisions in how to organize my work	3.76	3.65	0.11
3	I can make my own decisions regarding my professional development	3.72	3.55	0.17
4	I can make my own decisions on a sufficient range of aspects in my work	3.54	3.65	0.11
5	In our School it's common that everyone is involved with decision making	3.02	3.45	0.43
6	Although the teachers in our organization have the opportunity for input, the decisions are still made from the leaders at the top	3.41	3.05	0.36

As can be observed from Table 7 above again, there seems a perception difference between teachers and principals on the involvement of teachers in decision making. The statistical Mean difference of 0.43 and 0.36 on involvement of everyone in decision making and decisions to be made from the top despite the input from teachers respectively supports the above statement. What makes the matter very serious is that the different perceptions of principals and teachers in the two items. While teachers negatively perceive that everyone is involved in decision making and have a positive perception for the item that describes decisions are made from top though teachers are asked for inputs, the schools principals, on the other hand, perceive it the other way round.

Table 8: Summary of Level of the Application of Responsibility and Accountability Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and Principals Respondents

No	Responsibility and accountability	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	I am accountable to my superior for my performance	3.84	3.90	0.06
2	I am kept accountable	3.96	4.20	0.24
3	I feel responsible for my performance	3.99	4.20	0.21
4	We can take responsibility without asking	3.77	4.10	0.33
5	We share collected responsibilities for each other's behavior	3.58	3.75	0.17
6	All staff are encouraged to express their opinion (regardless of their formal status)	3.34	3.50	0.16

As can be seen from Table 8 above, teachers and principals have the same perception on the responsibility and accountability dimension of practice of distributed leadership. There are two points worth mentioning. The first one is that despite the overall medium practice of accountability and responsibility, principals perceive that three aspects of the dimension are practiced highly: being kept accountable, felling responsible for one's performance and taking responsibility without asking (M= 4.20, 4.20 and 4.10 respectively). This may be related to the relative decentralization of school leadership from regions and ministry level and the relative freedom given to principals to exercise their leadership role. The second point is that there is a point of perception difference between in the case of taking responsibility without asking superiors. While the perception of teachers is that it is not exercised highly, principals perceive that the practice in this regard is high. This can also be an indicator for the narrow chance given for teachers to exercise leadership and accountability.

As can be seen from Table 9 below, there are two interesting points to analyze. The first one is that principals believe that initiatives and ideas are not coming for top (M= 2.85). This could be a strong indicator for the practice of distributed leadership had the teachers also have the same

Table 9: Summary of Level of the Application of Initiative Aspects of Distributed Leadership as Perceived by Teachers and Principals Respondents

	Initiatives	Mean (Teachers)	Mean (Principals)	Mean difference
1	Initiatives and ideas mainly come from the leaders at the top	3.27	2.85	0.42
2	There is sufficient amount of freedom to contribute your own ideas to improve the work	3.24	3.65	0.41
3	Professionals have to take the initiative and responsibility due to a lack of direction and lead	3.33	3.10	0.23
4	All tasks are assigned to the professionals based upon the level of expertise	3.17	3.30	0.13

perception, which is not. The points of perception difference of teachers and principals from this dimension are two: initiatives are coming from top and on the presence of sufficient freedom to contribute one's ideas to improve the work (Mean differences of 0.42 and 0.41respectively). While teachers perceive that most ideas come from the top, principals believe that ideas mainly come from the staff. On the other hand while principals perceive positively that there is sufficient freedom to contribute idea to improve work, teachers do not have high positive perception for the item. As these two points are also very key aspects for practice of distributed leadership, they are points to get due attention.

Challenges to Practice of Distributed Leadership

To identify the challenges to effective practice of distributed leadership, both the teachers and principals were asked to rate some items. Table 10 and 11 below present the data according to the responses of the study participants.

Table 10: Challenges to Distributed Leadership Practice According to Teachers

No	**My School Leader**	Mean
1	enables me to make meaningful contributions to the school	3.30
2	encourages me to share my expertise with my colleagues	3.32
3	welcomes me to take the initiative	3.24
4	formally acknowledges my teaching abilities	3.38
5	brings me into contact with information that helps me to create new ideas	3.25
6	stimulates me to reflect on my work in order to improve	3.28
7	has high expectations regarding my professional standards	3.21
8	supports me to make my own decisions in my work	3.31
9	empowers me by giving advice and guidance on my own development	3.16

Table 10 above shows the challenges to effective distributed leadership practice at the sampled schools level. As can be seen from the table, the effort put by the school principals to distribute the leadership is only medium as to the perception of the teachers. The value of the mean values in all the items is less than 3.5 and very close to 3.0 which indicate that the medium effort is not even satisfactorily put in place to encourage teachers to involve in leadership activities. The very least mean value, 3.16, which is given for the item that school principals empower teachers by giving advice and guidance to their development, can witness the case. Even the next least mean value score of 3.21 associated with principals' high expectations regarding teachers' professional standards shows that principals may doubt their teachers' professionalism to distribute leadership.

