

## Principals' Conceptual Managerial Skills and Teachers' Instructional Effectiveness in Secondary Schools, Central Gondar Zone, Ethiopia

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was establishing the relationship between conceptual skills of the school principals and instructional effectiveness of the teachers in secondary schools, Central Gondar region, Ethiopia. The study proposed to use a correlational research design. The population of the study were 50 principals, 50 vice principals and 1,500 teachers, totaling 1,588 personnel. Due to their small number and importance to the research, all school principals and vice principals were selected using the census technique. 307 teachers were chosen using simple random sampling techniques by Cochran formula. The closed-ended questionnaire was used as the primary method for both principal and teacher data collection instruments. The expert-judgment methodology was used to verify the validity of the instruments and the reliability of the instruments tested using Cronbach's alpha test score. The data was analyzed by using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. The study revealed that there was no statistically significant relationship between the principals' conceptual managerial skills with teachers' instructional effectiveness. The study concludes that principals' conceptual managerial skills have no significant relationship with teachers' instructional effectiveness. In light of the findings, recommendations for school principals, teachers, Ministry of Education and suggestions for further research were discussed.

**Keywords:** Conceptual skill, Instructional effectiveness, Managerial skill, School principal, Secondary school

### Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of social, technological, economical, moral, political, and cultural growth in all countries of the world. It is highly relevant for the basis of literacy, skills development, technological advancement as well as the ability to maintain the natural resource in the environment. School principals play a great role in implementing and facilitating education activity. Mei Kin et al. (2018) viewed that teacher instructional effectiveness cannot occur in education organizations unless the school principals initiate and use the managerial skill proficiently.

Principals' managerial skills will have an influence on teachers in improving their instructional effectiveness through continuous assistance in pedagogical areas. A school principal who is equipped with a managerial skill not only enables the achievement of high performance but also brings quality education in the school since the school principals have a great responsibility in ensuring appropriate implementation of the curriculum in the school (Ozumusul, 2015).

According to UNESCO (2012), quality education enables individuals to acquire problem-solving skills, build confidence, lay motivation, equip knowledge and skills that enable them to be informed lodgment, positive thinkers that contribute to social and economic development in society.

the search for quality education implies that teachers' instructional effectiveness needs to be boosted. This study demanded that school principals' managerial skills are crucial factors for teachers' instructional effectiveness because through specialized knowledge, cooperation into the group, and the skill that to know how the various parts of the firm interact with each other and will affect in any part of the organization (Stanickova, 2017).

Quality education cannot be distinguished from the managerial skills of school principals' and teachers' instructional effectiveness because quality education can be seen from the accomplishment of student and strongly influenced by teachers' instructional effectiveness, whereas teachers' instructional effectiveness is strongly influenced by school principals' managerial skills (Kurniawan, 2011) school principals' managerial skills help to manage teachers' instructional effectiveness in the classroom and teachers' instructional effectiveness will also help to improve students' achievement (Rohmah & Karwanto, 2014).

These days globally, school principals' managerial skills are high priority issues for many countries in education. It is not surprising that so many authors have provided insight into principals' importance of managerial skills (Katz & Robert, 2009). Further, Katz categorized the school principals' managerial skills into three:

Number one is the technical skills: which is defined as a managerial skill that is needed to use specialized knowledge and to be proficient in procedure and technique related to the day-to-day activity in the organization.

Second is the human relation skills: this is a managerial skill that constitutes cooperation into a group that is managed and working with peoples.

The third skill is the conceptual skill: this is a managerial skill that the organization is seen as a whole and the skill that knows how the organizations' various roles interact with each other and the change of any part of the organization affects other parts of the organization.

School principals' who have managerial skills are regarded as significant contributors to school productivity such as in an environment of joint decision-making, staff partnership, school administration, leadership issues, and instructional effectiveness in the school. The research finding in Nigeria revealed that many principals did not possess the managerial skills in communication skills in communicating goals, strategies, procedures, and programs to the teachers' (Egboka et al., 2013).

Similarly, the study by Nwogu and Ebinu (2019) states that school principals' lack of communication skills could be of the reasons teachers felt that they were not part of the school system because of the communication style embraced by school principals were contributing to unsatisfactory teachers' instructional effectiveness.

On the other hand, the study conducted in Tanzania disclosed that the bulk of state secondary school principals hold the necessary skills in management to manage teachers' instructional effectiveness (Kamete, 2014).

