

Assessment of School Climate and Leadership Practices: The Case of Four Selected Secondary Schools of Eastern Hararghe Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study was intended to assess the school climate and leadership practices of school principals in four selected secondary schools of Eastern Hararghe zone. The purpose of this study was to look into the depth of the nature of the existing school climate and the principals' leadership practice. The review of literature tried to overview the concept of school climate, leadership style and school leadership performance. It suggests school climate can affect many areas and people within schools. It further suggests that positive interpersonal relationships and optimal learning opportunities in all demographic environments can increase school achievement levels and reduce maladaptive behaviors. The study employed a descriptive survey method. Four out of twenty two secondary schools were selected as a sample for the study by using simple random sampling techniques. The research involved four categories of sample population, i.e. principals, teachers, students' representatives and PTA members. Questionnaire and Interview were the main instruments used to collect data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed. SPSS version 16 was used for the quantitative analysis. The major conclusions made from the study were better relationship among teachers and teacher-student relation observed in most schools. Instructional leadership style was mostly practiced by the school principals though some of them are either task-centered or people-centered or both. Parents less cooperate with the school community in general. Problems of lack of organized and continuous training for school principals, inefficient support from the schools boards, PTA and the community; and community maturity level (awareness) influences principals' performance sequentially. Moreover, schools principals had better performance level in their professional attitude. National education policy makers, educational leaders, school principals, teachers and PTA are recommended to consider the recommendation forwarded to alleviate some of the existing problems.

Keywords: leadership practices, school Climate, school performance, principals performance

Introduction

School climate is a stable set of organizational characteristics that capture the distinctive tone or atmosphere of a school (Tagiuri 1998). As to this concept school climate reflects; students, school personnel and parents social, emotional and ethical as well as academic experiences of school life. Being said school climate, all this elements are interrelated and interdependent especially in the area of teaching learning process. To support this statement, Cohen, (2006) and Najaka, *et al.*, (2002) in their research on social and emotional education indicated that positive school climate is a critical dimension linked to effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts as well as teaching and learning. In addition, Berkowitz and Bier, (2005) research review on character education have shown that effective risk prevention and health promotion efforts are correlated with safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate. To strength this idea, Blum, *et. al.*, (2002) stated that, safe, caring, participatory and responsive school climate tends to foster great attachment to school as well as providing the optional foundation for social, emotional and academic learning.

School climate promotes or complicates students' ability to learn. To the extent that students feel safe, cared for, appropriately supported and lovingly pushed to learn, academic achievement should increase. Concerned with this point Kerr, (2004) said that, positive school climate promotes cooperative learning, group cohesion, respect and mutual trust or a climate for learning. In addition, Brookover, *et al*, (1979), studies have shown that school climate is directly related to academic achievement. Therefore, better understanding of the nature of school climate within a building allows school administrators to identify areas of strength and focus on those that might need improvement. In view of this Chauncey, (2005) and Fulton and Lee, (2005) said that, the implications of preparing school leaders who understand the critical role of a school climate that promotes collaboration and learning communities and teachers who understand the importance of such a climate has implications for teacher education.

Capacitating the principals, so that they are able to assess and evaluate the impact and perceptions of their leadership practices. Accordingly, Fullan (2002) points out that only principals who are equipped to handle a complex, rapidly changing environment can implement the reforms that lead to sustained improvement in student achievement. Indeed, principals must deal with the various levels of skills and abilities of their faculty and a continuity of divergent situations within today's complex school environment. Waters, *et al*, (2004) reported that effective school leadership substantially boosts student achievement. School climate, leadership

practices, and quality instruction are frequently associated with effective schools. Focusing on school climate and school leadership practices, this study will examine the potential of their active collaboration around instructional matters to enhance the quality of teaching and principals' performance. Besides, Firestone and Louis, (1999) Leithwood and Jantzi, (1999) stated that, functioning as leaders, principals can serve to transform school cultures or to maintain them

Statements of the Problem

School climate characterizes the organization at the school building and classroom level. It refers to the feel of a school and can vary from school to school within the same zone. While an individual school can develop a climate independently of the larger organization, changes in school culture at the zone level can positively or adversely affect school climate at the building level. It reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptible to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. Several aspects of a school's physical and social environment comprise its climate, appearance and physical plant, faculty relations, student interactions, decision making, disciplined environment, learning environment, and school-community relations

Having this concept, the researcher experiences of different schools in some situations, has witnessed a change in the climate of a particular school shortly after a principal's assumption of duty. In some cases, pupils begin to show better attitude toward school and school work; the teachers are more hardworking, striving to meet the principals' expectations and standard. In some other situations, the opposite is the case so much that the parents and other stakeholders grossly dissatisfied with the performance of the school principals. To corroborate this claim O'Hanlon and Clifton's (2004) study indicates that the principals can promote or destroy a school through the climate he/she creates. This means the school climate in various ways mirrors the principal's personality.

