

Solomon Melesse¹, PhD

Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies Department
V/Dean, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences
Bahir Dar University

Original scientific paper

UDC: 37.013.43

DOI: 10.17810/2015.83

Setegni Molla

Education Expert at Benshangul Gumuz Regional State Education Bureau
Ethiopia

=====

THE CONTRIBUTION OF SCHOOL CULTURE TO STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: THE CASE OF SECONDARY AND PREPARATORY SCHOOLS OF ASSOSA ZONE, BENSANGUL GUMUZ REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

Abstract: This research focuses on investigating the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement. To this end, a mixed research approach was used. 82 teachers, 258 students, 5 school principals, and 3 school cluster supervisors were the data sources of this study. To see the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement, questionnaire for students and teachers, interview with school principals and cluster supervisors were used. Percentages and one sample t-test were used to analyze the data. The quantitative data confirmed that the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement was found statistically significant but slightly above the expected mean. Qualitative data from the respondents showed strong communication among stakeholders during the implementation process. The support system from teachers and other responsible bodies were seen as effective. A guideline that specifies teachers' responsibility and the program implementation process, such as continuous follow-up and supervision were reported relevant and triggering teachers to live up to the minimum teachers' professional commitment standard. Generally, both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis results revealed a moderate level contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement. As this result was not much encouraging, appropriate strategies of enhancing the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement were pointed out in the paper.

Keywords: School culture; Academic achievement; Preparatory schools; Secondary schools; Contribution.

Background of the Study

Education is regarded as a means of acquiring knowledge, values, and skills that provide people opportunities to adjust to the social and cultural changes. This capacity in turn helps people to participate in political, cultural, and social activities (Anbesu, 1996). In line with this, Amsalu (2002) indicated that the performance of educational institutions could be determined by the nature of school culture including, quality administration, commitment of teachers and students' motivation for their learning. Specifically, Maslowski (2001) stated that the effect of

¹ btlhmslmn1997@gmail.com

educational variables like teacher and student behavior as well as school culture, in general, have due value to students' academic achievement.

Consequently, Hoy and Miskel (1987) noted that teacher qualification without commitment, school without healthy school culture, students' existence at schools without motivation for learning is artificial. As any society infuses a specific culture to schools, as schools are miniature societies (Lawton, 1987), the respective communities come up with their own school culture. Therefore, school culture is defined as the term generally referring to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspects of how a school functions. The term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which schools embrace and celebrate racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity (Glossary of Education, 2013). In addition, culture could be developed and transmitted consciously and this is also true in schools.

Culture is also further defined by different scholars with slight differences. For example, Hoy and Miskel (1987) defined it as a system of shared orientations that hold the unit together. Hopkins (2001) also defined culture as consisting of a group of ideas, customs, objects, beliefs, attitudes, language, art, technology, and traditions. The above definitions of culture imply that all cultural practices that exist around a school have a strong linkage with school day to day practices. This means that school culture is born from the general societal culture (Lawton, 1987). This is so due to the fact that elements of school culture (vision, mission and values) do not stand apart from societal cultures. Supporting this idea, Taylor, Mark and Monica (n.d.), once stated that "schools have no choice ... to be concerned without community. It is within ... context that teaching and learning occurs. Without community, there will no schools" (p. 151).

This implies that the outcomes of schools have a strong relationship with the nature of school culture (i.e., visions, missions, and values), which emanate from the existing society, i.e., ideas, policies, and rules and regulations of the governing bodies. Due to different contextual influence, school culture is not static. In support of this idea, Hoy and Miskel (1987) disclosed that situations in today's work organizations, like schools, are dynamic and uncertain, i.e., situations are changing from time to time, from place to place, and the nature of schools depend on the situation. That is, if the situation is very favorable, schools become successful and otherwise, schools become unsuccessful. But, it is noted that situations are under the control of people.

According to Brown, school vision, mission and values emanate from broad concerns of society as well as the respective community, as community is a backbone to education. This idea was further elaborated by Taylor, Mark and Monica (n.d.) as the wider community influencing the development of the school as a caring center of educational excellence. Responsible school has a strong vision and mission, and it focuses on time, it is the heart of main school's values.

