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Full Length Research Paper

Leading educational change: The practices of transformational leadership in the Ethiopian technical vocational education and training (TVET) institutions

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The main purpose of this study is to assess the degree to which transformational leadership was practiced in the technical vocational education and training institutions (TVETIs) of Ethiopia. To this end, cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. The study was conducted in seven government TVET institutions selected through simple random sampling techniques. From these institutions, 122 participants were selected through proportionate, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaire and interview were employed to collect data from teachers and leaders respectively. Both descriptive and inferential statistics, including mean, standard deviation and independent sample *t*-test were used to analyze the quantitative data. The data gathered through interviews were analyzed qualitatively using narration. The study found that the five transformational leadership models were being practiced low or below average in the TVET institutions. But, when the models were independently considered, the variable enabling others to act and model the way were rated relatively high whereas the remaining three leadership practices, inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process and encouraging the heart were rated low by the respondents. The result shows that majority of the trainers in the TVETIs were not satisfied with the leaders' engagement in the five leadership practice of Kouzes and Posner's transformational leadership models. Leaders' failure to effectively lead change and innovation, lack of professional support for TVETI leaders and their incapability to use various approaches in securing and utilizing resources were the major problems hindered effective implementation of change in the institutions. It is recommended that the Oromia TVET commission should plan and invest resources in the development of leadership in the TVETIs of the region. The plan should focus on the utilization of best leadership practices that directly influence institutional effectiveness, relevant to the management of training institutions.

Key words: Transformational leadership, educational change, Ethiopia, technical vocational education and training (TVET).

INTRODUCTION

Leadership has become a key component of organization, management and administration of educational organizations systems and this development is reflected in both academic and educational policy statements

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throughout the world. In the some decades, changes in technology, economy, social, political and cultural aspects of the world have imposed changes on educational systems of both developed and developing countries. To cope with this, educational leaders are bewildered by the rigor of demands and increasing responsibilities that their governments specifically and the public, in general, have imposed upon them (Lam and Pang, 2003).

Ethiopia began to review its educational system comprehensively with the belief that human beings are the best resources for achieving comprehensive economic and social development. During the past few years, education and training system in Ethiopia have undergone both major quantitative and qualitative change. A succession of new policies was designed and implemented, with the Education and Training Policy (MoE, 1994) being the first major framework for systems reform and transformation. It is believed that one of the main problems in achieving organizational goals and satisfying the need of the society in a developing country is the capacity and effectiveness of leadership.

The key for successful implementation of educational reform in Ethiopia depends on how different actor such as scholars, policy makers, and other stakeholders perceive the meanings and opportunities of their roles during the reform process to maximize its potential benefit. At the same time, however, leaders of education institutions have always been viewed as critical to the success of the reform and can exhibit tremendous influence on it (Cizek, 1999).

The empirical literature on leadership has shown that transformational leadership is positively associated with educational leaders' effectiveness in implementing reform agenda (Coad and Berry, 1998; Sivanathan and Fekken, 2002). According to Barnett, (2001), the challenges that were brought to educational institutions by the idea of reform have been cited as reasons for advocating transformational leadership in educational setting because it was well suited to the challenge of current educational restructuring. Transformational leadership has the potential for building a high level of commitment in teachers to the complex and uncertain nature of the reform agenda and for fostering the capacities teachers need to respond positively to this agenda.

Kouzes and Posner's Transformational Leadership model (2002) can provide educational leaders with practical guidance on how to lead and act during reform agenda. As Barth (1991) points out, Kouzes and Posner's model provides educational leaders with the qualities to become good leaders and to improve training institutions. Effective implementation of reform regarding the training system requires transformational leaders and followers who raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality (Burns, 1978; Berry, 1998; Sivanathan and Fekken, 2002). Such leaders search for opportunities to change the status quo, inspire a shared vision and set a model to foster collaboration, empower employees to pursue a potential future, and recognize the contributions of employees to the overall success of the organization.

Bennis (1985) suggested that leadership is the key to managing change in culture, processes, and strategies. The value of studying leaders and leadership is enhanced by the overwhelming need we have in our society for leadership that will bring about greater effectiveness and improvement. Kouzes and Posner (2002) called for a deeper understanding of leadership because leading is an enterprise and a relationship that revitalizes an organization and brings growth and enrichment to a community. Thus, the focus of this research is to investigate the extent to which the leadership of the TVET institution is involved in the Kouzes and Posner's practices of transformational leadership and forward possible normative recommendations for further improvement.

Statement of the problem

Effective school leadership has become a dominant theme in contemporary educational reforms. Effective leaders are needed to sustain innovation and are the heart of capacity building for school improvement especially in TVET programs that need sustainability for its development. The importance of leadership in technical and vocational education cannot be overemphasized, because without proper leadership in TVET programs, the goals which are to prepare people to be self-reliant will not be possible.

At global level, there were both internally and externally increasing pressure being placed upon educational institution to enact institutional reform and restructuring. Over the past few decades, change in the education system had emphasized the importance of effective educational leaders. On the issue of change, Chong et al., (2003) claims that transformational leadership is critical to meeting educational challenges in a changing environment.

