



**THE PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL CLUSTER SUPERVISORS IN IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM IN SAESIE TSAEDA EMBA WOREDA, EASTERN ZONE OF TIGRAY REGION.**

**Haftom Teshale Gebre**

Faculty at department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Adigrat University, Adigrat, Ethiopia ([haftomteshale1@gmail.com](mailto:haftomteshale1@gmail.com))

**Abstract**

*According to the MoE's school improvement program blueprint document (2007), the timely and basic aim of the program is to improve students' academic achievement through creating conducive teaching and learning environments and with the active involvement of parents in the teaching and learning process. The general objective of the research is to examine the practices of cluster school supervisors in implementing school improvement programs and the major factors affecting the study area. The study used both primary and secondary sources, and the sample size was 93. Twelve people are chosen from each of the two clusters (Edaga Hamus and Adi-kelebes). And cluster ferewyni are Tekli suwaat, Edaga robue, and Kiros Alemayo. In the analysis stage, several interrelated pieces of information were summarized and arranged to make the analysis easily manageable by using STASTA. Study findings revealed that the major four domains impacted by school improvement programs through their mean, SD, and variance were 2.688172, 1.052724, and 1.108228 respectively. And also, the researcher can conclude that the major factors of the school improvement program and mostly cluster supervisors were inadequate attention given to supervision service and no experience in the practice of supervision in the study area.*

**Keywords:** SPI, cluster, Saesie Tsaeda Emba, and Eastern Tigray.

## **Background of the Study**

Human talents and knowledge are developed via education (Todaro, 2006). He continued by saying that it is commonly acknowledged that education's goal is to provide students the information, abilities, dispositions, and competences necessary to help themselves and the larger community. A country that effectively educates its youngsters is making an investment in its future growth, claim Sullivan and Glanz (2007). As a result, education is seen as a crucial catalyst that significantly affects a country's growth, economic fortunes, and citizens' quality of life. According to the World Bank (2011), education occupies a unique position in the life of any nation because it is one of the most powerful ways to reduce poverty and inequality, promote peace, and lay the foundation for sustainable economic growth. From this, it can be understood what role education plays in the overall development of a nation.

Different writers have given different definitions of school improvement programs. According to Barnes (quoted in MoE, 2007), school improvement is the process of modifying certain practices and policies in a way that helps to enhance the teaching and learning process. People involved in the school improvement program should be aware of the factors within schools that can be changed to produce a higher quality of education in order to change specific practices and policies, and they should be clearly informed as to what conditions outside the level of the school are necessary for the improvement (Dimmock, 1993). In this regard, it must be noted that since schools differ in shape, size, structure, culture, political environment, and other dimensions, we cannot have a single universally accepted school improvement approach that works in all educational systems and settings. Hence, different countries have developed different school improvement approaches that suit their educational problems (MoE, 2007).

As a result, the MoE in Ethiopia has launched a campaign to reform schools. According to the MoE's school improvement program blueprint document from 2007, the program's primary goal is to raise students' academic achievement by fostering supportive classroom environments and involving parents actively in the teaching and learning process. It is important to evaluate the implementation process whenever such new programs are brought into a certain educational system and they start to be implemented in order to determine its strengths and flaws. The assessment not only enables schools and educational leaders to identify the strengths and

weaknesses in the implementation of the school improvement programs but also provides them with an insight into what measures should be taken to improve the weaknesses and expand their strengths as well. This in turn helps schools make the most of the implementation of the programs.

The school administrators, vice principals, department heads, and senior teachers should assume primary responsibility for school-based supervisory methods inside their school, as stated by the MoE (2015). In order to optimize the professional competence of teachers and hence improve educational quality, these responsible partners organize short-term training and experience exchange. They also regularly observe instructors while they teach in the classroom.

But in a local setting, it might not be possible for this task to go off without a hitch. According to Govinda and Tapan (1999), "School supervisors also cannot function in isolation to maintain high quality in the school, and therefore they must be supported by appropriate institutions at various levels." This is true even though the supervisory activities at the individual school level are generally key components in ensuring the good functioning of the Education system. This suggests that schools should get internal and external supervision and aid from their local clusters and above in order to be effective, since their performance depends on the coordinated effort of these supervisions and assistances offered from multiple levels. Especially at present, it is believed the supervisory assistance offered from the nearby school levels (cluster) is par amounting in giving direct professional and technical support that helps them to build their capacity in a regular and persistent manner and as it has more prominent roles in school effectiveness and improvement because cluster supervision is a critical point in implementing school improvement programs. Accordingly, it is assumed that cluster-based supervision will help the Tigray region bridge the gap between centrally administered supervision and locally provided school-based supervision by directly supporting teachers and school administrators on a professional and technical level, fostering experience sharing between schools and inter-school communities, bolstering school-based supervision, and providing other support that helps with overall school improvement initiatives. Based on this supposition, all secondary schools in the Tigray area have been divided into several clusters, each of which has one cluster supervisor and four to eight member schools. Additionally, it is believed that cluster-based supervision would be successful in implementing school improvement programs because it would be more cost-effective, make better use of local resources, address the immediate needs of school teachers and heads, offer opportunities for on-