As indicated by different scholars, school culture has a great influence on student's classroom academic achievement. Regarding to this, Hoy and Miskel (1987), for example, noted that each culture describes the shared beliefs of teachers in the school. School with Strong cultures of efficacy, trust and academic optimism provide higher levels of students' academic achievement otherwise it will intimidate the socio-emotional developments of students.

Moreover, an effective and a healthy school culture facilitate teacher-student, teacher-teacher and student-student relationships. It also gives opportunities and venues for togetherness, discussing fundamental values, taking responsibility, coming together as a community and celebrating individual and group success (Brown, 2004).

In addition, teachers could have the responsibility of observing what students are doing, where they do it, how they do it, when they do it and who they are in any classroom context. It could be manifested by committed teachers. That is why we say that committed teachers show better understanding of personal differences of their students. Hopkins (2001), for example, noted that creative people tend to be divergent thinkers. Therefore, teachers must understand that creative students go beyond ordinary limitations of classrooms and schools, think and act in unconventional and even imaginary ways.

Teachers' commitment and strong participation have a strong contribution to students' academic achievement. With no question, committed teachers are role models for their students. Teacher's practice has an influence on students' day to day life as well as in their focus of receiving recital ideas for their learning. This idea is being confirmed by Hopkins (2001) in his explanations that students usually learn more when a teacher clearly explains and illustrate ideas, reviews regularly and holds students accountable for work, provides students with ample opportunity to practice, gives prompts and feed back to ensure success, corrects mistakes, and allows students to use a skill until it is thoroughly learned and become automatic overtime.

Teachers with a strong sense of commitment display high levels of planning and organization, they are open to new idea, and are more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students and are enthusiasm for teaching (Peterson & Deal 2002). Similarly, Mart (2013) disclosed that commitment is an essential element of successful teaching. Committed teachers are concerned with the development of their students and they profoundly struggle with how to keep students' learning. They cultivate students' curiosity and interest in learning. Showing commitment to student learning can be an important factor in motivating students. Committed teachers recognize and endeavor to fulfill their responsibilities to their students. The degree of loyalty that committed teachers have towards their profession is one of their distinguished characters. Generally, teachers who are engaged in their profession and committed to students and their learning play a crucial role in the development of their students.

In addition, committed teachers are adviser and counselor of students behavior, democratic facilitators of classroom teaching learning process, well skilled on their subject matters, have trust on schools activity *and* always they are guided by the teaching-learning plan (Lepper, et al., 2005). It is further elaborated by Hopkins (2001) as teachers with high level of commitment will contribute much to students' academic achievement.

As a result of all these, Ethiopia has formulated a pragmatic education and training policy (MoE, 1994). Based on this policy, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State (hereafter BGRS) has been doing its best to improve students' academic achievement. In spite of all the attempts, the researchers suspect that school culture has considerable effect on students' academic achievement and, therefore, charted out to explore it.

Statement of the Problem

Schools are complex organizations having different people who have a stake to the realization of its purpose including students, parents/guardians, teachers, instructional leaders (school principals and school cluster supervisors) and government bodies (Melesse, 2014; Ross & Gray, 2006). Above all, teachers take the lion's share in the process of realizing the intentions of schools. The teaching learning process is the central point for committed teachers and they use participatory classroom teaching learning methods by investing extra instructional time. However, this is not a reality in many schools today. Melesse (2014), for example, noted that the practice and making continuous effort to improve teaching is not visible in Ethiopian schools.

Similarly, Yalaw, Dawit and Alemayehu (2010) indicated that toxic cultural practices and norms such as absenteeism, cheating, less academic emphasis, inflation of students' scores, disengagement in academic tasks are reflected in Ethiopian primary schools. These toxic cultural practices are also reflected in different ways and degrees in most secondary schools. These cultural practices have an impact in improving academic achievement of the students. Moreover, there are other toxic school cultural practices that should not be tolerated. In this regard, Anthony (2004) noted plagiarism in the form of copying homework or purchasing papers for projects and other take-home assignments is a strong toxic culture at schools. These toxic school cultural practices are the main obstacles for every attempt to improve students' academic achievement in any society.