The reforms initiated by the Federal Ministry of Education (MoE) have placed leaders of educational institutions at all levels in a highly visible leadership role. Despite this national charge given to institutional leaders their leadership and management capacities at institutional level still remain weak (MoE, 2010). What effective leadership practices they lacked needs to be researched in order to identify and plan strategies for improvement. The major role of the TVET leaders is creating favorable environment for the trainers to teach and the trainees to learn. They are expected to inspire or motivate the academic and non-academic staff as well as the trainees to become active agents of change. More importantly, they needed to manage change as leaders.

According to the Federal TVET strategy document, in line with the conceptual principle of decentralization,

major operational responsibilities have been devolved to TVET institutions. It is envisaged that public TVET institutions are autonomous – within the framework of the federal laws for public institutions – with respect to financial management, designing and planning of TVET programs, adjustment of curricula. This increased responsibility requires strong and powerful leadership and supervision in order to avoid misuse of public funds and institutional planning in line with local, social and labor market conditions (MoE, 2008). This shows that the power of managing TVET institutions is decentralized which requires effective leadership.

However, anecdotal evidence reveals that many trainers complain that instead of managing change as leaders, management teams are engaged in managing stability. For many, a view exists that that their leaders fail to adapt to the new changing Ethiopian TVET policy and strategy. Criticisms from trainers include leaders failure to facilitate effective implementation of change and to create an atmosphere conducive to ensuring the improvement of the quality of training. Despite these criticisms, there is scarcity of research that particularly focus on the extent to which the leadership of the TVET has created an atmosphere conducive to effective implementation of the change stated in the Education and Training Policy and the TVET strategy. The need to fill this gap initiated this research work.

As stated in the guidelines of the Federal TVET Agency, college leaders must have general knowledge and skill in the areas of the training provided in their institutions. Similarly, leaders of the TVETs should have the knowledge and skills of educational leadership in addition to having at least one of the skills provided in the institutions.

Furthermore, the Oromia Region TVET commission guidelines state that heads of TVET institutions are required to have the minimum qualification of 'B' level (first degree), work experience of five years and competent in center of competence (COC) (OTVETC, 2012). However, experience shows that the current appointment of individuals in leadership positions is below the minimum criteria.

The research on leadership effectiveness in TVET Institutions of Oromia Regional state is scant. Since the current status of leadership in the TVET colleges has not been investigated and identified, there is insufficient data to inform policy makers in the design of mechanisms to enhance the quality of the TVET leadership and sustainability. This study was conducted to fill this gap. To this end, the study was guided by the following basic questions:

(1) To what extent do the leadership team members exercise the best five transformational leadership practices to change and transform the TVET Institutions?
(2) Which of the five transformational leadership practices are the most and the least exercised by the leadership teams of the TVET Institutions of west Oromia?
(3) To what extent are the TVET teachers satisfied with the practices of leadership team members?
(4) What are the challenges of Transformational leadership practices in TVET Institutions of West Oromia?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to assess the level of practices of transformational leadership in TVET Institutions of west Oromia. The specific objectives of the study were to:

(1) Examine the extent to which the leadership teams of the TVETIs were exercising the five transformational leadership practices for effective implementation of change.
(2) Assess the teachers' level of satisfaction with the leadership engagement in the five practices of transformational leadership models.
(3) Identify the major factors affecting the implementation of best leadership practices in government TVET Institutions of West Oromia.

Significance of the study

The results of the study can provide college deans with feedback about areas of strengths and weaknesses so that they can plan ways to improve their performance. It can also raise the awareness of TVETIs training sector leaders regarding the need to improve their leadership competence throughout their careers to meet the increasing challenges of their jobs. The finding of the study can provide the OTVETC officials with data or information concerning the current leadership practices and challenges of leadership in the TVET institutions.

Currently, both internally and externally, increasing pressure is being placed upon TVET institutions in Oromia to enact reform. The results of this investigation, therefore, provides TVET leaders with practical guidance on how to lead as well as practical suggestions on how to act during reform agenda.

Furthermore, it is believed that this research will be seen as a starting point for research in Kouzes and Posner's Transformational Leadership Model in Ethiopian TVET institutions, thereby stimulating further research to provide valuable insight for both academics and practitioners.

To date, there is no evidence or reported study identifying the degree to which TVET leaders in Oromia Region practice Kouzes and Posner's Transformational Leadership Model. In addition, there is no evidence concerning its effects on reform agenda or other educational outcomes in the institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Kouzes and Posner (1995), there are over 225 definitions of leadership found in literature but no one claims the last word on “defining” the term. Scholars have defined leadership in a ways that works best for his/her in his/her work with students, managers, government officials, community organizers, health care providers, and educational administrators. Kouzes and Posner (1995) define leadership as an art of mobilizing other to struggle for shared aspirations.

