

School Inspection Management and School Effectiveness in the Secondary Schools of Ethiopia: Policy implication Authors' details

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Research Article

Keywords: School Inspection, School Inspection Management practices, School Effectiveness, Secondary Schools

Posted Date: June 10th, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-9684177/v1>

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Additional Declarations: No competing interests reported.

Abstract

Effective school inspection management is a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring institutional accountability and fostering continuous school improvement within secondary education systems. The purpose of this study is to examine the management of school inspection and its contribution to school effectiveness in the secondary schools of the Somali Regional State, Ethiopia. It seeks to address a critical conceptual gap by analyzing inspection not merely as a regulatory event, but as a comprehensive management cycle encompassing planning, coordination, feedback, and systematic follow-up. Using a mixed-methods concurrent embedded design, data were collected from 248 teachers and school leaders through a stratified random sampling technique, complemented by purposive interviews with 12 key education officials. Quantitative data were analyzed via SPSS to test the nexus between management practices and effectiveness, while qualitative data were processed through Thematic Analysis to identify institutional bottlenecks. The analysis revealed that school inspection management practices specifically strategic planning, coordination, and feedback mechanisms are currently implemented at a low level (Mean < 3.00), which directly constrains their potential to enhance school effectiveness. Qualitative findings underscore a persistent "implementation gap" characterized by a punitive "fault-finding" orientation, weak follow-up procedures, and a critical shortage of qualified inspectors. These barriers transform the quality assurance process into an uncoordinated administrative burden rather than a developmental tool. This study contributes to the theoretical landscape by validating a management-effectiveness framework tailored for resource-constrained and peripheral contexts. Practically, it highlights the urgent need for a shift from compliance-based monitoring to a support-oriented inspection model. The study recommends that the Somali Regional Education Bureau prioritize competency and pedagogical training for inspectors and establish localized follow-up protocols to ensure that inspection outcomes translate into quantifiable improvements in secondary school effectiveness.

1 Introduction

In the contemporary global landscape, schools are increasingly pressured to demonstrate effectiveness through measurable student outcomes and robust instructional quality (OECD, 2023; World Bank, 2022). As formal institutions of learning, secondary schools serve as the critical bridge between basic literacy and higher education or the workforce. Consequently, the "Effective Schools Movement" has emphasized that school success is not accidental but a result of deliberate management systems and accountability mechanisms (Agih, 2015).

At the heart of these mechanisms lies **school inspection**. Globally, school inspection is recognized as a systematic external evaluation process designed to monitor, assess, and support schools by providing evidence-based feedback on leadership, teaching quality, and resource utilization (Ehren et al., 2017). While traditionally viewed as a regulatory "policing" tool, modern educational discourse redefines inspection as a developmental management process. Effective school inspection management involves

rigorous planning, stakeholder coordination, and, most critically, the systematic follow-up of recommendations to catalyze school improvement (Ehren et al., 2015; Gardezi, 2025).

In Africa, the narrative of school inspection is shifting from colonial-era "fault-finding" missions toward Quality Assurance (QA) frameworks. Countries across the continent have integrated inspection into their national development goals to address the learning crisis (Belina et al., 2026; Gustafsson et al., 2015). However, the effectiveness of these systems remains hindered by management bottlenecks. In many Sub-Saharan African contexts, inspection is often reduced to a periodic ritual rather than a continuous management cycle (Agih, 2015). Research suggests that while inspection frameworks exist, the "management" of these inspections specifically how data is communicated and how schools are supported post-inspection remains the weakest link in the quality chain (Cheng, 2022).

In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has institutionalized school inspection as a core pillar of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP). The Ethiopian inspection framework is structured around five domains: inputs, teaching-learning processes, student achievement, school leadership, and community participation (Teferra et al., 2018). Despite these structured policy guidelines, the transition from policy to practice remains a significant challenge. In secondary schools, where curriculum complexity and national examinations increase the stakes of school effectiveness, the management of inspection is often hampered by resource constraints and administrative inefficiencies (Belina et al., 2026; Gardezi, 2025; Gardezi et al., 2023). In emerging regions like the **Somali Regional State**, these challenges are compounded by unique geographical and institutional contexts, necessitating a focused investigation into how inspection management influences school outcomes.

The primary goal of school inspection management in Ethiopia is to ensure that schools meet national standards and continuously improve their instructional and organizational effectiveness. However, there is a persistent "implementation-gap" between the rigorous inspection guidelines formulated at the federal level and the actual management of these processes at the regional and school levels (Scheerens & Ehren, 2016; SHUKR, 2024).