In spite of the above toxic school cultures, home-work, class-work, assignment and other school practices have been believed to have a great role for developing students' academic achievement. The 1994 Ethiopian education policy strongly underlined that students' academic achievement could not be improved without having students with the culture of hard work. However, students lack motivation to enhance their academic achievement through hard-work at today. Supporting this assertion, Renchler (1992), for example, found out that out of 1,879 students of American high school, three-fourth of whom indicated that their level of motivation was not particularly high. Similarly, Maslowski (2001) indicated absence of effective methods of studying, lack of doing home-work, assignment, making and summarizing notes, using library and reference books, working with charts, tables and graphs in the present day schools.

As clearly stated in Maslowski (2001) general analysis, students school performance and achievement is being influenced by absence of responsible and clear school culture, teachers' commitment, and lack of students interest, motivation, study techniques, lack of awareness of parents as to how they could follow up their school children, lack of teachers covering textbook contents, using teaching aids in classrooms, absence of school co-operation, and lack of hard working students in school and classrooms. Lerra and Teka (2014) also noted that there was lack of school leadership support, commitment, incentives, understanding and weak collaboration of stakeholders.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement in the Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Assossa Zone, Benishangu Gumuz Region State.

Research Questions of the Study

The study is designed to answer the basic research question: how far does school culture contribute to students' academic achievement?

Significance of the Study

The researchers felt that the findings of the study would be important for the following reasons:

- Providing information regarding the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement in the Secondary and Preparatory Schools,
- Enabling stakeholders to give due attention to the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement in the Secondary and Preparatory Schools; and
- Showing to stakeholders regarding the implication of school culture to the learners' future life.

Scope of the Study

Geographically the study focuses only in Assosa Zone, Bambasi Wereda, Homesha Wereda, and Menge Wereda of Benishanguli Gumuzi Regional State. The variables focus only on the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement.

Design of the Study

An explanatory research design was employed in this study. It could help to explain any causal links between the factors or variables that pertains to the research problem. Thus, this design was selected on the background that investigating the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement in the Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Assosa Zone, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State.

Population of the Study

The sources of data includes school cluster supervisors, principals, students and teachers of the sample Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Assosa Zone, Benishangul Gumuz Regional State. According to Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Education Bureau Annual Abstract (hereafter BGRSEBANA) (2014), Assosa Zone had 7 Woredas and 14 Secondary Schools. From the 7 Woredas, 3 were randomly selected. These include Hamesha, Bambasi, and Menge. Of these weredas, one secondary school each was randomly selected, namely Homesha Secondary School (grades 9-10) from Homesha Woreda, Bambasi Secondary and Preparatory School (grades 9-12) from Bambasi Wereda, and Menge Secondary and Preparatory School (grades 9-12) from Menge Woreda. From the three sample schools of the Woredas, the total population were 2558 (Teachers, Male =72 and Female =10 total 82; students Male =1445 and Female =1023, total=2468, and 3 male cluster supervisors, 5 male principals).

Sampling Techniques

In this study, three sample Woredas and 3 schools were selected by convenient sampling method. Transportation access was the major criterion employed in selecting the schools and Woredas. In the three schools, there were 38 sections. Out of these, 11 sections were

randomly included in the sample, which was 30% of the total size. All the students were selected by proportional random sampling technique. Teachers, school cluster supervisors and principals were selected by using comprehensive sampling technique, as their size was limited.

Sample Size

From Bambasi Secondary and Preparatory School, the researchers selected 34 students each in grade 9 section F and section J, 25 students each from grade 10 sections B and E, 15 students from grade 11 section B, and 18 students from grade 12 section A. From Homesha Secondary School, 25 students from section A of grade 9, and 23 students from section C of grade 10 were selected. From Menge Secondary and Preparatory School, 37 students from section E of grade 9, 15 students from section A of grade 10, and 7 students from section A of grade 12 (as they were only 7 in number), and total students of the sample were 258.