Over the past few decades, debates over the most suitable role for leaders of educational institutions have been dominated by two conceptual models: instructional and transformational leadership models (Hallinger, 2003). However, the transformational leadership, specifically, Kouzes and Posner’s transformational leadership model is assumed to be more suitable model for the current study. Perhaps, the main reason for this is that the conditions under which TVET leaders are required to operate are moving fast, being dictated in part by the forces of change.

Conditions relating to institutional roles, TVET professionals’ roles, markets and demand factors seem to change almost every year, as policy strategies, institutional responses and pressures to respond to commercial and community imperatives change. Such change has required a new way of leading the institutions. That is effective transformational leadership.

As argued earlier, this study is informed by Kouzes and Posner’s transformational leadership model, which is the extension of Bass’s and Burn’s transformational leadership. Kouzes and Posner developed a model of leadership that consists of what they call it “The Five practices”. These are challenging the process, inspiring shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way and encouraging the heart (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

Based on their research project with successful leaders, for over almost 20 years, Kouzes and Posner suggested that leadership is not a position, but a collection of practices and behaviors. They also concluded that leadership is a compulsory skill that can be learned by everyone (Kouzes and Posner, 2002). The operationalisation of these five leadership practices is presented as follows:

Challenging the process

Challenging the process suggests that leaders shouldn’t be content to do ‘business as usual’. It includes encouraging others to think and take risk. Leaders thrive on and learn from adversity and difficult situations. They are risk takers who regard failure as a useful chance to learn and innovate if not caused by poor performance. Effective leaders are also early adopters of innovation. They seek out things that appear to work and then insist that they are improved. Kouzes and Posner (2002) describe the challenge to the process practice as being the search for opportunities to change the status quo. Leaders look for innovative ways to improve the organization. In doing so, they experiment and take risks. For transformational leaders, challenging the process is a way of life. By either creating new ideas or recognizing and supporting new ideas, leaders show willingness to challenge the system so as to turn these ideas into actions and to get new products, processes, and services adopted (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 2002).

Inspiring a shared vision

Inspiring a vision involves looking at the future with passion in order to make a difference and persuade others to own this vision. Inspiring a shared vision is an important aspect of leadership because leaders are expected to create and communicate organizational direction (Snee and Hoerl, 2004).

The “inspire a shared vision” practice was described as being when followers believe passionately that their leader can make a difference. Leaders envision the future, creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. Through their magnetism and quiet persuasion, leaders enlist others in their dreams. Leaders breathe life into their visions and get people to see exciting possibilities for the future (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

Inspiring a shared vision is vital for bringing people in any organization together to foster a commitment to a shared future they seek to create. Both visionary and transformational leaders passionately believe that they can make a difference by envisioning the future and creating an ideal and unique image of what the organization can become. They inspire such a vision in their followers with a positive and hopeful outlook. They generate enthusiasm and excitement for the common vision from others through genuineness and skillful use of metaphors, symbols, positive language, and personal energy (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 2002).

Enabling others to act

Enabling others to act is fostering collaboration and empowerment. It refers to leaders involving others in planning and giving them freedom of choice in the decision-making process. Enabling others to act allows followers to do their job and to realize their full potential. Transformational leaders strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity and to help each person feel capable and powerful. They consider the needs and interests of others and let them feel as if they carry ownership and responsibility in the organization. Kouzes and Posner (2002) describe the “enable others to act”

practice as a means of fostering collaboration and building spirited teams. Leaders actively involve others. They understand that mutual respect is what sustains extraordinary efforts; they strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity. They strengthen others, making each person feel capable and powerful.

Modeling the way

Modeling means being prepared to go first, living the behaviors they want others to adopt before asking them to adopt them. Because, people will believe not what they hear leaders say, but what they see their leaders consistently do. This also refers to the leader as an ethical role model. The leader must not only inspire others but also use his/her office to advance institutional goals rather than personal ones. Great leaders should serve as an example to others. In respect to this they should be committed to set an example for others by behaving in ways that are consistent with their stated values and to clarify values by finding their voice and affirming shared ideas. The model the way practice is described as consisting of the establishment of principles that are concerned with the way people (including constituents, peers, colleagues, and customers) should be treated, and the way goals should be followed. Leaders create standards of excellence and then set an example for others to follow. Since the prospect of complex change can overwhelm people and stifle action, leaders set interim goals so that people followers can achieve small "wins" as they work toward larger objectives. Leaders also unravel bureaucracy when it impedes action; they put up signposts when people are unsure of where to go or how to get there; and they create opportunities for victory (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

Encouraging the heart

People often need encouragement and motivation to achieve the goals set by the organization. Successful leaders have high expectations for themselves and their employees. Their credibility is based on their record of achievements, dedication, and daily demonstrations of what and how things need to be done. By influencing employee motivation, leaders attach rewards and recognition to job performance.

