



Research Paper

The Role of Parents in School Management in Private and Government Secondary Schools in Adama Town

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Abstract

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the status of parental involvement in school management. To this end, a descriptive survey research design has been used to collect relevant data from 35 representatives of parents and 40 directors/vice directors in five government and seven private secondary schools in Adama City Administration using questionnaire, focus group discussion, and key informant interview. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics while the qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Results of the study reveal that both parents and directors seem to have positive attitude towards parental involvement in school management, yet the actual practice on the ground is not satisfactory. Parents' involvement is limited to raising and supervising the utilization of school fund and fulfilling school infrastructure. They have minimal involvement in planning school activities, supervising teachers, providing of pedagogical support, and recruiting students due to barriers such as time constraint, lack of initiative, lack of awareness on how to contribute, and absence of incentives for parents. Although there are some differences in their mean values, statistically significant differences between private school and government school parents with regards to their involvement in school management were observed only on two domains: raising fund and managing students' discipline. Hence, working closely with community based association, raising parents' awareness through trainings, and providing incentives have been recommended.

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationales for parental involvement in school management

The idea of involving parents in school management has emerged based on two assumptions: their contribution in implementing decentralized school management system and their major role in child education. Scholars affirm that involving parents or the community is one way of decentralizing and democratizing the educational management system of a country (Mncube, 2009;

Naidoo, 2005; Chapman et al., 2002). According to Chapman et al. (2002), because of their proximity to their children's school, parents are more likely to make timely and pertinent decisions that can address the concern of schools. Dunne et al. (2007) also state that parents often make school related decisions with better sense of ownership and commitment.

Parents can also monitor the quality of education offered in their children's school by ensuring proper utilization of school resources and solving problems

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related to educational inputs (Duma et al., 2011; Swift-Morgan, 2006; Carnie, 2003; Bray, 2000; Williams, 1997). They can contribute to academic achievement of students by minimizing students' dropout and disciplinary problems (Ji & Koblinsky, 2009; Clase, Kok & Van der Merwe, 2007; Marschall, 2006; Epstein, 2001). Parents can also get involved in the development of better curriculum and teaching materials for schools (Glanz, 2006).

The extent and the domains of parents' involvement may vary from place to place. Some scholars agree up on six major domains of parental involvement in school management: infrastructure and maintenance, management and administration, teacher support and supervision, pedagogy and classroom support, student discipline, and student recruitment (Swift-Morgan, 2006; Muskin, 2001). Watt (2001) on his part categorizes domains of community support for schools into two as "monetary" and "non-monetary forms". Activities which involve fees, fundraising, and levies for supplementing teachers' salary and maintaining of classrooms are categorized as "monetary support" while other activities which range from participating in school meetings up to making decisions which influence school performance are grouped under "non-monetary" forms of participation. Parents can get involved in the school management through their representatives such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and other forms of organizations (Epstein, 2001). They can also serve as members of school board (Bray, 2000) and as members of cluster or village education committee which oversees several schools within a village (Obsaa, 2010).

As an academic institution, both private and government schools may follow similar procedures in discharging their responsibilities. However, there could be some variations between the two with regards to involving parents in the school management mainly due to differences in their organizational structure. In the case of government schools, zone and regional education bureau hold the highest level of accountability, whereas in private schools the ultimate decision making power is usually entrusted to elected school boards and/or elected officials (Guernsey, 2003). Among the major responsibilities and powers of school boards in private schools are developing policy and strategy, giving ultimate decisions on issues related to salary and employment,

and supervising resource utilization. Parental involvement is ensured in private schools through their representatives in the school board. Parents often comprise of up to seventy percent of the private school board members (Guernsey, 2003). This indicates additional roles that parents are expected to play in managing their children's school. In general, parents' involvement is crucial in the management of both government and private schools, yet there are some barriers to such practices of parents.