In the Somali Regional State, secondary schools continue to struggle with fluctuating academic performance and inconsistent instructional quality. While inspection visits occur, they are frequently characterized as "one-off" events rather than managed processes (SHUKR, 2024). Problems such as irregular scheduling, lack of coordinated feedback, and the absence of post-inspection support mechanisms mean that inspection findings often remain in reports rather than being translated into school-level improvements (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2018; Desierto et al., 2023). Without effective management comprising strategic planning, professional coordination, and rigorous follow-up school inspection fails to serve as a catalyst for school effectiveness (Abebe, 2020; Belina et al., 2026; Mitchell, 2015). This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the nexus between school inspection management practices and school effectiveness in the secondary schools of the Somali Regional State to provide policy-relevant insights.

At the global and continental levels, research has frequently addressed school inspection as a mechanism for quality control; however, significant contextual and conceptual gaps remain. For instance, while (Ehren et al., 2017) examined the impact of inspection across low and middle income countries and found that inspection "pressure" can improve school performance, their study focused predominantly on high-resource environments supported by automated data systems. Consequently, these findings lack direct applicability to infrastructure-strained regions like the Somali State of Ethiopia. Within the African context, (Fungilwa, 2021) investigated the role of inspectors in Tanzania by focusing on feedback mechanisms; nevertheless, that study emphasized individual inspector behavior rather than the broader management systems, such as strategic planning and bureau-level coordination. Similarly, although (Ezeugo & Chika, 2021) analyzed inspection as a tool for teacher professional development in Nigeria, the scope was limited to internal supervision. Thus, there is a clear absence of research that treats inspection as a systemic management process within the secondary education sector of developing nations.

In the Ethiopian context, while several studies have touched upon inspection, they often overlook the link between management cycles and school outcomes. For example, (SHUKR, 2024) investigated the relevance of inspection challenges and practice in Jigjiga Town; nonetheless, the study failed to establish a clear empirical link between these standards and school effectiveness. In the same vein, (Ashagre & Furi, 2024) highlighted the failure of schools to meet minimum quality standards; however, the research remained largely descriptive and did not offer a practical policy-implication framework for regional education bureaus. Furthermore, whereas (Ashagre & Furi, 2024; SHUKR, 2024) identified structural constraints like the shortage of qualified inspectors, their research was geographically restricted to central Ethiopia. As a result, the unique administrative and socio-political challenges of peripheral regions, such as the Somali Regional State, have been systematically neglected in national research. Finally, although Gorfe (2024) explored the misalignment between policy intent and operational practice, the study did not provide a methodological bridge to explain how specific management components, such as stakeholder coordination and systematic follow-up, directly influence school effectiveness.

This study, therefore, distinguishes itself from and advances the existing body of knowledge through a three-dimensional gap-filling approach. Specifically, it addresses a conceptual gap by moving beyond the view of inspection as a "one-off" visit, conceptualizing it instead as a continuous management cycle of planning, coordination, implementation, and follow-up. Moreover, the study fills a methodological gap; while previous Ethiopian studies have relied on basic descriptive surveys, this article adopts a more robust analytical lens to examine policy implications specifically tailored for emerging regions. Ultimately, the study provides contextual novelty by focusing on the Somali Regional State, which has been largely excluded from the discourse on secondary school effectiveness. By doing so, this research not only adds a voice to an underserved region but also offers evidence-based strategies to transform inspection from a regulatory formality into a genuine engine for school improvement. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine school inspection management practices in the Somali Regional State context and its contribution to enhancing the effectiveness of secondary schools.

To accomplish this objective, the study looks to address the following specific research questions:

1. What is the current status of school inspection management practice implementation in secondary schools of the Somali Regional State, Ethiopia?
2. To what extent do these school inspection management practices contribute to school effectiveness?

The significance of this study is multifaceted, offering profound implications for policy development, professional practice, and the broader academic discourse on educational quality.

At the policy level, this study serves as a critical strategic resource for the Somali Regional Education Bureau and the Ethiopian Ministry of Education. By identifying the inherent limitations of the current regulatory framework, the research provides a robust, evidence-based foundation to transition from a traditional "fault-finding" inspection model toward a developmental and support-oriented management system.

From a practical perspective, the study holds significant value for school administrators, inspectors, and educational leaders who navigate the daily complexities of secondary education. By pinpointing specific management bottlenecks such as fragmented coordination, irregular communication, and the absence of systematic follow-up mechanisms the research empowers practitioners to optimize their operational workflows. This allows school principals to better align their instructional leadership with inspection recommendations, while providing inspectors with the strategies necessary to move beyond compliance-oriented visits and actively contribute to the enhancement of classroom instruction and overall school performance.