Teachers' instructional effectiveness is defined with respect to the performance of the teachers in classroom management, use instructional media, student evaluations, mastery of subject matter, teaching conveyance, and participation in extra-curriculum activities in the school (Sudhan et al., 2009).

Classroom management is widely documented, showing that successful student behavior control by teachers, and producing positive education outcomes (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Researchers in America have reported that teachers equipped with classroom management techniques brought autonomy, accountability moral and social development, as well as students' achievement (Romi & Roache, 2012).

Teaching needs understanding of the use of relevant media and, most recently, the application of the use of robotics. A study conducted in Indonesia, on the use of instructional media in teaching to young learners indicated that teachers did the preparation and utilization of instructional media, but still at a minimum and not use it properly (Tanti, 2015).

Another very important element of instructional effectiveness is assessment. It denotes the process by which information of learning is gathered in accurate and efficient way to improve and make a decision about student learning.

A research study in Nigeria on the implementation of science teacher assessment in secondary school revealed that many science teachers are not technically trained and skilled to develop and administer tests, large class size, lack of motivation, lack of record-keeping facilities, and influence of parents and school principals are some of the triggers for teachers' ineffectiveness in assessment implementation (Faremi, 2014).

In the Central Gondar Zone, there are complaints and low teachers' performance. Besides, many contributing factors, such as teachers' absenteeism, reluctant to carry out school activities, staying in staffroom chatting during the lesson time, lack of interest to carry out student assessment, poor classroom management, poor implementation of teaching materials, and principals not supporting teachers.

According to Kimani et al. (2013), it is not possible to influence teachers' instructional effectiveness in the school without giving attention to the principals' managerial skills. In this setting, the study focused on the principals' managerial skills as a way of mitigating the problem due to teachers' instructional effectiveness that may hinder the achievement of school objectives to the maximum expected level.

According to the Ministry of education annual reports in Ethiopia (2010), students' achievement decreases from year to year, and in the Amhara national regional state, in general, and central Gondar zone, in particular, is getting worse. Therefore, to know where the problem lays, conducting research on school principals' managerial skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness is highly crucial.

From the above-mentioned, it is evident that the ambitions of Ethiopia as a country to deliver good quality education at all levels of grade but will not be met if the school principals are equipped with relevant managerial skills and teachers performing well in their instructional effectiveness, hence the need to undertake this study.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between school principals' conceptual managerial skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness in the Central Gondar Zone secondary schools, Ethiopia.

The following hypotheses were proposed to guide the study.

$H_{01}$ : There is no significant relationship between principals' conceptual managerial skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness in the Central Gondar zone secondary schools of Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia.

### ***Review of Literature***

#### ***School Principal Managerial Skills***

School principal Management skills are a collection of qualities and characteristics in the managers' personalities that allow them to handle the organization's work more effectively (Kamete, 2014). In certain professions, managerial skills can also be described as advanced professional expertise that principals have to hold to fulfill the duties and responsibilities in school management whereby teachers should be prepared with skills to carry out activities (Analoui & Madhoun, 2002).

For managers, Management achievement and effectiveness of school principals depend more on their managerial skills. Therefore, school principals as a manager must possess the skills needed

for school management (Singhal et al., 2005). In addition, Hartati et al. (2019) stipulated that the managerial skills of the school principals: conceptual, human interaction, and technical skills that enable the educational institution to understand the art and management science in fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of the principal. Similarly, Harling (2018) identified three key management skills on which the good principal of the school is based: conceptual, human, and technical skills. The scholar further concluded that while each of the managerial skills is generally present at all management levels, conceptual skills are more stressed by top-level management, technical skills are in first-line personal, which are associated with the school's day-to-day operation and human interaction skills at all management levels in the organization.

#### *The Attributes of the School Principal as a Manager*

Mullins and Linehan (2006) identified the school principal as involving a mixture of technical expertise, human relationships, and conceptual capacity. Skills in public relations represent the ability to get along with others and are essential qualities at all management levels. Depending on the level of management in the organization in which the school principal operates, the degree of technical skill expected by the school principal is varied. Mullins stated that, the principal as school manager advances the hierarchy of the organization, greater emphasis is likely to be on conceptual capacity and less rely on technical competence. Technical skills are applied the tasks that required the specific knowledge and methods in the first line level management and it concerned with training of subordinates, supervision and day-to-day operations of school activities. Human relation skills refer to an interpersonal skill that is working with other people. A distinguishing feature of management is the ability to secure the efficient use of human capital in the organization. This requires strategic use of coordination, leadership guidance to co-ordinate action.