1.2. Barriers to parents' involvement in school management

Despite its aforementioned benefits, previous studies reveal several barriers to parental involvement in school management. Among the barriers, economic conditions and educational status of parents, inconvenient political and institutional arrangements, and socio-cultural conditions are the major ones (Ramadikela, 2012; Adam, 2005; Shaffer, 1994). According to these scholars, when the economic status of parents is low, their participation in the school management becomes minimal because these parents often engage in hard works for longer hours to curb their financial shortage.

Similarly, in a context where parents lack the necessary skill or educational capacity to carry out the roles they are supposed to play, involving them in the school management could be difficult (Mncube, 2009). The attitude of parents also plays a big role in this regard. Although most parents like to involve in the management of schools, some prefer to stay away from such practice because they "feel that they are not welcomed at the school building or by the teacher of their children" (Murphy, 2002, p.40). Some parents also consider such involvement as interference to teachers business which they have no control over (Mncube, 2009; Murphy, 2002).

Teachers' negative attitude towards parents' involvement in school governance, their lack of confidence in dealing with parents' demand, and their lack of knowledge on how to involve parents are also among the major barriers to parental involvement in school management (Ramadikela, 2012; Baum & Swick, 2007; Cullingford & Morrison, 1999). Although they have the responsibility to take the lead in encouraging parents (Griffith, 2001), some principals also consider parental involvement in the school

management as violation of their professionalism (Duma, 2009; Mncube, 2009). With regards to this, Constantino (2007, p.58) claims that, “When cultivating family engagement to bring about enhanced student learning, perhaps the most important element is the principal’s belief in it”.

Lack of clear national policy for parental involvement in school management is also taken as a good excuse by educators to refrain from involving parents in the school system. In relation to this, Colombo (2006) states that schools need to have a clear policy on how to involve parents in such a way that both sides taste clear benefits of the collaboration. When the reward that they get is less than the cost of supporting a school, parents are less interested to participate in the school management (Watt, 2001). Language and culture are also believed to be common barriers to parental involvement in school management (Bridgemohan et al., 2005).

Scholars assert that failure to involve parents in the school management can lead to poor school performance or academic achievement, bad class attendance, poor students’ discipline (Rogers, 2003), increased attrition rate and dropout rate (Colombo, 2006). Hence, considering the contributions that parents could make in improving school performance and academic achievement of their children, scholars suggest that schools and the government need to design a policy which facilitates such involvement. Schools also need to work on empowering parents so that they can contribute effectively in the school management (Colombo, 2006). Griffith (2001) emphasizes that ensuring parental involvement in the school management must be among the key roles of principal.

1.3. Parents’ involvement in school governance in Ethiopia

Though the practice of involving parents in school management has long history in developed countries, such practice has been given special emphasis in developing countries following the Dakar Framework for Action in Senegal in the year 2000 (Bray, 2000). Cognizant of its benefits, the government of Ethiopia has also designed and implemented a decentralized education policy that encourages community involvement in school management (FDRE, 1994). School Improvement Program (SIP), which involves head teacher, assistant head

teacher, parents, representatives of local community, and students in the school management, has been introduced in Ethiopia (MoE, 1998). By doing so, the government has achieved significant success in improving access to education and creating sense of belongingness among communities (Obsaa, 2010).

However, local studies so far conducted in the area reveal some gap with regards to parental involvement in the school management in Ethiopia. According to Obsaa (2010), although community participation in the school management has helped in improving access, bringing equity in education and creating sense of belongingness among community, the attempts made by the Ethiopian government to decentralize educational management through community participation is not free from challenges. Workineh (2012) also found out that even though community and parents are playing significant role in the school management by making material and financial contributions, recruiting contract teachers and guards, building new classrooms, their awareness and level of participation in school affairs still needs improvement.

The two local studies by Obsaa (2010) and Workineh (2012) reveal the situation in rural Ethiopia focusing only on government schools. They did not investigate the situation in towns by comparing private schools and government schools. However, as indicated elsewhere in the preceding sections, parental involvement in school management may vary based on the socio-economic background and literacy status of parents. In the context of Ethiopia, most often, parents who send their children to private schools are in a better economic status or may also have better educational background than those parents who send their children to government schools. Therefore, the level of involvement of the two parents in the management of their children’s school may vary. However, there seems to be no research which clearly shows the disparity in the level and types of parental involvement in school management in our country in general and in the context of the current study in particular. Shibeshi (2009) also claims that research in the field of community participation in education is scant in Ethiopia.