Instruments of Data Collection

Questionnaire

In this study, 30 close-ended questionnaire items were developed by the researchers. The items focus on the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement with liker scales. Ten items on the contribution of school culture, 10 items on the contribution of teachers' commitment were adapted from Roberts (2011), and 10 items were developed by the researchers on the contribution of students' motivation for learning to academic achievement. The liker scales of the questionnaire are with a five point rating scales. These were 'strongly agree' (SA), 'agree' (A), 'undecided' (U), 'disagree' (D), and 'strongly disagree' (SD). The scales were coded as SA=5, A=4, U=3, D=2, and SD=1. After adapting the items of school culture and teachers' commitment questionnaire and developing students' motivation for learning items, the researchers translated them into Amharic version. The translated items were given to one Benishangu Gumuz Regional Education Bureau (hereafter BGREB) expert that had a Master's Degree in linguistics to examine the accuracy and proper translation.

Interview

In order to get information about the respondents' reflection regarding the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement, interview was employed. Interview was made with instructional leaders (main and vice school principals, and school cluster supervisors). From Bambasi Secondary and Preparatory School, two school principals and one school cluster supervisor, Homesha Secondary School one school principal and one school cluster supervisor, and Menge Secondary and Preparatory School two school principals and one school cluster supervisor with a total of eight interviews were held. The items used to gather data about the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement was totally 12 in number. The interview was done face to face by the researchers.

Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

Before distributing the questionnaire to the respondents for the final study, all the items of the questionnaires were gauged by two measurement and evaluation instructors' of BDU, one Benishangu Gumuz Regional Education Bureau curriculum preparation, supply and implementation expert, and one BGREB teaching-learning team leader. It is also the case in

point that a pilot study was conducted to check the contribution of school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation for learning questionnaire items in Ura Secondary School, which was excluded in the final study. For this purpose, 30 grade 10 students of the same school were randomly selected and then the questionnaire was distributed. The filled-in questionnaire was collected and reliability checked. The reliability level of the students' questionnaire was 0.794. To see the reliability level of school culture and teachers' commitment questionnaires, 30 teachers of the same school were selected by simple random sampling technique. The pilot test confirmed that the reliability level of school culture was 0.766, and teachers' commitment was found 0.84. With slight modifications, the questionnaires were distributed for large scale study and relevant data were collected by the researchers.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis methods of this study include both quantitative and qualitative approaches. In order to analyze data, responses from questionnaires were categorized, tabulated and elaborated to check the contribution of the predictor variables (i.e., school culture, teachers' commitment, and students' motivation) on the criterion variable (i.e., students' academic achievement). The quantitative data gathered from the sample schools was analyzed by using one sample t-test. The qualitative data collected from school principals and cluster supervisors were interpreted and analyzed in words vis-à-vis themes made using the basic questions of this study and categories emanated from the collected data.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion of the Findings

Table 1 - One sample t-test analysis regarding the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement

Factors	<i>Expected Mean</i>	<i>Cal. Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
School culture	3	3.72	0.56	11.547	81	0.000

As indicated in Table 1, the result of one sample t-test on the contribution of school culture to students' academic achievement showed that the calculated mean (3.72) is greater than the expected mean (3). The difference is significant at $t(81) = 11.547, p < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be asserted that school culture has a positive and significant effect on students' academic achievement.

The qualitative data from school Principals and cluster supervisors also supported the quantitative result. That is, school principals and cluster supervisors were asked about whether or not school culture has an effect on students' academic achievement. Both of them agreed that school culture has a strong contribution to students' academic achievement. One of the interviewees, for example, noted that in a school that is well organized, trusted and respected by the respective society, the value of education and students' academic achievement could be enhanced, science and technology could be innovated, and modernity could be observed in the respective community as well as in the country at large.

A qualitative analysis on commitment of the school management, attention given to teaching learning, monitoring and proper follow up and support for teachers were discussed.

According to Menge Secondary and Preparatory school cluster supervisor, for example, the school management showed commitment and take instructional time to enhance students' academic achievement to the extent the action plan requires. Because of concern of the school management, it is reported that review meetings with parents and stakeholders regarding the concern of students' academic achievement was deliberated.