Exemplary or visionary leaders play a special role in the celebrating of individual or group achievements, because they are the most prominent personality in the organization and serve as role models. By celebrating achievements together, leaders let people feel that they are part of the group and part of something significant. When leaders encourage their employees through recognition and celebration, they inspire them to perform better. In order to keep hope and determination alive, leaders recognize the contributions that individuals make. In every winning team, the members need to share in the rewards of their efforts, so leaders celebrate accomplishments. Leaders make people feel like heroes (Kouzes and Posner, 1995, 2002).

The study used Kouzes and Posner's transformational leadership model to assess the leaders' practices. In other words, in this study, the degree of the leaders' effectiveness was investigated in terms of the above-presented five best practices of transformational leadership model. No attempt has been made to investigate the leaders' IQ, leadership style, their personality traits, emotional intelligence and other aspects of leadership in TVET institutions.

Research design

Cross-sectional survey research design was used to assess and describe the perceptions of respondents on the transformational leadership practices and challenges in TVET institutions. The strategy enabled the researchers to describe events and assess the existing transformational leadership practices in the institutions from a broad and wider magnitude (Cohen and Manion, 1994). In undertaking the study both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. To conduct the study, both primary and secondary data sources were used. The use of multiple sources of data is quite important to explore the research problems from different angles (Cohen and Manion, 1994). It also enabled the researchers to generate rich data and believed to enhance the validity of the study.

Sample size and sampling technique

Oromia Regional State has eighteen zonal administrations which clustered in the location of east, south-east and western zones. From the three locations, western zones were selected through stratified random sampling. The western Oromia regional state is classified into eight zonal administrations. Among these eight zones, three (Jimma, Iluababora and South-west shewa) were selected as sample through simple random sampling technique.

According to Oromia TVET commission, there are 19 TVET Institutions in these three zones. From these zones, a total of 7 (37%) TVET institutions were selected using simple random sampling method. Eighty seven (31%) trainees from a total of 280 were selected and included in the study from the seven sample institutions using proportionate, simple random sampling technique.

All the leadership team members, 35 (100%), were included as a sample using purposive sampling method. Hence, a total number of 122 respondents participated in study. Interviews were conducted with seven Deans

Table 1. Multi-stage sampling techniques for total population and sample size.

S/N	Total population	Sample	Percentage (%)	Sampling techniques
1	Oromia	West Oromia	33	Geographical cluster and simple random sampling
2	8 Zones in West Oromia	3 Zones	37.5	Simple random sampling
3	19 TVETIs in the 3 Zones	7 TVETIs	37	Simple random sampling
4	280 Trainers in the 7 TVETIs	87	31	Proportionate and simple random sampling
5	35 Management members	35	100	Purposive sampling
Total		122	37	-

from the sample institutions. It is believed that these participants had important data or information concerning the challenges of leadership in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions in West Oromia (Table 1).

Instruments and procedures for data collection

Questionnaire

The Kouzes and Posner Leadership Practice Inventory (LPI) observer questionnaire was adopted for this study. LPI is a reliable and valid standardized leadership assessment tool which has proved powerful in assessing individuals' leadership capacities and in demonstrating what exemplary leaders do (the five practices) to make a difference at the personal, interpersonal and organizational level (Leong, 1995).

Several studies were conducted to determine whether the inventory had sound psychometric properties and the tests indicated that the LPI was internally valid and reliable. All the studies revealed an internal reliability (Cronbach alpha) ranging from .70 to .91 and test-retest reliability of at least 0.93 in all five leadership practices (Leech et al., 2010).

Generally, LPI effectively measured the five practices leaders do exhibit when doing their best (Kouzes and Posner, 1995; Leong 1995; Condon and Clifford, 2010). Research indicates that measurement of the five practices does not vary from industry to industry, profession to profession, community to community and country to country (Kouzes and Posner, 2002).

As Kouzes and Posner (2002) point out, what works to inspire people in business settings also works in educational setting. Thus, the measure has been found widespread appeal across many disciplines (Condon and Clifford, 2010). In this study context, the reliability of the LIP instruments was also checked before administered to the respondents. The results showed that the reliability coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) for the questionnaire ranges from 0.792 to 0.854 which is considered good for the purpose of this study.

In this study, the LIP questionnaire was used to gather data from sample trainers and all management team members selected from the seven TVET Institutions of west Oromia. The questionnaires for two groups have no difference in terms of the items or the contents included thereof. The basic difference between the two sets of questionnaire was in the form of their presentations. The items in the questionnaires for the institutional leaders were stated in a way that the participants could reflect on their own leadership practices while the teachers were asked to indicate the leadership practices of their leaders. A total of 122 questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and leaders of which all of them were filled out and returned.

Interview

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven college Deans. The purpose of the interviews was to collect more supplementary opinion, so as to stabilize the responses obtained through questionnaire and to gather additional data. The deans were selected for the interview because their position is important in describing the challenges of leadership in their TVET colleges. Besides, the researchers believed that this would help to obtain the leaders' views regarding the five practices to support the data obtained through questionnaire. Different documents such as FDRE TVET strategy document, guidelines, reports and the institution profiles were also analyzed in order to enrich the data obtained through the questionnaire and interview.