Thus, the current study aims at identifying the differences in the type and extent of parental involvement in school management in the government

and private secondary schools in Adama City Administration. Such comparative study may help to see what the situation looks like in both types of schools and facilitate the sharing of good experiences. To this end, the researchers have tried to answer the following research questions:

- What is the attitude of parents and directors towards the involvement of parents in the school management?
- What are the actual practices of parents in the school management in the government and in the private secondary schools in Adama City Administration?
- What are the major barriers to parents' involvement in the school management?
- Are there significant differences between government secondary schools and private secondary schools in involving parents in the school management?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research design

In this study, a descriptive survey research design with mixed approaches to data gathering and analysis has been employed. This research design has been selected because it is appropriate to answer research questions of the current study which give emphasis to describing the existing practices.

2.2. Sample and sampling techniques

The population of the study was drawn from secondary schools in Adama City Administration. By the time this study was conducted (Feb, 2017), there were five government and seven private secondary schools in the city and all of them were used as data sites. Out of 48 representatives of parents serving as members of parent-teachers association (PTA), forty parents were selected using availability sampling while all 28 directors/ vice directors were selected as data sources.

2.3. Method of data collection

Survey questionnaire, key informant interview, and focus group discussion (FGD) were used as major instruments of data collection. A five-point Likert scale with responses ranging from "5= strongly agree" to "1=strongly disagree" was used to collect data from the directors and the parents. The items in the questionnaire cover demographic information of the respondents,

attitude of the respondents towards the involvement of parents in school management, level of parental involvement, and barriers to parental involvement in school management.

The questionnaire had been checked by two experts before it was pilot tested in one secondary school. Based on the comments of the experts, and the outcome of the pilot test, some items were rephrased while others were omitted. Only items with the average Cronbach's Alpha value of ($r > 72$ for Attitude, $r > 70$ for practice and $r > 78$ for hindering factors) were considered for the final study. Besides, the English version of the parents' questionnaire was translated back and forth into Amharic to avoid potential misunderstanding. Out of 81 questionnaires distributed to the target samples, 75 (92.6%) were properly filled and returned.

The key informant interview (KII) was held with four directors: two from government schools and the other two from private schools. The schools were selected purposively because of their proximity and the presence of insider's support. In order to help the interviewee focus on important issues, the researcher used interview guide. The FGD was held with selected representatives of parents or PTA members in four of the selected schools: two in private and two in government schools. A total of fourteen participants were included in the FGD based on their willingness. All FGDs were held outside school compound to minimize potential social desirability bias.

2.4. Method of data analysis

The quantitative data were fed into SPSS version 20 and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics, while the qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed thematically. Extracts from the transcript have been quoted to illustrate the analysis. The analysis was done in an integrated approach using the quantitative data as major frame. To protect the privacy of the participants, anonymity of the sample schools and the participants has been maintained by refraining from mentioning names.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Demographic information

Majority of the parents (60%) and the directors (82.5%) who served as data source are male. This indicates the fact that gender equity is not yet given

enough attention in the school management especially in the assignment of directors. Nearly half of the parents (45%) who were involved in the study had educational qualification which ranges from diploma up to master’s degree. Some percentage of the parents (22.9%) has also completed their secondary level education. Majority of the directors (90%) were first degree and second degree holders. These results show that both parents and directors who took part in the current study have good educational background to deal with school management issues. More than half of the parents (54.2%) have served in the current school for more than four years. In contrast to this, the majority of the directors (75%) have served in the current school for less than four years. However, since most of the respondents had stayed in their respective schools for at least two years, the data that they provided for the current study is reliable from experience point of view. The percentage of respondents from private school (57.1%) is more than that of government school (42.9%). Considering the numerical difference of the two types of schools in the town, the representation is appropriate enough to elicit relevant information.