According to the response of the school cluster supervisor of Homesha woreda, teachers showed interest to teach and collaboratively work with the school community which resulted to the proper school culture. The respondent also disclosed that appropriate school culture is developed in the school due to committed school management.

The Contribution of Teachers' Commitment to Students Academic Achievement

Table 2 - One sample t-test analysis of the contribution of teachers' commitment to students' academic achievement.

Factors	Expected mean	Cal Mean	Sd	T	df	Sig
Teachers' commitment	3	4.7280	0.60	25.945	81	0.00

As indicated in Table 2, the result of one sample t-test showed that there is a statistically significant mean difference in teachers' commitment as the calculated mean (4.73) above the expected mean (3) scores at $t(81) = 25.945, p < 0.05$. That is, the calculated mean is greater than the expected mean. It implies that teachers' commitment had a significant positive effect on students' academic achievement.

The qualitative data from school Principals and cluster supervisors about the contribution of teachers' commitment to students' academic achievement also showed that teachers in their respective schools were committed to enhance students' academic achievement. Like for example, some teachers used different teaching methods and some teachers interred into the classroom with strong preparation, and they reflected agreeable personality in the classroom. As confirmed by the interviewees, most teachers' understand their students, were democratic, and had very good interest to the teaching-learning process. These activities as confirmed by the interviewees were the main sources for high students' motivation and in turn it affects students' academic achievement positively.

In any school, one of the key elements to improve students' academic achievement was teachers' collaborative work with colleagues, parents, students, and commitment in teaching. It is believed that commitment to teach in turn significantly affects students' academic achievement. In this line, all the sample school cluster supervisors and principals forwarded similar responses for the interview made with them regarding level of teachers' commitment. As they disclosed, most of the teachers had very good commitment to teach; showed punctuality and frequent attendance were aspects observed in their respective schools. It was common to see teachers who were committed and responsible for teaching.

Table 3 - One sample t-test analysis of the contribution of ` motivation to students' academic achievement.

Factors	Expected mean	Cal Mean	Sd	t	df	Sig
Student Motivation	3	4.461	0.70	23.945	81	0.00

As presented in Table 3, the result of one sample t-test analysis on the contribution of motivation to students' academic achievement revealed that students' motivation had statistically significant relationship with their academic achievement with $t(80) = 23.945$, $p < 0.05$. Thus, it can be asserted that students' motivation had a significant contribution to their` academic achievement in Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Assossa zone, Benshanguli Gumuzi Regional State, Ethiopia.

On the other hand, interview data from school cluster supervisors and principals disclosed that most of the students had motivation for learning. An attempt was also being made to check major activities of teachers directed towards enacting to develop students' motivation and thereby enhance academic achievement, and it was recorded that most teachers tried to modify their teaching style, lesson plan, and notes in such a way that they encourage students' motivation and enhance academic achievement. The result revealed that students have little motivation to learn. That is, according to the interviewees (school cluster supervisors and principals), most students were interested for learning. All school cluster supervisors and principals pointed out that those students have moderate interest towards their learning. One interviewee, for example, asserted that in his school, students' behavior to learn as well as the motivation they have for their academic achievement was high. As a result, they showed recommendable results. However, mentioning had been made that some students focus on making money through Gold Mining activities at the cost of their learning. As a result, some students` examination results get decreased from year to year. This problem has been exacerbated from grade level to grade level.

The researchers also checked whether or not teachers` enact to develop students' motivation and thereby enhance academic achievement. All the respondents asserted that the major activities performed by teachers that could possibly develop students` academic achievement include, *using their time properly, treating students equally without gender difference, applying active teaching-learning methods, using teaching aids, and applying continuous assessment and the like*. One interviewee, for example, disclosed major tasks performed by teachers as a means to develop students' motivation and thereby enhance their academic achievement. These include, supervising students` attendance, use peer assessment in the classroom, practice real classroom teaching learning didactic elements, give critical classroom exercise and homework and check always whether or not students do, take critical and strong measure on absent students, use debate between classroom students, and formulate and implement classroom rules and regulations, and maintain effective classroom management.