Methods of data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics including, means, standard deviations and independent sample t-test were applied in this study. Means and standard deviations were used to measure the practices of transformational leadership in TVET institutions as measured by Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). This facilitated an effort to see a variation in their perceptions of the five transformational leadership practices. The independent sample t-test was computed to test significant variations between the two groups of the respondents (teachers and leaders). In addition, the qualitative data obtained from deans through interview was categorized based on the similarities of responses. This was analyzed qualitatively to enrich the quantitative data.

Ethical considerations

In the process of the study, the following ethical issues were

Table 2. Participants in levels of qualification.

Level of qualification									
C-Level		B-Level		A-Level		Others		Total	
Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)
75	61.48	39	31.97	3	2.46	5	4.10	122	100

considered. Firstly, all the respondents were provided information regarding the objectives of the study and ethical issues related to the study ahead of the data administration. Secondly, the provision of information was totally dependent on the willingness of the respondents. The participants were informed that all the information they provided were strictly confidential. The Deans have also read the interview protocol before they respond to the interview questions. Results were also presented only in an aggregate form to assure confidentiality. Finally, the (LPI) obsever questionnaire was secured by asking permision from the source and adopted to the context.

RESULTS

In terms of qualification, there were three categories of teachers in the Ethiopian TVET institutions: C-level, B-level and A-level, which is equivalent to diploma, fist degree and master's degree respectively.

As indicated in Table 2, the respondents in the first category 75 (61.48 %) were with C-level (level III and IV qualification in Ethiopian context) and they regarded as technicians. Those with B-level (are also called level V or degree) are trainers of level III and IV. The trainers at "A" level are master's degree holders and they train at degree level and they are called instructors.

Table 2 shows that 39 (32%) of the respondents were with "B" level or first degree and only 3 (2.5%) of the sample respondent were with "A" level or second degree qualifications. The rest 5 (4.1%) were had no qualification relevant to TVET institutions. Thus, it could be concluded that the profile of the TVET teachers and leaders was not good. Because as it is stated in the Federal TVET Agency guideline (2008), the qualification of TVET trainers should be minimum "B" level or first degree holder.

The data in Table 3 indicates that 22 (62.9%) of the management members led for less than five years while 11 (11.4 %) had 6 to 10 years of experience the rest 2 of them had above 10 years' experience in TVET Institution leadership position. The data generally indicated that a great number of the sample TVET leaders 33 (94.3%) served for less than 10 years as leader and have no rich experience in TVET leadership positions.

Generally, the demographic information regarding qualifications and work experience indicated that, most of the teachers in the TVETIs have no adequate experience and level of qualification to transform the institutions and to deal with many of the problems facing the institutions on daily basis.

As indicated in Table 4, the five leadership practices were analyzed using mean scores. The means and corresponding standard deviations of the sample respondents show that the fourth leadership practice or (enabling others to act) was the highest practiced leadership behaviors with the mean score of 3.21 and the corresponding standard deviation 1.00, implying that the leaders' engagements in this leadership practice was relatively high. It shows that leaders in the TVETIs have able to engender the development of cooperative goals through empowerment and trust building.

The others four leadership practices (modeling the way, challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision and encouraging the heart) were rated by the respondents as average and below average. However, the mean scores for this leadership model varies from one another with inspiring a shared vision (M = 2.82, SD = 1.10), modeling the way (M = 3.01, SD = 0.89), encouraging the heart (M = 2.63 SD = 1.06), and the least engaged model was challenging the process (M = 2.55, SD = 1.08).

The results generally indicate that, leaders of the sampled institutions were not effectively engaged in the four practices of transformational leadership model. However, when the models are independently considered, enabling others to act and modeling the way were better exercised than challenging the process and encouraging the heart. Kouzes and Posner (2002) argued that leaders must highly demonstrate at least some of the five key 'practices' to be successful in leading their organization.

Table 5 assessed the teachers' level of satisfaction with the practices of leadership in the TVET institutions. The teachers' perceptions for each leadership practice are summarized in Table 5. The data in Table 5 show that 68.9% of the respondents' satisfaction was average and below with regard to leaders' engagement in the practice of encouraging the heart while 68.55 % were moderately or less than moderately satisfied with challenging the process.

The summary of aggregate data for the five leadership practices indicated that 48.06% were with low satisfaction, 27.72% were moderate, while 34.13% were highly satisfied with the leaders' engagement in the five practices of Kouzes and Posner's transformational leadership. Generally, the data from in Table 5 indicated that 68.9% of the sample TVET trainers' satisfaction with the TVET leaders' engagement in the

Table 3. The Leadership team in sex and years of experience.

Experience in current position	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	18	51.4	4	11.4	22	62.9
6-10 years	8	22.9	3	8.6	11	31.4
11-15 years	1	2.9	0	0	1	2.9
16 years above	1	2.9	0	0	1	2.9
Total	28	80	7	20	35	100.0

Table 4. The five leadership practices by Means and corresponding SD (N=122).