3.2. Attitude towards parental involvement in school management

The attitude of directors and parents towards parental involvement in school management may affect the parents’ contribution in this regard. As it has been discussed elsewhere in the preceding sections, some directors consider parental involvement in school governance as violation of their professionalism (Duma, 2009; Mncube, 2009). In the current study, eleven items

were included in the survey questionnaire to elicit information on the attitude of the respondents toward parental involvement in school management.

As indicated in Table 1, the mean scores on most of the items show that both the parents and the directors have positive attitude towards parental involvement in school management. For example, the mean value on Item 1 for parents (M=3.9, SD=0.95) and for the directors (M= 4.1, SD=0.67) indicate that both parties agree on the importance of parental involvement in school management. The mean scores of both parties on Item 3 also indicate that the two sides believe that parents can play significant role in creating healthy teaching environment. The mean value of Item 2 and Item 5 also reinforces this result. The FGDs and KIIs results also support the above findings. The participants strongly believe that parents can play significant roles especially in the proper management of school grant and fulfilling infrastructure.

The target parents from both government and private schools reported that schools often invite them to comment on their annual plans. For instance, an FGD participant from a private school stated, “It is very good. Schools have good willingness to involve us. Every member of the parents committee freely expresses his feeling. The school presents its plan. We openly discuss on it” (Parent, Private school, April 7, 2017). Similarly, a discussant from government school stated “In order to improve parental involvement, they send us invitation letter every three months. We go there and give our opinions on what they present” (Parent, Government school, April 7, 2017).

Table 1: Respondents belief on the importance of parental involvement in School Management

SN	Items	Parents			Directors		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
1	I believe parents can play significant role in school management	35	3.91	0.95	40	4.10	0.67
2	The involvement of parents is not that much important in the management of schools *	35	1.74	0.82	39	1.56	0.88
3	Parents’ involvement in school management can have significant role in creating healthy teaching environment.	34	4.21	0.65	38	3.82	0.80
4	As parents’ representative, (I feel) I am (Parents are) playing significant role in the management of the school I have been assigned to.	35	4.40	0.91	40	4.28	0.72
5	Parents should be given better mandates in the school management	35	4.34	0.59	40	4.00	0.75

N.B: Bold texts in parenthesis () shows how the same item is phrased in the directors’ questionnaire.

As can be seen from the preceding two excerpts, school directors seem to have good attitude towards parental involvement in the school management. The discussants expressed the freedom that parents have in commenting on the plan of schools. Asked about what may happen if parents are not involved in the school management, one of the parents stated:

If there is no participation of parents, the school [directors] will develop the sense of selfishness. They start to work for personal gain, to fill their pocket. I feel they will leave nothing for the next generation (Parent from Government school, April 3, 2017).

This excerpt could be taken as an evidence for parents' awareness on the importance of their involvement in the school management. It also indicates parents' worry on the possible power abuse by directors unless parents are involved in the management of schools. The directors from both government and private schools also support the idea stated by the parents. As can be seen from the following excerpt, the directors reported that without the involvement of parents, schools hardly achieve their goals.

If they [parents] participate, the quality of education will improve. Education quality can be improved if the parents extend their financial support... If there is no proper involvement of parents, the school cannot run its function properly (Director, Private School, April 4, 2017).

Nevertheless, in spite of the invitations of directors, parents of government schools do not seem to be motivated to participate in the school management as expected. The following excerpts can illustrate the directors' complaint in this regard:

There is some reluctance on the parents' side to come to school and accomplish their responsibilities. This happen because they have to run their personal business. Here [in school] they give free service. So, parents show reluctance to come to school and give service (Director, Government school, April 4, 2017).

The initiative on the parents' side is not that much big, unless they are pushed by the

school. Parents need to be given awareness training on the importance of parental involvement in school management (Director, Government school, April 5, 2017).

As can be seen from the above excerpts, parents need to be pushed to come to school. The two interviewees believe that parents have no time to participate in the school activities because they have to run their personal business. According to the directors, since parents gain no incentive for their contribution, they are less interested to work for schools. Contrary to that of parents of government schools, parents of private schools seem to have good motivation to contribute their share towards the improvement of their children's school according to some directors.