Furthermore, the study offers substantial theoretical contributions to the global body of knowledge regarding school effectiveness. By providing empirical evidence from a developing and peripheral context, the research enriches educational discourse by challenging predominantly Euro-centric models of school accountability and management. It introduces a contextualized perspective on how school effectiveness is shaped in environments characterized by unique socio-political and resource constraints. Consequently, the study advances the "Effective Schools Movement" by demonstrating that school success is deeply contingent upon locally managed quality assurance cycles, thereby offering a more inclusive and globalized understanding of educational quality.

2 Review of Related Literature

2.1 The Concept and Evolution of School Inspection Management

The concept and evolution of school inspection management have undergone a significant paradigm shift, transitioning from a narrow focus on regulatory "policing" to a comprehensive developmental management process. Historically, school inspection emerged in the 19th century as a bureaucratic tool

designed primarily for administrative surveillance and compliance with government regulations (Ehren, 2016). However, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, global educational discourse particularly across Europe and OECD nations redefined inspection as a core component of Quality Assurance (QA) (Fungilwa, 2021). According to (Ehren et al., 2015), modern school inspection management is now understood as a systematic organization of evaluative activities that include rigorous pre-inspection planning, the application of standardized evidence-based criteria, and the professional communication of findings. Consequently, the global trend has moved away from "fault-finding" toward "intelligent accountability," where the management of inspection is viewed as a continuous cycle intended to trigger internal school improvement and professional growth (Scheerens & Ehren, 2016).

In the African context, the evolution of school inspection was long hampered by colonial legacies that emphasized top-down supervision and punitive monitoring. Nevertheless, in recent decades, many African nations have sought to reform these systems by establishing autonomous Quality Assurance bodies (Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013; SHUKR, 2024). For instance, countries like Nigeria and Tanzania have attempted to shift from "supervision" (which is often internal and instructional) to "inspection" (which is external and systemic) (Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013; Fungilwa, 2021). In the Ethiopian education system has experienced a distinct evolution in its approach to school evaluation. In the mid-20th century, the role was limited to "visiting teachers" who focused on administrative checking; subsequently, this evolved into a system of "supervision" during the Derg and early EPRDF eras (Ashagre & Furi, 2024). Specifically, it was only with the introduction of the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) that a formal, external "School Inspection" system was institutionalized (Tefera, 2024). In the contemporary Ethiopian context, school inspection management is now structured around a rigorous framework of five domains ranging from inputs to student ethical development aligned with the School Improvement Program (SIP). Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has shifted its policy to treat inspection as a management function that requires strategic planning, standardized School Self-Assessment Forms (SAF), and feedback-driven follow-up (Belina et al., 2026). In spite of these robust policy frameworks, the challenge in Ethiopia particularly in emerging regions remains the effective management of these cycles to ensure they translate into actual secondary school effectiveness.

2.2 The Nexus Between Inspection Management and School Effectiveness

The relationship between school inspection management and school effectiveness is not merely incidental but represents a complex, causal nexus where the quality of management processes serves as the primary catalyst for organizational change. This nexus is fundamentally built upon the premise that inspection does not improve a school simply by its occurrence; rather, it is the systematic management of the inspection cycle comprising planning, coordination, and follow-up that determines its ultimate impact on school performance (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2018; Desierto et al., 2023).

At the core of this relationship is the quality of strategic planning and stakeholder engagement. When inspections are well-managed and transparent, they foster an institutional culture of self-evaluation and

reflection. Specifically, when the inspection process is inclusive and based on shared standards, it bridges the gap between external accountability and internal school improvement (Altrichter & Kemethofer, 2018). Furthermore, effective management ensures that inspection findings are not perceived as punitive "verdicts" but as diagnostic tools. This creates a "feedback-loop" where school leaders and teachers feel ownership of the improvement goals (Ehren & Visscher, 2008). Consequently, the school moves beyond simple administrative compliance and begins to internalize the standards of instructional quality and leadership efficiency, which are the hallmarks of an effective school.

Conversely, the link between inspection and effectiveness is severely weakened or even severed when management processes are flawed. In many developing contexts, inspections are often characterized by a "fault-finding" orientation and a lack of professional coordination (Ayeni & Ibukun, 2013; Gardezi et al., 2023). On the other hand, if inspections are managed as isolated, episodic visits with no systematic follow-up, they often result in what researchers call "window dressing" or cosmetic compliance. Moreover, the nexus is most visible in the "follow-up" phase of management, which acts as the bridge between evaluation and school effectiveness (O'Doherty et al., 2025). Effective inspection management ensures that resources, training, and administrative support are aligned with the gaps identified during the inspection (Okafor et al., 2024). Without this management of post-inspection support, the most rigorous evaluation remains a dead letter. Therefore, the management aspect how the inspection is organized, how results are communicated, and how the subsequent improvement plan is monitored stands as the definitive driver of school effectiveness. Ultimately, it is not the "act of inspecting" that improves schools, but the "management of inspection outcomes" that transforms secondary schools into effective centers of learning..