#### *The Qualities of Successful School Principal as Manager*

Mullins and Linehan (2006) also describes eleven traits or qualities of a good school principal as a manager, the characteristics are divided into three separate categories, and all of them are intertwined, and ownership of one lead to having the other. The school principal needs basic knowledge and facts which this is defined as the foundation level in making decisions and taking action. In addition, the school principal needs unique competencies and characteristics which specifically influence teachers' conduct and performance. These eleven characteristics of the good school principal are commands of simple information, appropriate technical awareness, ongoing attention to circumstances, logical and problem-solving judgments, cognitive skills and abilities, emotional endurance, constructive suggestion to react intentionally to circumstances, imagination, mental capacity, healthy working patterns, and self-knowledge and abilities.

#### *Teachers Instructional Effectiveness*

Among many indicators of teachers' instructional effectiveness, classroom management, use of instructional media, and continuous assessment implementation are of the utmost importance. These to indicators will be used for this research study variables.

Classroom management is a term used to describe the process of ensuring classroom lessons run smoothly despite disruptive behavior occurred and methods of preventing misbehavior and dealing with it (Taysum et al., 2017). Similarly, classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep students organized, orderly, focused, attentive and scholastically fruitful during class teaching-learning process (Abbot et al., 2014).

Many scholars wrote approximately the definition of assessment in distinct ways. Regarding this, Poza-lujan (2015) states that the term assessment can be used in training to consult in any manner or interest, which is designed to gather information about the attitudes, or talents of learners. Besides, he states that assessment is the process of acquiring data, which is used to make an educated

selection about students, to give comments to the scholars about his or her development, strengths, and weakness, or to decide academic effectiveness.

Talabi (2001) declares that instructional media are usually developed to give practical pictures and experience to achieve curriculum objectives. The instructional media are considered extreme green facilitators within the instructional setting. They may not be replacing teachers in classroom teaching. But the use of instructional media requires a resourceful method though the teacher who desires to constantly be at the alert for novel ideas and tactics to make the lessons provided with exclusive instructional media to achieve powerful effects. Besides, Owusu (2009) explained that instructional media are the numerous materials that attract the five senses which boost the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research Design***

The correlation research design was regarded as the most relevant for this study because the researcher was determined whether and to what degree the relationship exists between two or more quantifiable variables. Therefore, the researcher used to establish the relationship between school principal conceptual managerial and teachers' instructional effectiveness in secondary in central Gondar zone, Ethiopia (Curtis et al., 2016). The researcher used purely quantitative methods to gather data from the school principals, vice principals, and teachers. According to Hunter and Leakey (2008), the objective of the quantitative method in research is to develop and employ theories and hypotheses on the phenomena.

### ***Target Population of the Study***

The study was targeted 50 principals, 50 vice principals, and 1500 teachers who are the target groups of the study. According to the Regional draft guideline, there is only one assigned principal and vice-principal in 50 secondary schools and 1500 teachers in Central Gondar Zone. In total, the study will target 1,600 personnel in the entire Zone.

### ***Sampling Techniques***

Firstly, the list of all names of teachers, school principals, and vice-principals were taken from the Central Gondar Zone Education office, which were 1500 teachers and 50 school principals and 50 vice-principals. School principals and vice-principals were considered as a sample using the census technique because they are very useful in providing information on the subject to be studied and their number is limited; therefore, collecting the data takes less time and resources. Teachers' population was sampled using a simple random technique so that each subject is left in the population and has the same probability of being selected for the sample.

### ***Sample Size***

The study finally had a total of 407 sample size, which is 50 school principals' and 50 vice-principals' and 307 teachers to conduct the study.

### ***Description of the Data Collection Instrument***

This section contains a description of the instruments in the current study to collect the data. The study was employed closed-ended questionnaires to collect data from teachers', principals', and vice-principals'. The closed-ended questionnaire was the primary method of data collection for a correlation research study (Landy & Conte, 2016).