Now things have been changed a lot. They [parents] make serious follow up. They come to school and ask us about the school. ...Their initiation is very interesting. In my opinion, parents are playing their role properly (Director, Private School, April 7, 2017).

The disparity between private school and government school parents in their involvement in school management reflects the reality in the literature. When the economic status of parents is lower, their participation in the school management becomes minimal (Adam, 2005; Shaffer, 1994). This could be one reason that prevents parents of government schools from involving in the management of their children's school. On the other hand, since they pay for their children's school, parents of private schools are interested to involve in school management to make sure that they are getting proper service for their money. According to some FGD participants in private schools, some representatives of parents in private school are also shareholders of the school. Therefore, they actively participate in the management of the school to ensure the sustainability of their business. In other words, these parents are also economically better off compared to parents who send their children to government schools. In short, although they seem to have positive attitude and readiness to participate in the management of their children's school, parents of government school lack commitment to do so.

Table 2: Attitude towards the actual involvement of parents in school management

SN	Items	Parents			Directors		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
1	The school principals (I) always want to involve parents in the major decisions made in the school	35	3.34	1.24	40	4.22	0.62
2	The school principals (I am)are positive about parents involvement in the school management system	35	3.7	1.15	38	4.16	0.59
3	The school principals (I) make decisions alone and call parents for signature only *	35	2.11	1.11	40	1.28	0.64
4	School principals positively accept parents’ comments (Parents make useful comments) during school management meetings	35	4.14	0.77	39	3.64	1.01
5	School principals are (I am) not happy about the involvement of parents in the school management *	35	1.69	0.90	40	1.63	0.84
6	Parents need capacity building training to contribute their role in the school management	35	4.29	0.62	40	4.25	0.70

N.B: Bold texts in parenthesis () shows how the same item is phrased in the directors’ questionnaire

The mean values of the parents and the directors on some of the items in Table 2 indicate that there seem to be some differences between the two parties on the attitude of directors towards parental involvement in school management. For instance, the mean scores of the directors on Item 1 (M=4.22, SD=0.62) indicate that directors always want to involve parents in the major decisions they make, whereas the mean score of the parents’ response on the same item (M=3.34, SD=1.24) is closer to “Undecided”. The responses of both parties to Item 2, (M=3.7, SD=1.15) for parents and (M=4.16, SD=0.59) for directors, show that principals are positive about the involvement of parents in the school management system. Similarly, the mean values of the directors (M=1.28, SD=0.64) and that of parents (M=2.11, SD=1.11) on Item 3 reveals that both parties disagree that principals make decisions alone and call parents for signature only. Nevertheless, the difference in the mean value of the two parties on the last two items could be an indicator for the presence of some reluctance on the part of the directors in fully involving parents in school management.

Responses of both parties to Item 4 show that school principals positively accept parents’ comments during school management meetings. However, there exist some difference between the response of parents (M=4.1, SD=0.77) and that of directors (M=3.6, SD=1.01). The response of the two parties to Item 5 also shows that parents are happy about their involvement in the school management. The strong agreement of both parties to Item 6, (M=4.29, SD=0.62)

for parents and (M=4.25, SD=0.70) for directors, shows that parents need capacity building training to contribute their role in the school management. This may indirectly indicate the presence of knowledge gap among parents in contributing their share in the school management.

In general, although both the directors and the parents believe that involving parents in the school management is important, the directors’ willingness in involving parents in the actual practice of school management does not seem to be satisfactory. Such reluctance on the part of the directors may emanate from the directors’ underestimation of the parents’ knowledge about school system or their fear of losing authorities over the school management due to influence of some strong representatives of parents (Guernsey, 2003; Duma, 2009; Mncube, 2009).

3.3. Comparison of private and government schools on attitude of parental involvement in school management

The results of the analysis of an independent samples t-test (See Table 3) private school (M=3.39, SD=0.78) and government school (M=3.51, SD=0.31), $t_{(2,33)} = 0.25, p > 0.05$ indicate that there is no statistically significant difference between directors of the two schools on their belief about the importance of parental involvement in school management. The analysis of similar test indicates the absence of statistically significant difference between the mean values of parents of the two schools on their belief about the importance of parental involvement in school management.