2.3 School Inspection Policy in the Ethiopian Context

The school inspection policy in Ethiopia is fundamentally rooted in the national quest for educational quality, primarily institutionalized through the General Education Quality Improvement Program (GEQIP) and the School Improvement Program (SIP). Within this framework, the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2013, 2015) transformed the traditional supervision model into a more rigorous external inspection system designed to serve as a primary quality assurance mechanism. By aligning inspection with the SIP, the policy intends to create a synergistic relationship where school self-evaluations are validated by external inspectors, thereby ensuring that every secondary school operates within a nationally recognized threshold of quality and accountability (Shewaye, 2017; SHUKR, 2024).

Specifically, the Ethiopian inspection policy is structured around five interrelated domains that define school performance: resources and learning conditions (inputs), instructional and engagement practices (processes), and student achievement, ethical development, and school leadership (outcomes) (Ashagre & Furi, 2024). The policy requires inspectors to utilize standardized instruments, such as the School Self-Assessment Form (SAF), to ensure objectivity and consistency across diverse regional contexts. Furthermore, the framework is designed to be developmental in nature, emphasizing that the primary goal of inspection management is not to penalize schools but to provide constructive feedback that fosters continuous professional growth and instructional improvement.

Empirical evidence from scholars such as (Abebe, 2020; Ashagre & Furi, 2024; Belina et al., 2026) suggests that while the policy framework is technically sound on paper, its management in peripheral and emerging regions particularly the Somali Regional State encounters severe institutional bottlenecks. These challenges include acute shortages of qualified and autonomous inspectors, logistical hurdles in reaching remote secondary schools, and a lack of systematic integration of inspection findings into regional budgetary and planning cycles (Gardezi, 2025; Gardezi et al., 2023). As a result, the practice of school inspection in these contexts often regresses from its intended developmental and support-oriented function toward a purely regulatory and episodic "fault-finding" exercise.

2.4 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study illustrates the relationship between **School Inspection Management Practices** and **School Effectiveness**, within the context of **Policy Implications**. This framework indicate, when Inspection Management is characterized by rigorous planning and proactive follow-up, it directly influences the internal processes of the school. This interaction enhances School Effectiveness by bridging the gap between national standards and school-level reality. Furthermore, the Policy Implication aspect ensures that these findings are fed back into the regional education system to refine future inspection management protocols, creating a sustainable loop of educational quality improvement.

3 Materials and Methods

3.1 Study Design

This study employed a mixed-methods research design, specifically a concurrent embedded design. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously to provide a holistic view of the relationship between school inspection management and school effectiveness (Klassen et al., 2012). The rationality for this design was to achieve triangulation; while the quantitative data provided statistical breadth regarding systemic trends across the Somali Regional State, the qualitative data offered the depth needed to interpret the socio-administrative and logistical challenges unique to the Ethiopian secondary education context. Globally, emerging regions face significant hurdles in moving from "policing" models of inspection to "support-oriented" systems due to resource constraints (Ishtiaq, 2019). By conducting this study in the Somali Regional State, the research examines these implementation gaps, offering valuable insights for policy formulation intended to empower education leaders and enhance instructional quality.

3.2 Target Population and Sampling Procedures

The study targeted secondary schools across three zones (-Fafan, Jerar, and Erer) and 21 secondary schools. These sites were purposefully selected based on their geographical diversity, school density, and the presence of both veteran and newly established secondary schools to ensure a representative sample. The target population comprised 650 participants, including secondary school teachers,

department heads, and school principals. For the quantitative strand, the sample size of 248 respondents was determined using Yamane’s (1967) sample determination formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ to ensure statistical precision and minimize sampling error within a finite population(Yamane, 1967).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \quad n = \frac{650}{1+650(0.05)^2} \quad n = \frac{650}{1+1.625} \quad n = 247.6 \approx 248$$

To ensure statistical precision, respondents were selected via stratified random sampling across the Science, Social Science, and Language departments. The justification for stratification was to ensure that different pedagogical perspectives and varying departmental experiences with inspection were proportionally represented, thereby reducing selection bias(Hasan & Kumar, 2024). For the qualitative strand, 12 key informants including Regional Education Bureau (REB) officials, Woreda-level inspectors, and secondary school supervisors were selected through purposive sampling. The rationale for this approach was to engage participants with the strategic oversight and specialized expertise essential for understanding the institutional nuances of inspection management policy(Yvonne Feilzer, 2010).