S/N	Leadership Variable	Mean	S. D
1	Modeling the way	3.01	.89
2	Inspiring a shared vision	2.82	1.10
3	Challenging the process	2.55	1.08
4	Enabling others to act	3.21	1.00
5	Encouraging the heart	2.63	1.06
	Total	2.89	.93

practices of Kouzes and Posner's transformational leadership was average and below the average.

Model the way

Participants were required to indicate their levels of agreement with TVET leaders engagement in leadership practice *model the way* (Table 6). The result indicated that, the TVET leaders were moderately engaged (M = 3.01, SD = 0.89), in the leadership practice *model the way*. The result of an independent sample *t*-test revealed that the perceptions of the instructors was statistically different from that of the TVET leaders, $t\ (122) = 3.43,\ p = .001,\ [CI=95]$ in which the TVET leaders (M=3.32, SD=1.10) perceived themselves as highly engaged in *model the way* practices than they were perceived by their counterpart teachers (M=2.70, SD=.73).

Inspiring a shared vision

The mean score and the corresponding standard deviation were used to assess the level of engagement of leaders in leadership practice *inspiring a shared vision* and an independent sample t-test also employed to see the perception differences between leaders and teachers group.

The data in Table 7 shows that the mean score for the respondents regarding leaders' practice of *inspiring a shared vision* was found to be low (M=2.82; SD=1.10). An independent one-sample *t*-test result depicted statistically significant difference between the perceptions of the trainers' and the TVET leaders, $t\ (122) = -4.30,\ p = .000,\ (CI=95)$ in which the TVET leaders (M=293, SD=1.15) perceived themselves that they better engaged in this particular leadership practice as compared to the perception of the teachers (M=2.71 SD=.98).

In the interviews data, the trainers reported that decisions are always made by the top leaders and communication was top-down. One respondent wrote "we do not know what is happening in the institution" while some of them criticized the leaders for lack of transparency. These comments indicate that there is failure on the part of the leaders to enlist the staff in the pursuit of their vision. Kouzes and Posner (1995) asserted that although the vision was cooperatively developed with all stakeholders, the leader must articulate it and provide focus. To achieve extraordinary outcome leaders need to effectively articulate organisational vision. Therefore, based on the quantitative and qualitative data from both group, one could conclude that the extent to which the leaders of the TVETI engaged in the leadership practice of *inspiring a shared vision* was minimal. It seems that leaders lacked the vision, skills and concrete plan to change and improve their institutions. The TVET leaders' low engagement in this leadership practice might have negatively affected the trainers' and non- academic staff's commitment, performance, satisfaction, and motivation as well as cohesion.

Challenging the process

An independent sample *t*-test was used to evaluate the

Table 5. The teachers' level of satisfaction on the five transformational leadership practices (N=87).

Transformational leadership practices	Level of satisfaction							
	Low		Moderate		High		Total	
	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)	Count	Percentage (%)
Modeling the way	32	36.78	22	25.29	33	37.93	87	100
Inspiring a shared vision	32	36.78	24	27.59	31	35.63	87	100
Challenging the process	46	52.87	22	25.29	19	21.84	87	100
Enabling others to act	30	34.48	26	29.89	31	35.63	87	100
Encouraging the heart	33	37.93	27	31.03	27	31.03	87	100

Table 6. Independent sample *t*-test for the mean ratings of respondents regarding the level practices *model the way*.

Position of respondent	N	Mean	S. D	T	Sig(two-tailed)
Teacher	87	2.70	0.729		
Leader	35	3.32	1.103	-3.43	0.001
Total	122	3.01	0.89		

Table 7. Independent sample *t*-test for the mean ratings of respondents regarding the level practices *inspiring a shared vision.*

Position of respondent	N	Mean	S. D	T	Sig(two-tailed)
Teacher	87	2.71	0.98		
Leader	35	2.93	1.15	-4.30	0.000
Total	122	2.82	1.10		

Table 8. Independent sample t-test for the mean ratings of respondents regarding the level practices challenging the process.

Position of respondent	N	Mean	S. D	T	Sig(two-tailed)
Teacher	87	2.40	0.92		
Leader	35	2.71	1.24	-3.793	0.000
Total	122	2.55	1.08		

Table 9. Independent sample t-test for the mean ratings of respondents regarding the level practices enabling others to act.

Position of respondent	N	Mean	S. D	T	Sig(two-tailed)
Teacher	87	3.12	0.88		
Leader	35	3.31	1.26	-0.851	0.396
Total	122	3.21	1.00		

Table 10. Independent sample *t*-test for the mean ratings of respondents regarding the level practices *encouraging the heart.*

Position of respondents	N	Mean	S. D	T	Sig(two-tailed)
Teachers	87	2.29	0.90		
Leaders	35	2.98	1.19	-4.390	0.000
Total	122	2.63	1.06		

extent to which the TVET leaders exercised the Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice *challenging the process* model. Kouzes and Posner (2002) described the *challenge the process* practice as being the search for opportunities to change the status quo. For transformational leaders, challenging the process is a way of life.