Table 3: Private vs government secondary schools on attitude towards parental involvement in school management

	School Type	Group Statistics			t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		N	M	SD			
Mean of Directors	Private	20	3.3923	0.28	-1.177	33	0.25
	Government	15	3.5091	0.31			
Mean of Parents	Private	20	2.7438	0.41	1.522	33	0.14
	Government	15	2.7833	0.23			

3.4. Domains of parents’ involvement in school management

In the current study, eight items were included in the survey questionnaire to check the level and domains of parental involvement in the school management. Table 4 shows that parental involvement in the governance of their children’s school is restricted to few domains. The mean values of parents’ response (M=4.1, SD=0.94) and that of directors’ (M=3.9, SD=68) on Item 1 show that parents’ involvement in the management of school budget is high. The mean values of both parties on Item 2 also reinforce the response on Item 1. Improving school infrastructure and maintenance and monitoring of the overall performance of schools are other areas where parental involvement is high.

On the other hand, the mean value of the parents’ responses (M=1.40, SD=0.91) and that of the directors’ (M=1.25, SD=0.63) on Item 4 affirms that the involvement of parents in the promotion of teachers is almost none. Likewise, there is less involvement of parents in the management of students’ discipline, planning of activities of schools, and student recruitment, according to the parents. Contrary to the parents’ responses, the directors, in their response to Item 3 (M=3.97, SD=0.62), Item 6 (M=3.88, SD=0.88) and Item 7 (M=3.33, SD=1.9), claim that parents are actively involving in those areas. The researchers feel that the disparity in the responses of the

two parties on these three items might have emanated from the directors’ desire to positively position themselves with regard to involving parents in the school management.

To summarize, one can reasonably conclude from the above results that the roles that parents are playing in the school management is limited to financial issues such as controlling budget utilization, raising funds, and improving infrastructure of schools. Contrary to the directors’ claim, the contribution that parents make in the core activities of schools such as planning the annual activities of schools, recruiting students, and management of students discipline is minimal. To use the word of Watt (2001), the parents’ role in the target school management is limited to “monetary” support.

Regarding the domains of parental involvement, FGD and KII participants also reported that parental involvement is common in the areas of school infrastructure development, management of school fund and resolving students’ discipline. In relation to this, one of the key informants from a private school said, “Parents work to improve the teaching learning processes, to improve the students’ performance by fulfilling the infrastructure of the schools. For example, there is shortage of chairs and blackboard. We talk with parents to resolve these problems” (Director: Private school, April 5, 2017). An FGD participant from government school also shares this opinion. He states,

Table 4: Domains of parental involvement in the school management (out of 5)

S.N	Areas of Involvement	Parents			Directors		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
1	Budgeting process of the school	35	4.14	0.94	40	3.95	0.68
2	Raising finance/funds for the school	35	4.09	0.82	38	3.97	0.68
3	Management of students’ discipline	35	1.54	0.82	40	3.97	0.62
4	Promotion of teachers	35	1.40	0.91	40	1.25	0.63
5	Improving school infrastructure and maintenance	35	4.08	1.48	39	4.03	0.67
6	Planning annual school activities	35	1.57	0.85	40	3.88	0.88
7	Student recruitment	35	1.34	0.64	40	3.33	1.19
8	Monitoring the overall performance of schools	35	3.91	0.74	40	3.83	0.79

“I participate in all the meetings of parents committee. The school has purchase plan. It has budget. It presents its budget plan to the committee. We supervise the purchase process and the bid process” (Parent: Government school, April 6, 2017).

The finding of this study rhymes with the findings of some previous studies. Studies so far conducted in this area revealed that community participation in school management in Ethiopia is mainly limited to monetary support and kind contribution which can be used for improving school infrastructure and supplement salaries of part time teachers. The involvement of parents in school management decision making or teaching and learning was found to be minimal (Obsaa, 2010; Swift-Morgan, 2006).