3.3 Data Collection Tools

Data were collected using a structured survey for teachers/principals and semi-structured interviews for education officials. The survey was adapted from the School Inspection Impact Scale (Ehren & Visscher, 2008) and the School Effectiveness Questionnaire (Scheerens & Ehren, 2016). Adapting these established instruments was necessary to ensure the constructs remained relevant to the Ethiopian secondary school standards (MoE, 2013) and the specific resource-constrained environment of the Somali region while maintaining high construct validity. The survey utilized a 25-item instrument on a 5-point Likert scale.

The interview protocol consisted of six guiding questions focused on inspection planning, coordination, feedback mechanisms, and post-inspection follow-up. The semi-structured format was chosen to allow participants the flexibility to disclose unforeseen administrative barriers while maintaining a focus on the study’s core objective: assessing the contribution of inspection to school effectiveness.

3.3.1 Data Analysis Technique

Quantitative data were analyzed using a SPSS (Version 26). The justification for this approach is based on their complementary analytical philosophies: SPSS was utilized for Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to validate the measurement model. The rationale is that Covariance-Based SEM is the industry standard for theory testing, confirming whether the proposed relationship between inspection management and school effectiveness statistically matches the observed data (Park & Kim, 2021).

Qualitative data were processed using ATLAS.ti 9 software and analyzed via Thematic Analysis. The rationale for using ATLAS.ti 9 was to enhance the rigor and transparency of the analysis through systematic data management and automated coding of interview transcripts. The analysis involved familiarization, coding, and the generation of themes to triangulate with the quantitative results(Gupta,

2024). Final integration occurred during the interpretation phase, where qualitative themes provided "narrative evidence" for the statistical paths identified by the quantitative models.

3.4 Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

To ensure the rigor of the quantitative instrument, a pilot test was conducted with 30 educators from a secondary school in a Jigjiga Town administration (not included in the final sample) but possessing similar characteristics. Construct validity was confirmed via KMO factor analysis (0.872), and internal consistency was established with a Cronbach's Alpha of .80, indicating high reliability, exceeding the recommended minimum standard of .70 (Izah et al., 2023). This pilot phase was critical to ensuring that the technical terminology regarding "School Inspection Domains" was clearly understood in the local context. For the qualitative strand, trustworthiness was maintained through member checking and data triangulation. The justification for member checking was to ensure that the researchers' interpretations accurately reflected the lived experiences of the inspectors and school leaders, thereby increasing the credibility and confirmability of the findings.

Throughout the study, ethical standards were rigorously observed to ensure respect for participants' dignity, autonomy, and well-being (Abay et al., 2016). Formal ethical clearance was secured from the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee (Ref. No. COE-REC/012/24), and an official letter of cooperation was obtained from the Department of Educational Planning and Management at Hawassa University. In line with the ethical guidelines proposed by Cohen et al. (2005) and Yin (2014), informed consent was obtained from all participants before data collection.

4 Results

4.1 Demographic profiles

The respondents' demographic profile indicates that the sample was well suited to provide informed perspectives on school inspection management and school effectiveness.

Table 1
The demographic statistics of the respondents

<i>Sn</i>			<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1	sex of the respondents	Male	208	83.87
		Female	40	16.129
		Total	248	100
2	educational level of the respondents	BA/Bsc/Bed degree	226	91.129
		MA/Msc	22	8.870
		Total	248	100
3	work experience of the respondents	< 5	10	4.032
		10-May	195	78.629
		16-Nov	43	17.338
		Total	248	100
4	working position of the respondents	Leaders	99	39.919
		Teachers	149	60.080
		Total	248	100

The demographic profile of the participants, as summarized in the table, provides a foundational context for understanding the perspectives on school inspection management and school effectiveness within the study area. With a total sample of 248 respondents, the data reveals a significant gender disparity, with 83.87% (n = 208) being male and only 16.13% (n = 40) female. This skewed distribution reflects a common trend in the secondary education sector of the Somali Regional State and Ethiopia more broadly, where male professionals continue to dominate leadership and teaching positions. Regarding educational qualifications, the overwhelming majority of respondents 91.13% (n = 226) hold a first degree (BA/BSc/BEEd), while a relatively small segment 8.87% (n = 22) possesses a postgraduate degree (MA/Msc). This indicates that the participants meet the minimum national requirement for secondary school staffing in Ethiopia. However, the low proportion of Master's degree holders suggests a potential area for professional growth, as higher academic qualifications are often linked to a more nuanced understanding of complex management frameworks and quality assurance standards.