the-job training and reflection, and aim to implement the current trends of decentralized educational administration in the nation (TREB, 2007). Although cluster supervisors have a significant role to play in school reform, little is known about how effective they are in actual practice, particularly in the Tigray region.

### **General objective:**

The general objective of the research is to examine the practices of cluster school supervisors in implementing school improvement programs and the major factors affecting the study area.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Description of the study area**

In the Tigray region's eastern zone is Seasia tsaeda emba woreda. According to EMA (2017), it is situated between latitudes  $39^{\circ}28'30''\text{E}$  and  $39^{\circ}53'00''\text{E}$  and longitudes  $13^{\circ}55'00''\text{N}$  and  $14^{\circ}23'30''\text{N}$ . This woreda is situated 37 kilometres from Adigrat town via the northern zone and 78 km from Mekelle town. In relation to other woredas, Seasia tsaeda emba is located south of Klteablaelo, Hawuzian, and Ganta-afeshum woredas, east of Atsbi-wenberta Woreda, and north of Gulemekeda Woreda.

### **Sources and methods of Data collection**

Both primary and secondary sources were employed in the study to gather useful data that was essential to carrying out and fulfilling the research's goals. In summary, both qualitative and quantitative data worked together to help the study accomplish its goal.

### **Primary Source of Data**

This study collected primary data using two main research methods of data collection: questionnaires and interviews.

**Questionnaires** try to give a lot of replies from a lot of individuals. The researcher circulated and gathered the questionnaires using both closed-ended and open-ended formats in order to get firsthand knowledge on the subject.

**Interviews** are achieved by the use of the leading questions' follow-ups. inquiries during face-to-face interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the chosen center cluster managers, vice principals, and principals of the research area's schools.

### **Secondary Source of Data**

The secondary data used in this study was mostly gathered from secondary sources including published and unpublished papers, journals, reports, and websites that deal with the subject.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

A descriptive survey was employed as the research strategy for this study. According to Mouton (2007), a study design offers a solution to the query, "What are the techniques to be employed to gather the needed information? Additionally, it serves as a blueprint or plan for the research's execution. Descriptive research was used to carry out this study because this kind of research aims to describe the nature and status of a certain issue by performing an in-depth examination through the collecting of all relevant data regarding the subject matter under consideration.

Surveys and many types of fact-finding enquiries are included in descriptive research. The main goals of descriptive research are to correctly depict the traits of a certain person, circumstance, or group as well as to characterize the current condition of affairs (Kothari, 2009). By gathering information using various techniques, the researcher has similarly characterized the existing scenario about the practices and difficulties faced by secondary school cluster supervisors in carrying out school development initiatives. Because it is a study in which multiple parts of a population are sampled at a particular point in time, the researcher utilized a cross-sectional design.

#### **Sample size**

One of the crucial components of a study that results in acceptable procedures is a sample. Purposive sampling, which is non-probability sampling, and the simple random sampling method, which is probability sampling, were the sample methods employed in this study.

The demographic frame for this study only includes people who are directly influenced by the cluster supervisors' implementation of school improvement programs, hence the purposive sample approach is employed. The example frame contains the vice principals, instructors, and principals who are involved. The sample size is thus 93. From each of the two clusters (Edaga Hamus and Adi-kelebes), twelve individuals are picked. Tekli Suwaat, Edaga Robue, and Kiros Alemayo make up cluster ferewyni, while the other 81 people came from five secondary schools.

**Data analysis**

All main and secondary data were gathered, arranged uniformly for analysis using both descriptive and statistical techniques, and then the data analysis procedure started. This involves examining the procedures of cluster school supervisors in executing school improvement programs and the key variables impacting the research region utilizing tables with frequency and percentage as well as mean, SD, and variation. Several interconnected pieces of information were compiled and structured throughout the analysis stage utilizing STASTA to make the analysis simple to handle.