3.5. Comparison on level of parental involvements

As can be seen in Table 5, the result of the analysis of an independent sample t-test, private (M=3.8, SD=0.89), government (M=4.47, SD=0.52), $t_{(2, 33)} = 0.015$, $p < 0.05$ indicates that there is statistically significant difference between parents of private schools and that of government schools on their level of involvement in raising finance/funds for schools.

Similarly, the result of an independent sample t-test, private (M=1.85, SD=0.93), government (M=1.13,

SD=0.35), $t_{(2, 33)} = 0.008$, $p < 0.05$) indicates the presence of statistically significant difference between the two types of schools in the level of parental involvement in the area of students’ discipline management. The involvement of parents in private schools is higher than that of parents in government school. Such difference might have emanated from the better awareness of parents of private schools on the importance of education for their children. These parents may also want to get good return for the money they invest.

On the other hand, with regard to raising finance/funds for schools, parents from government school seem to have better involvement. This result indicates that since parents from private school are already paying the school fee, they may not be required to raise other funds. However, parents from government school are often asked to contribute for school infrastructure fulfillment where there are some shortages. However, there is no statistically significant difference between the two schools on other domains of school management. Similar comparison made between responses of directors from the two types of schools on the level of involvement of parents in various domains of school management was also found to be statistically not significant.

Table 5: Private vs government schools on level of parental involvement in the school management (Parents Response)

Items	School Type	Group Statistics					
		N	M	SD	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Budgeting process of the school	Private	20	3.9500	1.09904	-1.416	33	0.166
	Government	15	4.4000	0.63246			
Raising finance/funds for the school	Private	20	3.8000	0.89443	-2.577	33	0.015
	Government	15	4.4667	0.51640			
Management of students’ discipline this school	Private	20	1.8500	0.93330	2.819	33	0.008
	Government	15	1.1333	0.35187			
Promotion of teachers	Private	20	4.0500	1.05006	-0.262	33	0.795
	Government	15	4.1333	0.74322			
Improving school infrastructure and maintenance	Private	20	1.2500	0.55012	-1.413	33	0.167
	Government	15	1.6000	0.91026			
Planning annual school activities	Private	20	1.8000	1.00525	1.907	33	0.065
	Government	15	1.2667	0.45774			
Student recruitment	Private	20	1.5000	0.76089	1.728	33	0.093
	Government	15	1.1333	0.35187			
Monitoring the overall performance of schools	Private	20	3.7500	0.91047	-1.542	33	0.133
	Government	15	4.1333	0.35187			

3.6. Factors that hinder parents’ involvement in school management

There are several barriers to parental involvement in school management. According to Adam (2005) and Shaffer (1994), the sources of such barriers could be parents themselves or the school management. The same scholars categorize barriers related to parental involvement as economic conditions of the parents, existing political and institutional arrangements, and social and cultural condition. In the current study, the magnitude of six major barriers to parental involvement in school management has been checked. Responses obtained from parents and directors on this issue have been summarized in Table 6.

The mean value for the parents’ response (M=3.91, SD=0.95) and that of the directors’ (M=2.68, SD=1.16) in Table 6 show that lack of initiatives or interest among parents is a major barrier to parental involvement in school management. Such type of reluctance on the parents’ side may emanate from their fear of interfering to school business or lack of motivation on the directors’ side in encouraging parental involvement in the core activities.

On the other hand, both the parents and the directors strongly disagree or disagree that the remaining six factors are potential barriers to parents’ participation in school management. Thus, one can reasonably conclude from this response that factors related to policy, parents’ level of literacy, lack of awareness on the importance of parental involvement in school management are not serious obstacles to parental involvement in the school management. Participants of the FGDs and KIIs also indicate that parents’ reluctance is the major barrier to

parental involvement in school management. This mainly emanated from the time constraint that the parents have. The following excerpts illustrate the existence of such problem:

Parents are not willing to come to schools when we call them to discuss on school problems. Only some of them come and make decisions. Later others say they do not know about the issue. Sometimes three parents show up out of nine hundred. What does this mean? (Parent (FGD), Government School, April 7, 2017).