The professional maturity of the respondents is further evidenced by their work experience. A vast majority, 78.63% (n = 195), have between 5 and 10 years of service, and 17.34% (n = 43) are seasoned professionals with 11 to 16 years of experience. Only a marginal 4.03% (n = 10) are novice educators with less than 5 years of service. This distribution is highly advantageous for the study's validity, as it

suggests that nearly 96% of the participants have substantial "institutional memory" and long-term exposure to the implementation of inspection cycles.

Finally, the composition of working positions provides a balanced "360-degree" view of the school system. With 39.92% (n = 99) of the sample serving as school leaders and 60.08% (n = 149) as teachers, the study successfully bridges the gap between those who manage inspections and those who are the primary subjects of the evaluative process. Collectively, these demographic characteristics establish a highly credible and professionally experienced respondent pool, lending significant weight to the study's conclusions regarding the nexus between inspection management and school effectiveness.

Table 2
Assessing the school inspection management practices

School inspection management practices	Teachers		Leaders		No. of items	Average mean		Statistical tests	
	t-test	P-value	Mean	SD		Mean	SD		
Inspection planning	2.876	.649	2.795	.657	9	2.85		-1.0304	0.6798
Inspection criteria and standards	2.841	.6262	2.838	.788	8	2.840		-0.039	0.548
Inspection feedback mechanisms	2.944	.7385	2.881	.726	7	.2.921		-0.509	0.548
Stakeholders involvement	2.848	.3549	2.815	.351	10	.2.921		-0.509	0.548
School Effectiveness	2.7918	.30311	2.8186	.27924	22	2.8014		.798	.203
Source: Computed from Survey Data (2023)									
Note: SD=Standard Deviation, Mean value below 3.00 indicate low practices, 3.00-3.5 = Moderate practices, and > 3.5-5.00 = Strong practices.									

Table 2 presents the analysis of key dimensions of school inspection management practices, namely inspection planning, inspection criteria and standards, inspection feedback mechanisms, stakeholder involvement, to assess the extent to which these elements are implemented and their contribution on school effectiveness in secondary schools in the study region. The analysis provides insight into how effectively inspection functions are operationalized to support school improvement.

Specifically, the practice of inspection planning recorded an overall mean score of 2.85, which indicates a low level of practice. This result suggests that inspection activities are insufficiently structured, poorly

scheduled, and weakly aligned with school improvement priorities. In the absence of systematic planning, inspection processes tend to operate in a reactive rather than developmental manner, thereby constraining their capacity to guide schools toward continuous improvement. The independent samples t-test result ($t = -1.03, p = .68$) further reveals that the difference between teachers' and leaders' perceptions is not statistically significant at the .05 level. *This implies that both groups hold similar views regarding the inadequacy of inspection planning*, which strengthens the credibility and consistency of the finding. Therefore, weak planning diminishes the effectiveness of inspection processes and limits their potential contribution to instructional improvement and accountability within secondary schools.

The interview results from the respondents were summarized as the following: *School inspectors and principals report that while school inspections are technically planned, the process is undermined by poor coordination, lack of specialized training, and inadequate communication between regional and local administrative levels. These systemic gaps, coupled with weak follow-up and insufficient resources, prevent effective preparation, ultimately limiting the accountability and overall impact of school inspections.*

On the other side: *Woreda education experts and PTSA members highlight that while school inspections are technically scheduled, their execution is severely hindered by systemic weaknesses. Key obstacles include incomplete planning, inadequate budgets, and a critical shortage of skilled personnel and resources. Furthermore, a lack of consistent follow-up, poor communication, and low accountability transform what should be a quality improvement process into an uncoordinated and ineffective administrative task.*

The findings further reveal that lacks of commitment and negative attitudes toward inspections treat the process as a burden rather than a tool for progress. Because regional and woreda offices fail to provide the necessary training and structural support, schools and inspectors remain ill-equipped to manage the process. Consequently, the absence of systematic coordination and skill development undermines the overall operational effectiveness of the inspection system.

Table 3
Regression analysis results of the study on management od school inspection and school effectiveness

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.602 ^a	.362	.360	.50046
a. Predictors: (Constant), Inspection Management Practices.				