As indicted in Table 8, the low mean score of respondents (M=2.55, SD=1.08) generally indicates that the leaders were less engaged in leadership practice *challenging the process*. The difference in the responses of the participants' across their position was also examined. Statistically significant difference was observed between perception of leaders and teachers for leadership practice *challenging the process* (*t* (120) =-3.79, p=.000), implying that leaders (M=2.71, SD=1.24) evaluated their involvement in this model as high as compared to teachers ratings (M=2.40, SD=1.24).

The study data generally show that the TVET leaders were not engaged in the practices of challenging the process to expected level. As Kouzes and Posner (1987) point out, extraordinary outcomes are achieved by highly challenging the process. When they involved in this practice, leaders make every effort to support, sustain, maintain, and promote support.

Likewise, the qualitative data result confirms that the leaders hardly challenge the status quo. The TVET teacher reported that the leaders lacked vision and concrete plan to change the institutions. Leaders were focusing on routine activities which could be performed by workers at lower level. The respondents suggested that "…. the leaders neither take risk and experiment new and innovative ideas nor give the staff freedom to experiment even when there is a chance of success".

Generally, the quantitative and qualitative data obtained from both the TVET teachers and leadership team indicated that leaders did not make adequate effort to maintain, sustain and promote support through the leadership practice of challenging the process to extent it is required. The leaders' less engagement in the practice of challenging the process was a major obstacle for the improvement in institutional performance and quality training. They were also not in position identifying and eliminating structures and routines that work against change.

Moreover, they failed to create a shared vision and sense of urgency, implant plans and structures that enable change, and foster open communication among the staffs (Sosik and Dionne, 1997).

Enabling others to act

Enabling others to act engenders the development of cooperative goals through empowerment and trust building. In Table 9, an attempt was made to assess the degree of TVET leaders' engagement in the practice of *enabling others to act* as one important model of transformational leadership.

As can be seen in Table 9, the mean score of the respondents was found to be above average (M = 3.21, SD =1.00) suggesting that the TVET leaders implemented this leadership practice in their institutions. There is no statistically significant difference between the perception of teachers and leaders regarding the implementation this practice in the sampled institutions (*t* (122) = -851, p > 0.05).

In the qualitative data, the sample teachers reported that leaders involve them during planning and discussions in some issues of the institutions. The leaders also argued that there was cooperation among the staff and the leadership team, between the staff of different departments as well as the staff of the same department. They generally suggested that there was

a good beginning to develop the tradition of enabling others to act.

Although, the TVETIs attempted to involve the academic and non-academic staffs in planning process, implementation of the major activities of the plans is still limited. The institutions only emphasized routine activities while ignoring major tasks that ensure change and innovation.

Organizational structures were not constructed to encourage group action, the sharing of information, resources and ideas. There were no appropriated structures to provide opportunities for members of the organization and to embrace positive interdependence and collegiality. The TVET leaders' hardly have relevant knowledge and skills in the areas of group dynamics and team building.

Encouraging the heart

Table10 presents mean scores and independent sample t-test on Kouzes and Posner's leadership practice *encouraging the heart model*.

Participants were asked to rate to what extent the leaders practiced the transformational leadership *encouraging the heart* model which consists of six behaviors from *rarely* to *always.* The aggregated mean score of the respondents was found to be very low on this practice (M=2.63, SD=1.06) implying that the leadership commitment in recognizing individual contributions to the success of the organization was minimal. However, significant different existed between the mean ratings of teachers and leaders demonstrating that the existence of the practice of *encourage the heart* was relatively rated high by the leaders (M=2.98, SD =1.19) as compared to the teacher (M=2.29, SD =.90) respondents (t (122) =-4.390, p = .000, (CI=95).

This study revealed that leaders of the sampled TVETIs were unable to increase employee motivation and organizational support. Teachers have a strong need to be continually motivated to improve their performance and achievement. By being engaged in the practice of "encouraging the heart", the TVET leaders need to promote and support the successes of the members of their learning communities (Leech, 2010). Such practices were missing the TVET institutions under investigation. In general, the finding of the study shows that, when compared with others leadership practices, the variable *enabling others to act and modeling the way* were relatively rated high by the respondents. This implies the leaders' in sampled TVET Institutions of West Oromia were effectively engaged in these two transformational leadership practices.

It further depicts that, leaders in these institutions able to involve others in planning and giving them freedom of choice in the decision- making process. They strive to create an atmosphere of trust and human dignity and to help each person feel capable and powerful.

However, the remaining three leadership practices namely inspiring a shared vision, challenging the process and encouraging the heart were rated low by the respondents. Hence, one could conclude that leaders in the sample TVETIs have limitations in exercising the Kouzes and Posner's five leadership practices for the success of their organizational objectives by fully utilizing the manpower in their institutions.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of the data from the sampled institutions indicated that the TVET leaders were not effectively engaged in the leadership practices except one leadership model (enabling others to act) which was the highest practiced of the five leadership model. This indicates that the leaders failed to create conducive organizational climate required to bringing about change within the institutions.