A key informant from one of the private schools also state, “In our area, most of the parents are government workers. They do not have enough time. As a result of this, their participation in the school management is low.” (Director: Private school, April 6, 2017).The analysis of an independent sample t-test also shows that there are no statistically significant differences between government schools and private schools on factors that affect parental involvement in school management. This is may be because the parents in both schools live in the same socio-economic condition. Similarly, no statistically significant difference has been seen between the responses of the directors in the two schools.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

Results of the current study reveal that both parents and directors have positive attitude towards parental involvement in school management. Both parties responded that without the involvement of parents, schools hardly achieve their goals in delivering quality education.

Table 6: Barrier to parental involvement in school management

SN	Factors	Parents			Directors		
		N	M	SD	N	M	SD
1	Lack of interest among school principals to involve parents	35	2.03	1.04	40	1.35	0.69
2	Lack of initiative or interest among parents	35	3.91	.95	40	2.68	1.16
3	Lack of clear policy on parents involvement in school management	35	1.60	1.03	40	1.43	0.75
4	Parents’ low level of literacy about school management	35	1.66	0.94	40	1.55	0.85
5	Lack of awareness among parents on the importance of parents’ involvement in school management	35	1.63	0.91	40	1.80	0.94
6	Lack of awareness among directors on the importance of parents’ involvement in school management	35	1.43	0.82	40	1.58	0.84

Nevertheless, the actual practice on the ground seems to be different. Parents' involvement in school management is limited to school infrastructure development and financial management which includes raising funds for schools. The contribution that parents are making in the other domains of school management such as planning school activities, recruiting students and evaluating teachers' performance, was found to be insignificant.

Time constraint, lack of awareness on how to take part in the school management, and reluctance due to lack of incentive package on the parents' side and lack of willingness to practically involve parents on the directors' sides were found to be the major barriers to parental involvement in the school management. The recommendation of both parents and directors for parents' capacity building trainings could be considered as an evidence for parents' awareness gap. Other common barriers to parental involvement such as lack of clear policy and parents' level of literacy do not seem to be common in the target schools.

In the current study, comparisons were made to see if there are some differences between private schools and government schools concerning parental involvement in school management. Results of the analysis of an independent sample t-test indicate that there is statistically significant difference between parents of private schools and that of government schools on the level of parental involvement in raising finance/funds for schools and managing of students' discipline. Parents of private schools seem to have better involvement in the management of students' discipline, but less involved in raising fund for schools. This is true may be because parents who send their children to private schools have relatively better awareness on the importance of education for their children and thus strictly follow their discipline. On the other hand, results of an independent sample t-test reveal that there are not statistically significant differences between the two schools on the remaining domains of parental involvement in school management. This indicates the similarity of the scenarios in both types of schools.

4.2. Recommendations

In line with the above conclusions, the researchers would like to forward the following recommendations

which may help in curbing the existing problems and improve the involvement of parents in school management:

1. The results of the study reveal that parental involvement is limited to few domains of school management such as raising funds, fulfilling school infrastructure and improving students discipline, but the literature in the area of parental involvement reveal that parents can play other major roles which include planning school activities, recruiting teachers, preparing teaching materials, and giving lectures. Given their good educational background, some of the parents involved in the current study can make such contributions. Therefore, school directors and woreda education offices need to devise mechanisms to enhance parental involvement in these domains.
2. Time constraint, lack of incentives, and lack of awareness were found to be among the major barriers to parental involvement in school management. In order to curb these problems, school directors need to strengthen their ties with some local figures of the community and use them as bridges to encourage parental involvement. Preparing awareness raising or capacity building trainings and designing incentives package for those representatives of parents could also help in encouraging parental involvement in the school management.
3. Although there are no statistically significant differences between private schools and government schools on several domains of parental involvement in school management, parent from government schools can share the good experiences of private schools especially on the issue of managing students' discipline.
4. Finally, the researcher recommends further studies in the area with larger sample size. Comparative study of schools from town and schools from rural districts could also be another topic for further research.

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