Besides, as to the researcher's experience during school observation for Higher Diploma Program training purpose that took place in secondary schools validates, especially about the interaction of school climate, leadership practices and school effectiveness and principals' performance, most schools principals and school communities at large have poor conceptions regarding the mutually dependent of these elements for the success. Always one scandalizes the other. Principals criticize the community, teachers criticize the principals and parents again criticize the school administration as the whole and they were less informed about the overall practices in the schools. As a result, poor performances of the schools; low quality of education; wastage of schools resources; high drop rate of students; high rate of class repetition and low academic achievement of students can be observed in the schools. In many schools, school administrators try to accomplish tasks alone and the responsibility of implementing new idea falls to individuals. Due to this, problems are observed about what should be the nature of school climate in general for the school development? How principals should practice their leadership duties to bring a change? What and how they are performing to be transformational for the school community.

In addition, it is often very common in present to hear the allegation of falling quality of education in our country. For this matter, the Ministry of Education is dealing with different means of improving education quality. Conversely, improving quality is not the role of a single element of the community; rather it is the responsibility of all the consumers of education. The combined effect of all these elements can affect school performance directly or indirectly. Because of these and other literary link of school climate and effective leadership, with quality education and school effectiveness, the researcher was initiated to assess the nature of the existing school climate and leadership practices of Bisidimo, Kombolcha, Karamile and Chalanko secondary schools in Eastern Hararge Zone.

One of the most fundamental questions raised by researcher was "What is the nature of the existing school climate and leadership practices of selected secondary schools?" Particularly, study was attempted to find out answer to the following basic questions:-

1. What is the nature of the existing school climate of Bisidimo, Kombolcha, Karamile and Chalanko secondary schools?
2. What is the nature of the leadership on practice in these selected secondary schools?
3. What are the school related factors that influence the leadership performance of principals?
4. What are teachers' perceptions towards their principal's performance?
5. In which areas of school climate activities school principals' performance is high?

Significance: The researcher anticipates this research will be valuable to all concerned with educational leadership. It will contribute to knowledge, which might justify stakeholders' expectations of the nature of school climate and leadership practices of principals. The researcher believes that the starting point to improve the performance of both the teachers and the pupils is to improve the school climate. Thus, this study will help some principals who for one reason or the other have not been effective in carrying out their responsibilities and

therefore work with more effectiveness and efficiency using appropriate leadership practices to improve school climate. It will contribute to those studies, which have been carried out, in the mission for broadening and understanding the leadership practices of principals with regard to school climate. In addition, the study will assist the country's policy makers and educational planners to assess the contents of the courses necessary for prospective and incumbent principals, to ensure that they are equipped with relevant skills required to run schools in a way that would enhance the achievement of Ethiopian MDG of 2015.

Scope: the study was confined to two elements of school as an organization. These are school climate and principals leading practices with their performance. Bisidimo, Kombolcha, Karamile and Chalanko secondary schools were taken as a study area. Using the Parsonian framework for viewing school health stated in Halpin, et al, (1963) aspects of school climate, different levels of school organization were examined: the organizational, the managerial (collegial leadership), and the technical aspects. Specifically the study was very much limited to: - first, factors that measures school climate such as leadership relationships between the principal and teachers, second, the leadership practices, third, contexts that are used to assess the performance of secondary school principals and fourth, school related factors that affects principals' performance.

Methodology: This study was descriptive method in nature. Descriptive method was adopted because it helps to explain educational phenomena in terms of the conditions or relationships that exist; opinions that are held by teachers, students and experts; processes that are going on; effects that are evident; or trends that are developing (Koul, 2005). At the same time, it is often considered as the major means through which opinions, attitudes, suggestions for improvements of educational practices and other data can be obtained from the large sample size (Greenfield, 2002).