**Table 1. Major four domains**

Domains	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Teaching and Learning	30	32.26	32.26
Parent-community and school relations	25	26.88	59.14
School Leadership and Administration	22	23.66	82.80
Creating conducive Teaching and Learning Environment	16	17.20	100.00
Total	93	100.00	

  

	Mean	SD	variance
Domains	2.688172	1.052724	1.108228

As shown in the above table, 26.88% of respondents said that parent-community and school relations contributed to the school improvement program; 32.26% of respondents said that teaching and learning did; 23.66% said that school leadership and administration did; and 17.20% said that creating conducive teaching and learning environments contributed to the school improvement program. Additionally, the mean, SD, and variance of the key four domains that were

affected by school improvement programs were 2.688173, 1.052724, and 1.108228 correspondingly. The researcher might thus draw the conclusion that domains have a significant role in school reform initiatives. Accordingly, the SIP domains allude to important topics on which the program is intended to intervene in order to enhance students' learning outcomes (MoE, 2007).

**Table 2. extent of cluster supervisors to arranging induction training for beginner teachers**

Training	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
low	7	7.53	7.53
medium	21	22.58	30.11
high	31	33.33	63.44
very high	34	36.56	100.00
Total	93	100.00	

According to the aforementioned table, 36.56% of respondents indicated that they used cluster supervisors to set up induction training for new teachers at a very high level, 22.58% indicated that they used cluster supervisors to set up induction training for new teachers at a medium level, 33.33% indicated that they used cluster supervisors at a high level, and 7.53% indicated that they used cluster supervisors at a low level. Thus, the researcher may draw the conclusion that improving the school program in the study region will result from cluster supervisors setting up induction training for new teachers. Accordingly, supervision in effective schools makes an effort to remove barriers from the workplace so that teachers can observe one another at work, get feedback from others, have professional conversations, and have the chance to decide on collective instruction actions (Glickman, 1985).

**Table 3. Hold conferences before and after classroom observations**

Items	Freq.	Percent	Mean	SD	Variance
Yes	75	80.65	1.193548	.3972204	.157784
No	18	19.35			
Total	93	100.00			

The majority of respondents (80.65%) said that conferences were place before and after classroom inspections in their clusters, as shown in the table above. Cluster monitoring was included in the school improvement program for this reason. On the other side, 19.35% of the respondents said that in their clusters, there were no conferences held before and after classroom inspections. There were conferences before and after classroom observations in their clusters for the bulk of the day, but some unconditional instances, as the researcher cross-checked with key informants during the interview. Because cluster supervision focused on school leadership and administration, parent-community and school relations, and a secure and healthy school environment, there were no conferences held before to or following classroom observations in their clusters. A mean, SD, and variance of 1.193548,.3972204, and.157784, respectively, provide additional evidence. In accordance with this, classroom observation seems to function best when organized into a cycle of preparation, observation, and feedback; as a result, the supervisor and supervisee must collaborate both before and after the observation process. When engaging in all of these activities, teachers must believe that their supervisors are there to support them and make them more efficient (Lilian, 2007).

**Table 4. Organize capacity building programs to teachers in the study area**

Items	Frequency	Percent	mean	SD	variance
No	25	26.88	1.268817	.4457477	.198691
Yes	68	73.12			
Total	93	100.0			

According to the data in the table above, 73.12% of respondents reported that supervision offered programs to help instructors enhance their capacity. To the contrary, teachers' capacity-building activities were not available under cluster supervision, according to 26.88% of the respondents. Additionally, plan programs to help instructors enhance their capacities; their mean, SD, and variance were 1.268817,.4457477, and.198691, respectively. In general, most of the respondents received teacher capacity-building programs after receiving cluster supervision in the research region. In accordance with this, instructors must believe that the supervisor is there to aid them and to increase their effectiveness (Lilian, 2007).



**Table 5. factors negatively affecting cluster supervisors effectiveness in their contribution to schools improvement program**

Statements	Frequency	Percent
No high experience on the practice of supervision	14	15.05
Inadequate attention given to supervision service	19	20.43
Lack of clear direction from Woredas Education experts	5	5.38
Lack of cooperative, honest, friendly and collegial relationship	5	5.38
Lack of Support teachers to conduct action research	11	11.83
Lack of strategic and short term plan to implement cluster supervision	5	5.38
The supervisors are overloaded with classroom activities	5	5.38
School based supervisors teaches the same credit like ordinary teachers	10	10.75
Lack of adequate training system on the practices of School based supervision	4	4.30
Inadequate pre-service and in service training	5	5.38
Supervisors attitude towards supervision work	5	5.38
Ability to conflict resolution and performance counseling	5	5.38
Total	93	100.0