The researchers also checked whether or not teachers always modify their teaching learning techniques, lesson plan, and notes in such a way that they encourage students' motivation and increase academic achievement. All of the interviewees disclosed that *most of the teachers attempt to modify their classroom teaching learning style, subject notes, and lesson plans as frequently as is required by the teaching context that they are in*.

Discussion of the Findings

The researchers investigated how far school culture contributed to the students' academic achievement. The major findings of the study are discussed herewith.

The study showed that school culture had a significant contribution to students' academic achievement at $t(81) = 11.547, p < 0.05$. Therefore, teachers perceived that school culture had a significant effect on students' academic achievement in the sample Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Assossa Zone, Benshanguli Gumuzi Regional State.

The results of one sample t-test showed that the contribution of teachers' commitment to students' academic achievement was found significant as the observed mean (4.73) score is greater than the expected mean (3) score at $t(81) = 25.945, p < 0.05$. The finding shows that teachers' commitment had the highest contribution to the improvement of students' academic achievement. That is why the literature (e.g., MOE, 2005; ETA, 2013) confirmed that teachers who have this variable are expected to make a difference in students' academic achievement. Specifically put, they asserted that no curriculum can be implemented effectively and students' academic achievement will not be attained without having committed teachers. Teachers, therefore, are mainly expected to have real commitment to their profession and thereby to enhance students' academic achievement.

Similarly, school cluster supervisors and principals also disclosed the fact that the improvement of students' academic achievement is determined by the presence of effective and committed teachers. That is, when teachers are committed to their profession, the improvement of students' academic achievement will be maximized. This view has been once elaborated by ETA (2013) as *committed teachers are teachers who produce greater learning gains among their students*. The value of committed teachers to students' academic gains has been clearly indicated by different scholars. Yalaw, Dawit and Alemayehu (2010), for example, indicated the invaluable and irreplaceable roles of teachers in the school. As to these scholars, *no matter what a wonder full material is prepared, special curriculum is developed, comprehensive program is designed and all other inputs and facilities fulfilled, education cannot be effective without competent and committed teachers*.

Regarding to teachers' commitment, school cluster supervisors and principals share the above scholars view. For example, most of the respondents disclosed the fact that *knowing the contents of the subject matter they teach and implement in appropriate way, being a role model for their students in all aspects of life, especially in getting to the school and attending their class on time, giving respect and care for students as an elder*, mentioned as actual indicators of teachers' commitment that could possibly improve students' academic achievement.

The result of the interview data regarding the contribution of teachers' commitment to students' academic achievement is match with the quantitative data findings. As can be observed from quantitative result, the contribution of teachers' commitment to students' academic achievement was significant. The results suggested that teachers showed commitment, feel ownership to school organization, to their profession and to students' learning as well as to their academic achievement.

In another development, the results of one sample t-test showed that the contribution of students' motivation to their academic achievement was significant at $t(80) = 5.167, p < 0.05$.

Similarly, interview results disclosed the presence of moderate student motivation to their learning.

It is well communicated from the literature that students' motivation for learning could not be enhanced without multidirectional movement of school management and teachers good instructional practice. This means that the existence of teachers and school leaders' commitment has a great role to enhance students' motivation. Renchler (1992), for example, noted that *as teachers want their students to remain motivated for learning, the teachers must remain motivated to find a solution to an admittedly difficult problem.*

For these two results (quantitative result obtained from students and teachers and qualitative result from School Cluster Supervisors and Principals), it could be suggested that students' motivation had contributed to students' academic achievement in the Secondary and Preparatory Schools of Assossa zone, Benshanguli Gumuzi Regional State.

Generally, school culture and teachers' commitment had positive contribution to students' academic achievement. As explained by school cluster supervisors and principals, in the schools not only teachers but also school management were committed towards becoming attentive to teaching-learning, monitoring and proper follow-up and support for teachers as well as enhancing students' academic achievement. This implies that without sustained needs of principals to exert high efforts and teachers' commitment, students' motivation for learning could not be consistently enhanced and thereby bring positive contribution to students' academic achievement (Maneklu, 2012). Similarly, Renchler (1992) noted that *if school leaders expect students to become motivated for learning, they must first sustain their own motivation to create schools where students discover that learning is an exciting and rewarding activity.* Maslowski (2001) further pointed out that *involvement and commitment, monitoring students' progress, a positive atmosphere backed up by the involvement of school management and parents, and structured and well regulated teaching is prominent issues in school, which bring a greater students' academic achievement.*

Finally, the both the quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the contribution of school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation for learning were significant factors to enhancing students' academic achievement in Secondary and Preparatory schools had no significant contribution.