The questionnaires were written in a list of questions to which answers were recorded by the respondents (Kumar, 2014). The questionnaires were contained for Likert scales type of closed-ended questions. The purpose of closed-ended questions is to get numerical data from the respondents. This was enabled the researcher the quantitative data collection and analysis simple as compared to the qualitative data. In supporting the above ideas, the larger the sample size, the more

structured, closed-ended, and numerical the questionnaire may have to be, and the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open the questionnaire may be (Cohen et al., 2007). Similarly, closed-ended questionnaire instrument for data collection is appropriate to reach a sample of teachers in a short span of time and to confirm privacy. It is also cost effective, familiar, and simple to administer as well, for gathering more general and accurate information with objective responses (Orodho, 2009).

The questionnaire will be prepared in English language because all the sampled principals and teachers were secondary school that are expected to be able to speak, read, listen and understand the concepts of the questionnaire and were assisted by the researcher when there was any ambiguity about instruments.

#### ***Data Collection Procedure***

The researcher got permission from Kenyatta University, School of Education, Department of Education Management, Policy and Curriculum studies, and Central Gondar Zone Education office before data collection. This is a mandatory requirement before carrying out the research. After getting the permit and letter of authorization, the researcher proceeds to Education Office the Central Gondar Zone, then to teachers, principals, and vice-principals by the time when they were in the semester meeting to collect the data. The researcher clarified the importance and purpose of the study for the respondent, free consent of participation was also sought by describing the freeness of the participation. Finally, assurance of confidentiality of the respondents was kept.

#### ***Method of Data Analysis***

After collecting the data, emphases were given on the ways of organizing the data as well as the application of appropriate methodologies for analysis based on the types questions to be answered and the data were presented in frequency tables. The data collected through closed-ended questions tallied, tabulated, and filled into SPSS version 20. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage and represented in frequency table. Therefore, for this study to establish the relationship between school principals' managerial skills (conceptual, and teachers' instructional effectiveness (use of instructional media, classroom management, and continuous assessment implementation) Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used for each variable.

### **Results and Discussion**

**Table 1. Correlation analysis between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' continuous assessment implementation (N=368)**

Variables	Correlation	Variables	
		Conceptual skills	Continuous assessment
Conceptual skills	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.048
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.664
	N	285	83
Continuous assessment	Pearson Correlation	-0.048	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.664	-
	N	83	83

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

As shown in Table 1, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' continuous assessment implementation in the teaching-learning process was found to be -0.048. The value for the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of -0.048 revealed that the strength of the association between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' classroom management was found to be weak and the direction of association was found to be negative. This infers that the high scores of either of the variables significantly lower the relationship of the other variable and the vice versa is true. Additionally, the p-value of 0.664 was above the level of significance of 0.05, and hence, the study established that there was no statistically significant relationship between the principals' conceptual skills and teachers' continuous assessment implementation in the teaching-learning process in secondary schools, Central Gondar Zone, Ethiopia. Therefore, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of principals' conceptual skills and teachers' continuous assessment implementation was found to be weakly negative and a non-significant relationship which is  $r(366) = -0.048, p > 0.05$ .

**Table 2 Correlation analysis between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' use of instructional media (N=368)**

Variables	Correlations	Variables	
		Conceptual skills	Use of instructional media
Conceptual skills	Pearson Correlation	1	0.069
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.535
	N	285	83
Use of instructional media	Pearson Correlation	0.069	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.535	-
	N	83	83

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

As designated in Table 2, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' use of instructional media in the teaching-learning process was found to be 0.069. The value for the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of 0.069 revealed that the strength of the association between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' use of instructional media 0.069 was found to be moderate and the direction of association was found to be positive. This implies that the high scores of the principals' conceptual skills are associated with the high scores of teachers' use of instructional media in the teaching-learning process in secondary schools, Central Gondar Zone, Ethiopia. Furthermore, the p-value of 0.535 was above the level of significance of 0.05, and hence, the study established that there was no statistically significant relationship between the principals' conceptual skills and teachers' use of instructional media in the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of principals' conceptual skills and teachers' use of instructional media was found to be moderately positive and a non-significant relationship which is  $r(366) = 0.069, p > 0.05$ .

As indicated in Table 3, the relationship between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' classroom management in the teaching-learning process was found to be -0.097. The value for the Pearson correlation coefficient of -0.097 revealed that the strength of the association between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' classroom management was found weak and the direction of association was found to be negative. This suggests that the high scores of either of the variables significantly lowers the relationship of the other variable. Likewise, the p-value of 0.384 was above the level of significance of 0.05, and hence, the study established that there was no statistically sig-

nificant relationship between the principals' conceptual skills and teachers' classroom management in the teaching-learning process secondary schools in Central Gondar Zone, Ethiopia. Therefore, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of principals' conceptual skills and teachers' classroom management was found to be weakly negative and a non-significant relationship which is  $r(366) = -0.097, p > 0.05$ .