Table 11: Challenges to Distributed Leadership Practice According to Principals

No	**Teachers in Our School**	Mean
1	are engaged in and committed to participating in school leadership roles	2.95
2	actively participate in decision making	3.20
3	actively show initiative related to school improvement	3.35
4	demonstrate their responsibilities in their work	2.99
5	help one another by sharing knowledge	3.35

Table 11 shows the perception of principals about the readiness and commitment of teachers to assume leadership roles. Specifically the principals were very critical of teachers commitment to participate in leadership roles (M=2.95) and their demonstration of taking responsibilities in their works (M= 2.99). Even in other cases, they also are not satisfied in the teachers' interest to participate in decision making, showing initiation to school improvement and help each other by sharing knowledge (M= 3.20, 3.35 and 3.35 respectively). In general principals think that teachers are not ready to assume leadership responsibilities which can be witnessed by being accountable in their teaching work.

7. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data obtained from teachers and principals from public secondary schools of Dessie city administration showed the following results. To begin with, according to both the teachers and principals, the extent of leadership distribution in the selected sample schools was found to be me moderate. Out of the seven dimensions of distributed leadership, both groups of respondents perceive that leadership is moderately distributed in five dimensions including organizational structure, vision, collaboration and cooperation, decision making and responsibility and accountability. On the other hand, according to the respondents, the leadership distribution in the remaining two aspects, values and beliefs and initiatives, was found to be low but which is very close to medium performance. In general, this result is in line with the finding of Dejene (2014) which he found that the practice of distributed leadership to be Moderate at Addis Ababa University. On the other hand it is different from that of Mitiku (2014) which he found that the practice of distributed leadership practice to be low in south west shoa zone Public secondary schools.

On the other hand, the analysis on the perception difference between teachers and principals show some differences on items under each dimension of distributed leadership. In the organizational structure dimensions, while teachers are less positive on three items which include the flexibility of the school structure to allow teachers to participate in decision making, existence of consultation meeting and support of the school for development of the teachers, principals have high positivity unlike teachers.

On the vision dimension of distributed leadership, while teachers negative about students taking ownership of their tasks and activities, principals are positive about it. On the other hand, while teachers are less positive about the presence of common value for all in the schools, principals are very positive about it. Again, on the values and beliefs dimension of distributed leadership, while teachers are less positive on two aspects, principals are very positive about them. These aspects of values and beliefs include existence of mutual respect among teachers and setting of higher standards for teachers in the selected schools.

In expressing opinions on a regular basis and taking responsibility without asking also teachers are less positive than principals in the collaboration and cooperation and responsibility and accountability dimensions of distributed leadership. In decision making also while teachers are less positive than principals about involvement of everyone in decision making and incorporation of the inputs from teachers in decision making.

Principals are very critical about the initiation of ideas from top while teachers strongly believe so. On the other hand teachers are less positive about the existence of sufficient amount of freedom to contribute ideas to improve their work than principals.

Lastly, it was also found out that lack of commitment to participate in leadership activities and the inability to demonstrate responsibility on the teachers' side are main challenges to distribute leadership. On the other hand failure to empower, initiate and encourage teachers to make significant contribution, showing low professional standards for teachers and not involving the teachers in decision making or initiating ideas from the top despite the meaningful contribution of ideas by teachers from the principals was observed to be main challenges to distribute leadership. These findings are in many ways similar to the findings of Dejene (2014). As to Dejene, Lack of team work, loose tie among college deans, department heads and instructors and lack of shared responsibility among instructors were the major challenges that deter the practice of distributed leadership practice in Addis Ababa University. Similarly Mitiku (2014) also found out that despite the willingness of the teachers to assume leadership role, the principals' were not distributing leadership roles. In my study I also found out that the teachers were ready to involve in decision making and other leadership roles despite the reluctance of the principals' to share their leadership roles to them. In the analysis this was found as a point of departure in their opinion between the two sides.

8. CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this study was to describe the extent to which leadership is distributed in Public Secondary Schools of Dessie City administration and whether the distribution of leadership differs according to the perception of teachers and principals. To this end, relevant data were collected, analyzed and conclusions are drawn. Below is the conclusion reached under each basic question raised for the study.

1. To what extent is leadership distributed at Public Secondary schools of Dessie City Administration?

The leadership practice in the sampled public secondary school can be regarded as moderately distributed as the mean both for the teachers and principals in five dimensions of distributed leadership out of seven indicates such performance.

2. What are the extent of the perceived differences between leaders and teachers in the extent of distributed leadership?

There are some observed perception differences between teachers and principals on the extent of leadership distribution. While principals tend to be positive on every dimensions of leadership distribution, teachers on the other hand were observed to be less positive.

3. What are the challenges in practicing distributed leadership in the schools?

Both teachers and principals had pointed out the main challenges for leadership distribution at the selected sample public secondary schools. It can be concluded that the challenge for distributing leadership at the studied schools emanates from both teachers and principals which mainly is due to lack of commitment and demonstration of responsibility from the teachers' side and actual willingness to engage teachers in leadership activities from the principals'' side.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data gathered, the following recommendations are given to improve the practice of distributed leadership in the selected schools;

1. Principals should initiate and encourage teachers to contribute ideas, participate in decision making and assume leadership roles based on their experiences and field of study for the success of schools.
2. Teachers, on the other hand, also have to show initiative and willingness to assume responsibilities besides their teaching assignment and work cooperatively with the principals and other staffs as it enhance the improvement of school and their professional development.
3. Leadership training for principals and if possible for all the academic staffs, especially on the ways and merits of distributed leadership, should be organized to clear out their perceptions on the issue.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Educational Planning and Management

Questionnaire to be filled by School Principals

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize the practices and challenges of distributed leadership in Public Secondary Schools of Dessie City Administration. The researcher will use the data gathered through this questionnaire for strictly academic purposes. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire honestly. Your response will be kept confidential. Your genuine response to this study is indispensable.

NB: please do not write your names in any part of the questionnaire! Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!
PART   I: Background   Information
Direction: Please place an "X" mark on the space provided against the items

1. **Sex:** Male_____ Female_____

2**. Age:** 21-30_____31-40_____ 41-50 _____ ≥51 _____

3**. Your department**: _____

4**. Your qualification**: B.A/ B.Sc _____ M.A / M.Sc_____

5 **Year of Experience**: _____

PART II: Please indicate the degree of your perception about of distributed leadership by putting Circle. There is five alternatives   and   their   value   is   indicated   as   follows:
1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

NO	Organizational Structure	1	2	3	4	5
1	Tasks and responsibilities are hierarchically decided by the professionals in our school					
2	At our school there are formally agreed leadership roles					
3	Teachers make decisions within predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability					
4	The school structure formally provides everyone with opportunities to participate in decision making					
5	The formal structure in our organization facilitates informal leadership at all levels in the organization					
6	At our school we have regular consultation meetings					
7	The school supports professional development/opportunity					
	Vision					
8	At our school we have a shared Vision					
9	At our school we have common values for all					
10	Teachers take ownership of their own tasks and activities					
11	Students take ownership of their own tasks and activities					
12	Strategic development as a learning organization is one of our school goals					
	Values and Beliefs					
13	Mistakes are seen as a learning opportunity					
14	Colleagues have confidence in each other's abilities					
15	There is mutual respect among the professionals in our school					

16	At our school we set high standards for Teachers					
	Collaboration and Cooperation					
17	We work collaboratively to deliver school results					
18	We express our opinions on a regularly basis					
19	We share our knowledge and experiences with one another					
20	We help one another to solve problems					
21	We are provided sufficient time to collaborate with our colleagues on work related issues					
22	In our school we cooperate with each other to achieve the collective ambition					
	Decision making					
23	I can make my own decisions related to the content of my work					
24	I can make my own decisions in how to organize my work					
25	I can make my own decisions regarding my professional development					
26	I can make my own decisions on a sufficient range of aspects in my work					
27	In our school it's common that everyone is involved with decision making					
28	Although the Teachers in our school have the opportunity for input, the decisions are still made from the leaders at the top					
	Responsibility and accountability					
29	I am accountable to my superior for my performance					
30	I am kept accountable					
32	I feel responsible for my performance					
33	We can take responsibility without asking					
34	We share collected responsibilities for each other's behavior					
35	All staff are encouraged to express their opinion regardless of their formal status					
	Initiatives					
36	Initiatives and ideas mainly come from the leaders at the top					
37	There is sufficient amount of freedom to contribute your own ideas to improve the work					
38	Teachers have to take the initiative and responsibility due to a lack of direction and lead					
39	All tasks are assigned to the Teachers based upon the level of expertise					
	Teachers in Our School					
40	are engaged in and committed to participating in school leadership roles					
41	actively participate in decision making					
42	actively show initiative related to school improvement					
43	demonstrate their responsibilities in their work					
44	help one another by sharing knowledge					