Participants: According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000) research participants are the units of analysis as they are the sources from which research data are being collected. In line with this, the analysis and the general discussion of this study revolve around principals, PTA members, students' representatives and teachers under study. It appears there is no conventional way of determining a sample size that is representative of the target population as there are diverse views on this issue. However, Gay and Airasian (2003) assert that it is most likely to obtain a representative sample if random sampling technique is used. In addition, Gay and Airasian (2003) stated that the sample of 10% to 20% of the target population is often used in descriptive research. These authors claim that the sample size of 400 is sufficient when the population size is about 5000 units or more. Accordingly, study was carried out on a randomly selected sample of 158 participants out of 286 total populations.

A two stage sampling techniques were used to select representative sample size. At the first stage, four secondary schools were selected. Schumacher and McMillan (1993) suggest that when simple random sampling is used to select schools, the subjects from such schools should be selected randomly. In view of that, researcher employed lottery system of simple random sampling techniques for the selection of the schools. Second, 90 teachers and 12 principals, vice principals and unit leaders, 40 students' representatives were selected from the sampled schools. The researcher used available sampling techniques because of students representatives, principals and vice principals, and PTA are directly linked with the practice of leadership. The following table depicts the total population, selected sample size from each selected schools and techniques employed for the selection.

Result and discussions

The nature of school climate

The following table 3 is the summary of the analysis done for school climate based on responses of teachers regarding to these dimensions of school climate

Table 1 Analysis of teachers' perception regarding dimensions of school climate

Dimensions of school climate	NI	Mean	SD	R
Leadership relation between principals and teachers (LRBTP)	5**	3.65	0.08	5
Relationship among teachers (RT)	4**	3.88	0.32	1
Teachers-students relationship (TSR)	4**	3.86	0.31	2
Community-school relations (CSR)	4**	3.73	0.33	3
Student Academic Orientation (SAO)	4**	3.67	0.32	4
Student Activities (SA)	3**	3.63	0.33	6
Security and Maintenance (SM)	6**	3.60	0.32	7
Total	30			

Notes, N=72, criterion mean=3, SD= Standard deviation, NI= number of items, **= Number of items included under each school dimension, R= rank

Leadership relation between principals and teachers in the school, relationship among teachers; teacher-students relationship, community-school relations; student academic orientation, student activities and security and maintenance were provided for the participants.

As it is indicated in table 3, the mean score of relationship among teachers and teacher-students relations were 3.88 and 3.86 respectively. It was better than the mean score of the other dimensions. This implies that, most of the time teachers have initiation towards their students learning, respect the capability of their co-workers (colleagues), there was warm and friendly interactions between themselves.

However, the analysis of the opinion of teachers' also shows that, security and maintenance and student activities in the schools were relatively less when compared with the other school climate dimensions. This is to mean that there are problems of school safety and students' disciplinary problems. Particularly, lack of repair of buildings, lack of cleanness and neatness of classrooms and outside classrooms, reluctance of students in taking a part in school and co-curricular activities were observed. In contrast to this finding the national school climate center, (2007) discovered that in British, students, teachers, and families perceive the school as safe. In addition to this, the finding disclosed that school-level variables related to positive school climate include strong administrative leadership, availability of educational resources, high teacher morale, small school size and student-teacher ratio, less student and faculty turnover, higher socio-economic status, and a low percentage of students with behavior problems were reflected in the schools. Concerning these issues, The PTA responses were summarized under each question as presented in the following section.

What do you look for when observing teachers? Concerning their relation with principals, parents, students and when dealing with discipline problems of students, how they interact these problems and make decisions?

Though few teachers were deviating from the normal school discipline, most of them have smooth relation either with parents or students. Teachers deal with the disciplinary problems of the students by advising, guiding and even warning them. If the problem goes more than the capacity of teachers and the school, parents are invited to come and discuss on the disciplinary problems of their children. Then necessary decisions are taken on the students who were misbehaved. Beside this according to some of the PTAs' responses to the students' activities and their learning environment, most of the time students' academic and school activities were less. For this matter outside and inside school environments were considered as the reason for such problems. As an instance what they put was because of the philosophy of life of the outside community, students were not consistently following the afternoon classes. Sometimes some students are either sit and chew chat with their parents or with their friends in the chat rooms or even in the school.

The following table tries to show the average response of the students' representatives under each major school climate activities.