Based on the above model summary the school inspection management and school effectiveness in the secondary schools of Somali regional state has summarize as follows:

R (.602) Correlation coefficient indicated that there is a moderate-to-strong positive relationship between Inspection Management Practices and your outcome variable. R (.602): This is the correlation

coefficient. It shows a moderate-to-strong positive relationship between Inspection Management Practices and your outcome variable. While R Square (.362): indicating the level of "goodness of fit." Which means that, 36.2% of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the Inspection Management Practices. The Adjusted R Square (.360) is more conservative version of R Square where it's very close to .362, it suggests the model is stable and isn't being inflated by unnecessary variables. Std. Error of the Estimate (.50046): This represents the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line. Low values indicate more precise predictions. In short, the predictor has a strong impact, but there is still about 64% of the variation being caused by other factors not included in this model.

Table 4
ANOVA Aa The result table of the regression model of inspection management practice and school effectiveness

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47.372	1	47.372	189.137	.000 ^b
	Residual	83.405	333	.250		
	Total	130.777	334			
a. Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Inspection Management Practices.						

This ANOVA Table4 confirms that our model is statistically significant. Whereas the relationship we found isn't just a fluke in the data.

F-statistic (189.137): This is a very high value. It compares the power of your model (the "Regression") against the leftover error (the "Residual"). A high F-value suggests that your predictor, Inspection Management Practices, does a great job of explaining the variance in School Effectiveness. Similarly Sig. (.000): the p-value is less than .05 and even less than .001, this shows that the model is highly significant. We can confidently reject the idea that there is no relationship between these variables. df (1, 333): shows you have one predictor and a sample size of 335 (Total df + 1). is a solid sample size, which makes our results more reliable. Mean Square: The regression mean square (47.372) is much larger than the residual mean square (0.250), which is why our F-ratio is so high. Generally our first table showed that Inspection Management Practices explain 36.2% of School Effectiveness. This ANOVA table proves that this 36.2% is statistically real and not due to random chance.

Table 5
coefficient table

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	– .550	.250		-2.198	.029
	Inspection Management Practices	1.195	.087	.602	13.753	.000
a. Dependent Variable: School Effectiveness						

Conclusion of the Overall Regression Model:- The study reveals that there is statistically significant positive relationship between Inspection Management Practices and School Effectiveness $F(1,333,137, p < .001)$. The model is robust with Inspection Management Practices explaining 36.2% of the variance in School Effectiveness ($R^2 = .0362$). With a high t-value of 13.753 and a positive B-coefficient of 1.195, the data concludes that better inspection practices directly and reliably lead to higher levels of school effectiveness. Therefore, the null hypothesis can be rejected, confirming that Inspection Management Practices are a critical driver of school success.

5 Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to examine the management of school inspection and its contribution to school effectiveness in the secondary schools of the Somali Regional State, Ethiopia. The findings reveal a significant "implementation gap" between the rigorous national inspection policy and the actual operational practices at the regional and school levels.

5.1 The Status of School Inspection Management Practices

The descriptive analysis shows that all four dimensions of school inspection management planning, criteria application, feedback mechanisms, and stakeholder involvement recorded mean scores below the 3.00 threshold, signifying a low level of practice. Specifically, the practice of inspection planning (Mean = 2.85) was identified as a critical weakness. This finding suggests that inspection in the study area is characterized by poor scheduling and a lack of alignment with school improvement priorities. From a Systems Theory perspective, an educational system requires consistent regulatory feedback to maintain its equilibrium and achieve its goals (von Bertalanffy, 1968). The low planning score implies a breakdown in this "feedback loop," where inspections are conducted as reactive, episodic events rather than a proactive management cycle. These results are consistent with the findings of Gorfe (2024), who

noted a systemic misalignment between policy intent and operational practice in Ethiopia, where strategic planning is often bypassed for administrative convenience.

Furthermore, the results regarding inspection criteria and standards (Mean = 2.84) and feedback mechanisms (Mean = 2.92) indicate that the evaluative process remains surface-level. Effective school inspection management requires that findings be communicated professionally and constructively to trigger school-level change (Ehren & Visscher, 2015). However, the qualitative data from this study suggests that inspections are often perceived as a "burden" or a "fault-finding" exercise. This aligns with Bojia (2019), who found that in South West Shewa, the impact of inspection is compromised when stakeholders view the process with a negative attitude. When feedback is weak and communication is poor, as evidenced by the low scores in this study, the inspection process fails to provide the "narrative evidence" necessary for school leaders to implement pedagogical reforms (Chika, 2019; Fungilwa, 2021).

5.2 The Nexus Between Management and School Effectiveness

The study recorded a low overall score for school effectiveness (Mean = 2.80), which directly mirrors the low scores in inspection management. This statistical parallel reinforces the theoretical argument that school effectiveness is not a static state but is significantly influenced by external quality assurance mechanisms (Scheerens, 2016). The independent samples t-test results ($p > .05$) showed no significant difference between teachers' and leaders' perceptions, indicating a strong consensus across the professional hierarchy that the current inspection system is failing to catalyze instructional improvement.