Conclusions

Based on the major findings presented above, the following conclusions were made. The contribution of school culture (school vision, mission and values) to students' academic achievement was found significant. Students' motivation was also found a recommendable variable for enhancing students' academic achievement. Teachers' roles are very crucial for the effectiveness of the implementation of any educational innovations. In the context of school performance, effort, loyalty, and involvement from the teachers' side were found the most vital resources required. But in this study, teachers' roles were found to have moderate effect on the improvement of students' academic achievement. Teachers will be attracted to the profession if they feel belongingness and believe they are contributing to the success of their schools and students' academic achievement. In addition, teachers showed moderate level of deliberation on how to enhance or improve students' academic achievement. But, the quantitative results of the contribution of teachers' commitment to students' academic

achievement was found significant. Most importantly, the areas of the contribution of school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation to students' academic achievement are considered to be major questions that remain to be dealt with in future studies.

Classroom observation results also revealed that the teaching learning process was moderately successful. It was moderately conducted due to lack of interest to teach, absenteeism, late coming and lack of commitment among some teachers. The management was moderately committed and gave attention to the teaching learning process. Similarly, there was some level of community participation at schools, and as a result the schools received average support from possible stakeholders. Therefore, the contribution of students' motivation, school culture and teachers commitment to students' academic achievement were moderately significant. It is also noted that the improvement and enhancement of students' academic achievement was the result of these three factors (school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation). Generally, average level results were found about the effects of the preceding variables on students' academic achievement. That is, the contribution of these variables to students' academic achievement was found adequate by the qualitative data and found significant by the quantitative data. But, the interview and observation data were found consistent. Therefore, the researchers uphold the qualitative findings at the cost of the quantitative ones.

Recommendations

Academic achievement is not only the responsibility of the school community (i.e., teachers, school cluster supervisors, principals and students) but also it should be considered as a public responsibility to ensure all the students the right to receive quality learning. That is, the fate of the younger generation who will uphold all the responsibility to lead nations and nationalities of Ethiopia should not be left out to individuals. To create a strong academic achievement, it is necessary to establish a good instructional practice and to meet the demands of concerned bodies' at schools. If the education system is functioning properly, it is possible in the long run to establish quality teaching and learning at schools which ultimately help us to exhibit high students' academic achievement. In order to support the positive effect of school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation to students' academic achievement, relevant education authorities need to provide appropriate support to the instructional practice at schools. To this end, the researchers would like to disclose some relevant recommendations related to the respective stakeholders as follows:

- BGREB should strengthen research on pedagogical issues and act according to the empirical findings of the study. This could be an important step in improving the positive contributions of the contribution of school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation for learning to their academic achievement.
- AZECBO, BGREB, and WECBO should arrange continuous follow up and supportive supervision service in relation to the positive contribution of school culture, teachers' commitment and students' motivation for their learning to students' academic achievement.
- The three Weredas (i.e., Bambasi, Homesha and Menge) Education and Capacity Building Offices should (ECBO) should enhance the involvement of teachers in decision making regarding students' academic achievement and enhance teachers' attitude towards the education system through workshops.
- Schools should create a repeated discussion sessions with students and their parents/guardians, teachers, school cluster supervisors, Parents - Teacher Association

members, with education authorities thereby to enhance the positive contribution of school culture, teachers' commitment, students' motivation to their academic achievement.

- School Principals and School cluster Supervisors in collaboration with other stakeholders should facilitate the conditions for meaningful in-service teacher training at schools.
- Teachers should promote openness to change and commitment to learning, taking responsibility for their profession and being committed to strengthening it and thereby to enhance students' academic achievement.