Table 4 Analysis of students' representatives' perception regarding school climate activities

School Climate Activities	NI	Mean	SD	R
Teacher-Student Relations (TSR)	10**	2.10	0.19	1
Administration (ADM)	4**	2.08	0.25	2
Student Behavioral Values (SBV)	3**	2.00	0.27	7
Guidance (GU)	3**	2.01	0.28	6
Student-Peer Relationships (SPR)	4**	2.08	0.29	3
Parent, Community-School Relationships (PCSR)	4**	2.07	0.29	4
Instructional Management (IM)	7**	2.06	0.27	5
Total	35			

Notes, N =40, criterion mean=1.5, NI= number of items, **= number of items included under each measures, SD= standard deviation, R= rank

From table 4, mean score of the participants were more than the criterion mean for each measure of school climate activities. However, there was a mean difference among each measure. The mean score of teacher- student relation was 2.10 and it exceeds the mean score of the other measures of school climate activities. But the mean score for student behavioral values was least when compared to the other measures of school climate and it was 2.00. From these the researcher concludes that, most of the time students were individually treated by their teachers, and they have willingness to meet their teachers for personal and/or academic problems.

Factors influencing principals' performance

Table 5 Analysis of principals' perception regarding school related factors

Items	N	Mean	SD	R
Absence of Support from the community (SSCP)	11	2.81	0.87	2
Lack of Organized and continuous training (OCT)	11	3.27	1.00	1
Enough time (ET)	11	1.72	1.00	5
Lack of Clear vision and direction (LCVD)	11	2.18	1.25	3
Rigidity and inability to follow change (RIC)	11	1.36	0.67	7
Rule and principles of the school (RPS)	11	1.54	0.82	6
Community maturity level (CML)	11	2	0.89	4

Notes, criterion mean=2.5, N= sample size, R= rank, SD= standard deviation

Table 5 shows the descriptive results of principals' perceptions about school related factors that can influence their performance in terms of mean and standard deviations. The results of the study were ranked based on their mean score. In view of that, the mean score for lack of organized and continues training was somewhat higher than that of the other factors and it was followed by lack of support from the school boards, PTA and community which were 3.27 and 2.81 respectively. Similar to this a research summary done by British National School Climate Center, (2007) concluded that parent and community involvement in the school's mission is low. In light of this conclusion the research center recommended that their active involvement is viewed as valuable resources and they should be strongly encouraged. In addition, during the interview, the interviewees were asked the following question:

What would you observe when watching principals work with staff, their aspects of leadership behavior, problems they come across and sources of these problems?

In respect of this, five (33%) of the participants (respondent number 3, 6,9, 13,14,) stated that inadequate reading materials (books), high workload, absence of organized workshops and seminars in the schools and necessary instructional technological devices were problems for the principals as well as for teachers. Six (40%) of the PTA members (respondent number 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15) however described that almost all schools did not have enough physical and material facilities.

Principals' leadership behavior

This part of the analysis deals with the aspects of school principals' leadership behavior based on leadership style profile sheet

Table 7 Principals' leadership style profile in terms of Style grid theories

Autocratic leadership	Shared leadership	Laissez-fair
High productivity	High productivity and Morale	High Morale
15(Chalanko)	15	15
14(Kombolcha)	14	14
13 High	13 High	High 13
12	12 (Bisidimo)	12
11	11(Karamile)	(Chalanko) 11
10	10	(Kombolcha)10
09	09	09
08 Medium	08 Medium	Medium 08
07	07	07
06	06	06
05	05	05
04	04	04
03	03	03
02 Low	02 Low	Low 02
01	01	01
T: Concern for task		P: Concern for People

T-score and P-score of the principals were computed and indicated by the graph as it can be seen from table 7. From table 6 the T-score and P-score of Bisidimo secondary school was 12. It is indicated on the shared leadership graph since shared leadership results from balancing concern for task and concern for people.

The T-score and P-score of the respondent for Karamile principal was 11. This result indicates that the school principal gives equal emphasis for the achievement of concrete objectives and as well as workers' needs, interests, problems, development and so on. For Chalanko and Kombolcha secondary schools the same analysis was done. The T-score and P-score of the principals' were indicated on table 6. Here different results were obtained for these two schools when it is compared with the other two remaining schools. The T-score and P-score for these two schools were 15 and 11, 14 and 10 respectively. It means the schools' principal gives much

emphasis for the efficiency of the school operations which results from arranging conditions of work in such a way that school workers interfere to minimum degree.