As shown in Table 5 above, the majority of respondents (20.43%) claimed that supervision services received insufficient attention; 15.05% claimed that they had little experience practicing supervision; 5.83% claimed that Woredas Education experts had not provided clear direction; there was no cooperative, honest, friendly, or collegial relationship; and there was no strategic or short-term plan to implement cluster supervision. 10.75% of respondents said that school-based supervisors teach with the same credit as regular teachers, and 4.30% said that the lack of an adequate training system on the practices of school-based supervision is one of the factors negatively affecting the effectiveness. Other factors that negatively impacted the effectiveness included supervisor attitudes toward supervision work, their ability to resolve conflicts, and their ability to provide performance counseling. Therefore, the researcher can conclude that the major factors in the school improvement program and, mostly, cluster supervisors were inadequate attention given to supervision service and no experience in the practice of supervision in the study area. In line with this, These are the lack of schedules in schools that permit teachers to meet and work together for sustained periods of time; the demanding nature of teachers' work as an

increasing number of students arrive at school less well-socialized, less prepared to deal with materials, and more frequently from family settings that are not supportive; the aging and often demoralization of teachers due to declining resources; increasing levels of bureaucracy; and the rapid and frequent demands for change that come from central authorities. Additionally, the formation of a commitment to change is impacted by an organizational structure in which teachers' work is less independent and more connected with that of other instructors. Additionally, the program is under pressure to continually educate new employees who might not stay in the schools for very long because to the ongoing local transfers of teachers, principals, and educational administrators (Plan Sudan, 2006).

**Table 6. cluster Supervisors identify teachers ability to manage class**

Categories	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Strongly Agree	20	21.51	21.51
Agree	73	78.49	100.00
Total	93	100.00	

The findings shown in the following table demonstrate that the two sets of categories were chosen after data collection. 78.49% of respondents claimed that cluster supervisors recognize instructors' classroom management skills after they watch, whereas 21.51% claimed that cluster supervisors do so when they actually do cluster supervision. The researcher came to the conclusion that all instructors agreed that supervisors had discovered the classroom issue during the class observation based on the data presented above. Accordingly, managers must have some practical knowledge and abilities to be able to provide teachers the aid, direction, and support they need to enhance their classroom practices (Glickman et al., 2004).

### **Conclusion**

Both secondary and primary sources were employed to achieve the research goals and conduct the study. To put it briefly, both qualitative and quantitative data helped the study accomplish its goal.

The researcher can draw the conclusion that domains have a significant role in school development initiatives. And the researcher may draw the conclusion that improving the school program in the study region will result from cluster supervisors setting up induction training for new teachers.

The results of the study showed that the means, SD, and variance of the structure of teachers' capacity-building programs were 1.268817,.4457477, and.198691, respectively.

The study comes to the conclusion that inadequate attention given to supervision service and a lack of expertise in the conduct of supervision in the study region were the main contributors to the school improvement program and primarily cluster supervisors.

According to the study's findings, every instructor said that during the class observation, the supervisors had discovered the issue in the class.

## References

- Dimmock, C. (1993) *School-based Management and School Effectiveness*. New York: Routledge.
- Glickman, C. D. (1985). Development as the aim of instructional supervision. Retrieved from [www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED263655](http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICWebPortal/recordDetail?accno=ED263655), November, 20/2006
- Glickman, C. D., Gordon, S. P., & Ross-Gordon, J. M. (2004). *Supervision and instructional Leadership: A developmental approach*. USA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Govinda, R. & Tapan S. (1999). Quality Education through School based Supervision and Support, the case of GSS Primary Schools in Bangladesh. Retrieved on October 19/2010 from <http://unesdo.unesco.org/images/0011/001174/117472.pdf>.
- Lilian, C. M. (2007). Perception of classroom supervision by secondary school teachers in the Harare region. Unpublished Masters of Arts thesis, Tshwane University of technology.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). Manual for National Teachers' Professional Competence Level Standard Assurance Framework MOE, Addis Ababa.
- MoE. (2015). *Revised Educational supervision manual*. Addis Ababa: EMPDA.
- Plan international Sudan. (2006). End term evaluation of school improvement project. Khartoum.
- Sullivan, S., & Glanz, J. (2007). *Supervision that improves teaching* (2nd ed.). London: Corwin Press.
- Tigray Regional Education Bureau. (2008). BPR Manual Drawn to State the Roles & Responsibilities of the Curriculum Preparation and Implementation Core Process. Tigray, Mekelle.
- Todaro, M. P. (2006). *Economics for a Developing world: An Introduction to Principles, Problems and Policies for Development*, 2th Edition. Burnt Mill, UK: Longman Group Ltd.
- World Bank. (2011). *Education in Ghana: Improving Equity, Efficiency and Accountability of Education Delivery*. Washington, DC: World Bank.