References

- Amsalu, A. (2002). *The relationship among school culture, teacher's commitment, and students achievements in secondary schools of Benishangul Gumuz Regional state*. Addis Ababa University, (unpublished MA thesis).
- Abesuu, B. (1996). *Curriculum Development: Prepared for School Management Training*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Anthony, N. J. (2004). *Educational assessment of students*, 4th edition. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Merrill Ltd.
- Benishangul Gumuz Regional State Education Bureau (2014). *Education Management Information Systems (EMIS), Education Statistics Annual Abstract*, Assosa, Benishangul-Gumuz Region.
- Brown, H. D. (2004). *Language assessment: principles and classroom practices*. New York: Pearson Education Ltd.
- ETA (2013). Proceedings of the first National Education on Promotion of Quality education: Organized by Ethiopian teachers' association (ETA) in collaboration with UNESCO National Office, June 29-30 at Newcastle Hotel, Adama.
- Glossary of Education (2013). *The Glossary of Education Reform for Journalists, Parents, and Community Members* Retrieved on 05/12/2017 at <http://edglossary.org/school-culture/>
- Hopkins, D. (2001). School Improvement for Real Educational change and Development. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 3(1).
- Hoy, W. & Miskel, C. (1987). *Educational Administration: Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: McGraw-Hill Ltd.
- Lawton, D. (1987). *Education, Culture and the National Curriculum*. Sevenoaks: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd.
- Lepper, M. R., Henderlong Corpus, J. & Sheena, S. I. (2005). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivational Orientations in the Classroom: Age Differences and Academic Correlates. *Journal of American Educational Psychology*, 97(2), 184-196.
- Lerra, M. & Tekla, T. (2014). Leadership challenges facing School Principals in Implementation of General Quality Improvement Program: The Case of Wolaita Zone Town Administration. *Wudpecker Journal of Educational Research*, 3(4), 59-69.
- Maneiklu, L. (2012). *The Organizational Climate of Secondary schools in Northern Shewa Zone*. Bahir Dar University. (Unpublished MA Thesis)
- Mart, C. T. (2013). A Passionate Teacher: Teacher Commitment and Dedication to Student Learning. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development* January, 2(1).
- Maslowski, R. (2001). *School culture and school performance: an explanatory study into the organizational culture of secondary schools and their effects*. Enschede: Twente

University Press.

- Melesse, S. (2014). The Contribution of Teachers' Peer Assessment and Self Reflection to the Implementation of Active Learning Strategies: the Case of Primary Schools of Bahir Dar Town, Amhara Region, Ethiopia, *Research Journal of Education and Review*, 2(4), 77 – 87.
- MOE (1994). *Education Policy Document*. Addis Ababa: Ethiopia.
- Peterson, K. D. & Deal, T. E. (2002). *The shaping school culture fieldbook*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Renchler, R. (1992). *Student Motivation, School Culture, and Academic Achievement: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management*. College of Education, University of Oregon.
- Ross, J. A. & Gray, P. (2006) Transformational leadership and teacher commitment to organizational values: The mediating effects of collective teacher efficacy. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 17(2), 179-199.
- Taylor J., Halstead, M. and Monica. (n.d). Values in education and education in Values: the Falmer press, London. <http://edglossary.org/school-culture/>. *The Glossary of Education Reform for Journalists, Parents, and Community Members*. 25 Nov, 213.
- Yalew, E., Dawit, A.G. & Alemayehu (2010). *Assessment of Grade Eight Students Academic Achievement in Amhara Region*. Amhara Region Education Bureau: Bahir Dar.

Biographical notes:

Solomon Melesse completed his First Degree in Pedagogical Sciences, Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction, and his PhD in Curriculum Design and Development both from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. He had been a high school principal for 5 years and Education Senior Expert at Amhara Region for 4 years. Moreover, he has been teaching at Bahir Dar University for the last 14 years.

Setegni Molla completed his First Degree in Chemistry in Addis Ababa University, his Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction at Bahir Dar University, both from Ethiopia. He has been working as education officer for the last 20 years in Benshanguli Gumuzi Regional State.