Appendix B

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Educational Planning and Management

Questionnaire to be filled by School Teachers

The purpose of this study is to scrutinize the practices and challenges of distributed leadership in Public Secondary Schools of Dessie City Administration. The researcher will use the data gathered through this questionnaire for strictly academic purposes. You are kindly requested to complete the questionnaire honestly. Your response will be kept confidential. Your genuine response to this study is indispensable.

NB: please do not write your names in any part of the questionnaire! Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!

PART   **I:**   **Background**   **Information**

Direction: Please place an "X" mark on the space provided against the items

1. **Sex:** Male_____ Female_____

2**. Age:** 21-30_____31-40_____ 41-50 _____ ≥51 _____

3**. Your department**: _____

4**. Your qualification**: B.A/ B.Sc _____ M.A / M.Sc_____

5 **Year of Experience**: _____

PART II: Please indicate the degree of your perception about of distributed leadership by putting Circle. There is five alternatives and their value is indicated as follows:

1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree

NO	Organizational Structure	1	2	3	4	5
1	Tasks and responsibilities are hierarchically decided by the professionals in our school					
2	At our school there are formally agreed leadership roles					
3	Teachers make decisions within predetermined boundaries of responsibility and accountability					
4	The school structure formally provides everyone with opportunities to participate in decision making					
5	The formal structure in our organization facilitates informal leadership at all levels in the organization					
6	At our school we have regular consultation meetings					
7	The school supports professional development/opportunity					
	Vision					
8	At our school we have a shared Vision					
9	At our school we have common values for all					
10	Teachers take ownership of their own tasks and activities					
11	Students take ownership of their own tasks and activities					
12	Strategic development as a learning organization is one of our school goals					
	Values and Beliefs					
13	Mistakes are seen as a learning opportunity					
14	Colleagues have confidence in each other's abilities					
15	There is mutual respect among the professionals in our school					
16	At our school we set high standards for Teachers					

	Collaboration and Cooperation					
17	We work collaboratively to deliver school results					
18	We express our opinions on a regularly basis					
19	We share our knowledge and experiences with one another					
20	We help one another to solve problems					
21	We are provided sufficient time to collaborate with our colleagues on work related issues					
22	In our School we cooperate with each other to achieve the collective ambition					
	Decision making					
23	I can make my own decisions related to the content of my work					
24	I can make my own decisions in how to organize my work					
25	I can make my own decisions regarding my professional development					
26	I can make my own decisions on a sufficient range of aspects in my work					
27	In our School it's common that everyone is involved with decision making					
28	Although the professionals in our organization have the opportunity for input, the decisions are still made from the leaders at the top					
	Responsibility and accountability					
29	I am accountable to my superior for my performance					
30	I am kept accountable					
32	I feel responsible for my performance					
33	We can take responsibility without asking					
34	We share collected responsibilities for each other's behavior					
35	All staff are encouraged to express their opinion regardless of their formal status)					
	Initiatives					
36	Initiatives and ideas mainly come from the leaders at the top					
37	There is sufficient amount of freedom to contribute your own ideas to improve the work					
38	Teachers have to take the initiative and responsibility due to a lack of direction and lead					
39	All tasks are assigned to the Teachers based upon the level of expertise					
	My School Principal					
40	enables me to make meaningful contributions to the school					
41	encourages me to share my expertise with my colleagues					
42	welcomes me to take the initiative					
43	formally acknowledges my teaching abilities					
44	brings me into contact with information that helps me to create new ideas					
45	stimulates me to reflect on my work in order to improve					
46	has high expectations regarding my professional standards					
47	supports me to make my own decisions in my work					
48	empowers me by giving advice and guidance on my own development					