**Table 3. Correlation analysis between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' classroom management (N=368)**

Variables	Correlations	Variables	
		Conceptual skills	Classroom management
Conceptual skills	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.097
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.384
	N	285	83
Classroom management	Pearson Correlation	-0.097	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.384	-
	N	83	83

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

**Table 4. Correlation analysis between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness (N=368)**

Variables	Correlations	Variables	
		Conceptual skills	Teachers' instructional effectiveness
Conceptual skills	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	-	0.866
	N	285	83
Teachers' instructional effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	-0.019	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.866	-
	N	83	83

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

As described in Table 4, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of the relationship between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instruction effectiveness was found to be -0.019. The value for the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of -0.019 revealed that the strength of the association between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness was found to be weak and the direction of association was found to be negative. Additionally, the p-value of .866 was above the level of significance of 0.05, and hence, the study established that there was no statistically significant relationship between the principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instruction effectiveness in secondary schools, Central Gondar Zone, Ethiopia. Therefore, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instruction effectiveness was found to be weakly negative and a non-significant relationship which is  $r(366) = -0.019, p > 0.05$ . Hence, H1 is supported. The findings contradict with the assertion of Giami and Obiechani (2019) there was a high positive relationship between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Moreover, the calculated probability value of 0.002 is less than the critical probability value of 0.05



and the relationship between principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria was statistically significant. Additionally, the findings of the study contradicted with the declaration of Muraina (2014) who asserted that when the right person is put in a place to do the right thing at the right time by leadership, it would help in the effective administrative of the school and guarantee greater accomplishment of specific school goals and objectives. Principals who assigned jobs to teachers in their area of expertise achieve much in terms of quality delivery and result. When teachers are performed in their area of comparative advantage, they then to be more committed and productive. However, the findings the study told us there was no positive synergy between the principals and the teachers in instruction effectiveness which end result, is the attainment of school goals and objectives in secondary schools, central Gondar zone, Ethiopia.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the finding of this study, the research study concludes principals' managerial skills that there is no significant relationship between the principals' conceptual skills and teachers' instruction effectiveness and the direction of the association was found to be weekly negative in secondary schools, Central Gander Zone, Ethiopia.

### **Limitations**

Most of the secondary school principals, vice-principals, and teachers are busy and may not have enough time to respond to questionnaires. The researcher made a great commitment to persuade them to fill the questionnaire timely, and by informing the importance and contribution of the successful completion of the study for the improvement of school principal management competency and teachers' instructional effectiveness in the school. Another limitation of this study is getting the previous empirical studies that are related to the area of the research topic at the national, regional, and local levels of the country.

### **Implication of the Study**

The Ministry of Education should give direction for regional and district education office officials to appoint well-trained school principals as well as should train and supervise those appointed school principals through continuous follow-up, especially that of the school principals were working out of their specialization without leadership training and expertise in the area of school leadership and management so that they be able to boost teachers' instructional effectiveness and consequently, reach the national goals. School principals should be involved in seminars and workshops on issues of management in education in order to enhance their administrative managerial skills by acquiring new skills to enhance teachers' instructional effectiveness and productivity as a whole. Teachers should be constantly involved in pedagogical training to enhance their instructional teaching effectiveness and to adequately copy with the present educational challenges faced in instructional teaching.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

This study is geographically limited to the relationship between principals conceptual managerial skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness in secondary schools, central Gondar zone, Ethiopia, similar studies should be carried out on other zones for further understandings of the relationship between principals' managerial skills and teachers' instructional effectiveness thus, it enables the Ministry of Education acquires more diversified information from the different zones to take an intervention in order to find out the solution of the problem.

The study is limited to classroom management, use of instructional media, and implementation of continuous assessment as an indicator of teachers' instructional effectiveness in the teaching-learning process policymakers and the Ministry of Education acquires more diversified information

so that other researchers should be carried out on other indicators of teachers' instructional effectiveness in the teaching-learning process in order to take an intervention in order to find out the solution of the problem.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare that they have is no conflicts of interest

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