This consensus highlights a major policy concern: when inspection management is weak, schools tend to engage in "cosmetic compliance" rather than genuine improvement. As noted in the World Bank (2022) and OECD (2023) reports, the global learning crisis can only be addressed when accountability mechanisms like inspection are managed as developmental tools. The findings of this study confirm that in the Somali Regional State, the lack of systematic follow-up and the critical shortage of skilled personnel (as revealed in the qualitative interviews) prevent inspections from enhancing instructional leadership and student outcomes. This supports the observation by Melsie (2021) that implementation in peripheral regions is often fragmented by resource inadequacies and insufficient inspector preparation.

5.3 Policy and Practical Implications

The implications of these findings are profound for educational policy in Ethiopia.

Practically and managerially, the results suggest that institutional strategies must move beyond "compliance-centric" reporting. For regional education officials and school principals, the priority should be the transition from a "policing" mindset to a "support-oriented" inspection model. This includes creating professional learning communities where inspection findings are used to design school-specific

improvement plans. Management must address the "coordination barrier" by establishing clear communication channels between the Woreda, the Regional Bureau, and the school, ensuring that inspectors act as instructional mentors rather than mere administrative evaluators.

From a policy perspective, the study serves as a roadmap for the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the Somali Regional Education Bureau. National strategies should prioritize the regionalization of inspection management frameworks to ensure they are contextually relevant to the logistical and cultural realities of emerging regions. Furthermore, the persistent challenge of weak follow-up implies that policy must mandate the allocation of "improvement budgets" specifically tied to inspection recommendations. Ultimately, moving from tracking "visit frequency" to measuring "improvement outcomes" will be essential to bridging the evaluation gap and ensuring that inspection leads to quantifiable gains in secondary school effectiveness.

5.4 Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This study provides valuable insight into the status of school inspection management and its contribution to school effectiveness in Ethiopia. However, several limitations suggest directions for future inquiry.

First, the study focused on secondary schools within specific zones of the Somali Regional State, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to all regions of Ethiopia, particularly those with different administrative capacities. Therefore, future research should expand its geographic scope to include a comparative analysis between "emerging" and "developed" regional states. Second, school effectiveness was measured based on the perceptions of teachers and leaders rather than objective longitudinal student learning data or national exam results. Consequently, further research should incorporate objective performance indicators, such as student dropout rates and standardized test scores, to triangulate with perceptual data.

Finally, while the study identified internal management challenges like poor coordination and inadequate planning, it did not fully measure the impact of external socio-political factors or regional instability on inspection regularity. Future studies should focus on assessing the resilience of quality assurance systems in conflict-affected or pastoralist contexts.

6 Conclusions

This study validates a comprehensive framework confirming that systematic school inspection management is a primary determinant of school effectiveness in the secondary schools of the Somali Regional State. The findings establish that while national inspection standards are robust on paper, their impact on school outcomes is realized only through a well-coordinated management cycle of planning, professional feedback, and rigorous follow-up. Strategic coordination and stakeholder engagement are the essential "human bridges" that convert regulatory inputs into meaningful quality gains. The study

demonstrates that the failure of inspection initiatives in peripheral regions is not due to a lack of policy, but is an outcome of management fragmentation that creates a "fault-finding" culture rather than a developmental one.

In conclusion, to achieve meaningful improvements in secondary education, the Somali Regional State must prioritize the development of inspectorate management competencies and the institutionalization of post-inspection support. By bridging the gap between federal policy vision and regional operational reality, these institutions can ensure that school inspection serves as a true catalyst for effectiveness. Ultimately, the quality of secondary education in Ethiopia will be defined not by the frequency of school visits, but by the strategic management that directs inspection outcomes toward empowering teachers and improving student achievement.

Declarations

Ethical approval

All of the investigational procedures performed in this study involving human participants were according to the Declaration of Hawassa University and approved by the Hawassa University Institutional Review Board (IRB) in the School of education in accordance with the guidelines and regulations. Approval Number (Ref. No. COE-REC/012/24) Dated Dec.13/2023 by behave of Dr Tesfaye Basha Lodango Review team Chairman.

Consent to participate

Informed consent was obtained from all participants involved in this study.

Consent to Publish

The authors affirm that all participants provided informed consent for the publication of de-identified data and findings resulting from this research.

Conflicts of Interest:

"The authors declare no conflicts of interest."

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Author Contribution

Acknowledgment

The authors sincerely appreciate the valuable contributions of individuals and institutions who supported this study.

Data Availability

The primary quantitative and qualitative datasets, along with any secondary data used and analyzed in this study, are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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