According to Tichy and Devanna (1996), leaders' incapability to inspire a shared vision negatively influences many aspects of the organization such as commitment, performance and satisfaction. Lack of a compelling vision negatively affects followers when they are uncertain about the future (Waldman, 2001). Therefore, the leaders' low engagement in this leadership practice might negatively affect the teacher and the non-academic staff's commitment, performance, satisfaction, and motivation in the sample TVET institutions.

Leadership is a relationship between the leader and the followers, and is based on the followers' perception. This study indicated that the teachers' perception of the leaders' transformational leadership practice was generally low. Besides, their perceived organizational support was also low because the leadership practice of enabling others to act was rated below average by the respondents.

In terms of the anticipated changes, the country aims to achieve, the leaders' less engagement in the five practices should be a major concern for both the government and the training institutions. The TVETI leaders' focus on routine activities was an indicator for their incapability to create a powerful and compelling vision which could transform routine work into energy that is collective and focused (Bennis, 1999).

The qualitative data revealed that lack of professional support such as leadership skill development, devolving of responsibility, training and the like negatively affected the performance of the TVET institutions. Although government-directed reforms have placed the TVETI leaders in highly visible leadership roles, the institutions still lack the capacity required to effectively implement the change in the training process. The leaders in the sample institutions also admitted that they were rarely provided professional support to improve the leadership

capacity and to ensure successful implementation of change.

The TVET trainers believed that leaders were unable to be innovative, willing to take risks, and challenge assumptions about the way things have always been done because power and responsibilities on some issues was centralized at Regional level. Instead of finding solution for problems facing their institutions, they tended to seek solution from the regional office.

As a result, the system became bureaucratic which often caused impractical and inflexible administrative situations. These structural characteristics tended to jeopardized decision making in which TVETIs leadership team members were fearful of taking the initiative without the explicit order from Regional State. In other words, leadership activities in TVETIs of West Oromia highly prescriptive and, thus, the institutional leaders were expected to follow the directives as mandated by the Regional TVET Commission.

Consequently, leaders in the training institutions have acted as agents of stability, rather than as agents of change. In a similar manner, the role of academic and non-academic staff had been framed as that of order takers within the educational bureaucracy (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). Initiative had seldom been valued or expected. Instead, the TVETI leaders had been attempting to maintain cultural continuity inside the system bureaucracy (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

Resources are critical to the success of an organization. The shortage of one type not only impedes the implementation of various parts of the overall plan but also causes under or non-utilization of complementary resources. The data gathered through interview with the TVETI leaders indicated that the sampled TVETIs were facing serious shortage of human and material resources. The study identified not only acute shortage of resources in the TVETIs, but also leaders' lack of firm understanding of their institutions' resource needs and their incapability to frequently use various approaches in securing and utilizing resources to secure competitive advantage.

The interviews data showed leaders' failure to use different strategies such as developing a shared vision and collaborative relationship with external or internal providers to tackle the resource shortage and to strengthen their reform strategies. Although, budget allocated by the government could be the main source of financial resource for the TVET Institutions.

However, the TVETI leaders failed not only to understand that fund from one source could be inadequate but also to design strategies of securing additional budget. Thus, the major challenge of the TVET could be the leaders' incapability to secure the resources required rather than scarcity of resource.

RECOMMENDATION

The current TVET strategy is adopted with the aim of alleviating unemployment and poverty by producing skilled and productive citizens through short term and long term training. The achievement of this aim with the absence of effective leadership could be difficult if not impossible.

Thus, the Oromia Technical and Vocational Education and Training Commission is advised to plan and invest resources in the development of leadership in the TVETIs of the region. The plan should be focused on the utilization of best leadership practices that directly influence institutional effectiveness relative to the administration of training institutions.

The leaders need to recognize that without effective leadership, good strategic plans, skilled and marketable manpower are assumed to be ideal. Therefore, it is recommended that significant attention needs to be given to leadership development plan so that leaders improve their leadership skills to change their institutions. Such a plan should include the contemporary leadership practices such as transformational leadership models.

Coordinated and comprehensive leadership development models and training needs to be conducted to propel the TVET Institutions toward their mission. To this end, Jimma University and other universities found in Western Oromia might need to design a leadership training courses that particularly focuses on the practices of leadership, and the use of assessment resources such as Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI) and other instruments for leadership evaluation and development as a basis for continuous leadership development. Besides, TVET Institutions in West Oromia can cooperatively work with NGOs like VET-Net program which works on networking TVET institutions with higher institutions cooperating with the Jimma University.

Additional leadership practices study that can employ detail investigation might be necessary in order to look at each individual TVET institutions. The researcher used quantitative as major data to determine the level of leadership practice. But using quantitative data is not adequate to measure the perception of individuals. Perhaps a pure qualitative or mixed approach would be more helpful to find particular themes although such a study may require more risk to the participants as they would be identifiable. This study needs to be replicated at some time in the future to determine if the leadership practices are affected by employee or leaders' turnover or change with the leaders' level of leadership training and experience.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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