Table 8 shows the responses of teachers regarding their principals' leadership style in terms of mean, frequency and percentage. The details were shown in the following table.

Table 8 Analysis of teachers' perception regarding leadership practices of their principals

	Leadership Practices					
	Transformational	Instructional	Laissez-faire	Autocratic	Bureaucratic	Democratic
F	7	19	10	15	9	12
P	9.72	26.38	13.88	20.33	12.50	16.66

Notes, N= 72, F= Frequency, P= percent, T= total

On table 8, 26.38 % of the participants responded instructional leadership style as rank 1 (see Fig. 4 above). Also as the mean score of each leadership style point out, compared to the other leadership style instructional leadership style was mostly practiced in the schools. The percentage score for the first rank of the other leadership styles i.e. Laissez-faire, Autocratic, Bureaucratic, and Democratic leadership styles were: 13.88%, 20.33%, 12.50%, and 16.66% and their mean score is 3.27, 3.22, 3.39 and 3.33 respectively.

On the other hand, table 8 as well indicates that even though instructional leadership style was mostly practiced in the school; the other leadership styles were also often reflected. This means that it is difficult to conclude only instructional leadership style was practiced there. But the aim of this finding as it described above was, to identify the nature of leadership style that is mostly practiced by school principals. Similarly, Oyetunji (2006) in his study concluded that head teachers employ various styles while performing their duties and there is a link between head teacher leadership style and school climate in general.

School principals performance

Five performance indicators (variables) with sub-items under each indicator were provided for the teachers. Indicators used for the participants were principals' leadership qualities, instructional behavior, interpersonal relationship capability, professional attitude and managerial abilities. The detail of the analysis was as follows.

Table 9 Analysis of teachers' perception of principals' leadership performance

Performance indicators	NI	Mean	SD	R
Leadership activities (LA)	7**	3.51	0.11	5
Instructional behavior (IB)	8**	3.63	0.28	4
Interpersonal relationship capability (IRC)	6**	3.67	0.28	3
Professional attitude (PA)	6**	3.68	0.30	1
Managerial abilities (MA)	8**	3.67	0.30	2
Total	35			

Notes, N=72, criterion mean =3, R= rank, NI= number of items, SD= standard deviation, **= number of items included under each variables

In table 9, the mean scores of all the independent variables of principals' performance met the criterion mean score of 3.0. Ranking on the basis of mean score, the result of the study showed that participants had the most positive opinions about their principals' regarding the indicator of 'professional attitudes' and the least positive opinions in regard to 'leadership activities' which were 3.68 and 3.51 respectively (see Fig. 5 above). The other aspects were lying somewhere in the middle. It means principals' professional attitude, i.e. principals' attendance for professional meetings and seminars, behaviors, participations in activities to improve his personal knowledge, and his personal professional goals on regular basis, his punctuality to work, meetings and appointments, and his interest for a regular program of study in professional field were largely better in the secondary schools

In contrast to this, a finding that was carried out in Punjab by Shafqat Hussain Khan, *et al.*, (2009) on assessing the performance of secondary school head teachers concluded that ranking on the basis of mean score shows that participants had the most positive opinions about their head teachers regarding the indicator of 'capabilities of the interpersonal relationship' and the least positive opinions in regard to 'instructional behavior'. The other aspects were lying somewhere in the middle. Additionally, during the interview, the interviewees were asked to identify the major tasks and performances of the school principals.

What role do the school principals take in team meeting and what are some ways that the principals encourage parents to involve in this school work?

Accordingly, a large number of the participants mentioned such tasks as other than the academic duties of the school, he organize meeting and discuss with PTA members on different school matters and working on various aspects of school administration other than teaching duties. Tasks like conducting meeting with parents when it is needed provide annual and progress report of the school, student consultancy and personal related activities were some of the activities of the school

principals as to the responses of the interviewees.

To sum up the study has revealed that better teachers' perceptions towards their principals raise the educational standards in the schools. If teachers positively perceive their principals, it leaves a positive impact on teaching learning environment in a school (Mehmood, 2000, Saeed, 2001). This means a positive relationship between teachers and principals is essential for raising educational standards. Lack of this quality ultimately affects the quality of learning. The analysis of teachers' perceptions also reveals that selected secondary schools principals achieve relatively better in all the five major components, i.e. professional attitude, interpersonal relationships, instructional behavior and managerial abilities, with the component 'leadership activities' being weak.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn in this study, the following recommendations are forwarded.

It was found that in the selected secondary schools, security and maintenance, student activities in the schools and students' behavioral values were relatively low when compared with the other school climate dimensions /activities/ in general. Therefore, there has to be mechanisms like minimizing students disciplinary problems, establishing committee who follows the school building safety and necessary maintenance should be made timely. In addition to performing regular tasks, the school administrative bodies should urge each school community to develop schedule and perform the task of cleaning inside and outside the classrooms in the schools. Students should be encouraged to actively participate in different co-curricular activities so that they develop unique skills.

Most fundamental school related factor that can slow down the school principals' performance in the selected secondary schools was absence of organized and continuous training for the principals and lack of frequent cooperation from the school boards, PTA and the community in general can obstruct their performance. It has been proved that on-job organized and continuous professional training enhances principals' leading performance. Hence, this absence of organized and continuous training and support from the concerned bodies may lead the school principals to not to generate new performance and in many cases enforce the schools to remain stagnant in performance and productivity because of the performance of principals' is once affected. This makes the school community as well as teachers and school leaders to be reluctant for the school improvement. Thus, each school principal should be given organized and continuous training programs like professional experience sharing, refresher trainings, academic seminars and workshops that involve all the principals and teachers with special emphasis to educational leadership and management.

As indicated in this study, the performance of the school principals is mostly hindered by the absence and inadequate cooperation from the school boards, PTA and the community. Besides, where the community and others themselves fragmented and not collaborate with the schools and the schools are even in deeper crisis and where many parents are semi-literate and feel uncomfortable in a school environment, it seems essential that constructive community development, which creates greater community cohesion, along with economic regeneration, is needed, otherwise it is hard to see how real change and school improvement will become rooted.

Thus, the school boards, PTA and the community should cooperate with the schools in general and with principal in particular if the needed quality and performance is wanted to be achieved.

It has been found that both task-centered and people-centered leadership style were practiced by the selected secondary school principals with different level of emphasis. The researcher believes that balanced leadership style is the most comprehensive, rigorous, and useful integration of workers and output. Therefore, the researcher recommends it should be put into a practical format available to education leaders today. It can become however, a tool that will help leaders and leadership teams add value to the work of all stake- holders to improve the school effectiveness.

Educational leaders and principal preparation programs must undertake the responsibility of improving our school leaders' abilities to employ effective leadership practices. It is because the researcher belief that, if there is no successful leader who implements leadership practices effectively, the activities designed to enhance the objectives of the schools cannot be executed properly. Therefore, the school principals should be selected by considering appropriate professional qualifications. This enables to attract well qualified, experienced and with relevant educational background personalities to assume the positions of the schools. In recruiting and selecting principals, the educational bureau should maintain clear professional qualification, uniform, and standardized procedure.

In this study the analysis of teachers' perceptions reveals that secondary school principals achieve relatively better in all professional attitude, interpersonal relationships, instructional behavior, and managerial abilities, with the component 'leadership qualities' being weak. Therefore, school principals should set personal professional goals on a regular basis of encouraging teamwork, providing proper feed back to the teachers, effectively sharing decision making responsibilities with staff, helping the academic staff to improve their teaching profession, distributing responsibilities with the other staff members and remain informed with regard

to new developments in curriculum and instruction.

Finally, regional as well as national policy makers and educational planners should include school climate as part of a comprehensive school-wide plan for promoting school effectiveness, academic, social and emotional learning and preventing school problems. This would be included in the school's mission statement, policies, procedures and practices. Assessment of perceptions of students, teachers, and families on school climate and leadership practices should be done regularly. Government should provide on-going principals professional development that targets elements of school climate, especially those elements related with educational leadership. Students and families should be considered in the planning and implementation of school climate initiatives. Families and students should be actively and frequently invited to participate in school climate interventions. This study was delimited to four secondary schools out of 22 secondary schools of Eastern Hararghe Zone and perhaps it is not viable to generalize the results at zonal, regional or national level. Therefore, a large scale study should be carried out so that a rigorous mechanism for school climate and leadership practice assessment can be evolved. Some more aspects of school may be added to achieve a wider and truer picture of the schools.

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