

Principal Time-Use and School Effectiveness at Gabi-Rasu Zone Secondary Schools

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Abstract

Principals have different duties and responsibility to heads of schools. To better understand the allocation of their time work within the work day lives of principals, this study uses self-rating time-use data for secondary school principals in Gabi-Rasu Zone, Afar national regional state, Ethiopia. This study examines the relationship between the time principals spent on different types of activities and school outcomes including student achievement general education secondary school examination (GESSE) test score. We find that time spent on organization management activities, administration activities, instructional program activities, day-to-day instructional activities, internal relation activities, external relation and other activities are associated with school outcome (student test score). The researcher used a descriptive research design of survey type and gathered data through self-rating time usage data. The sample of this study comprises school principals in the Gabi-Rasu Zone. Thus, eleven public general preparatory secondary high school, two private general secondary high school and fifteen public general secondary high school. There are four research questions were guided this study. The data collected were analyzed through the computation of descriptive statistics, t-test, and contingency table and Univariate correlation. Findings indicated significant relationships between principal time-use and school effectiveness, principal effectiveness, proportion of time of different activity and activities that principals often engaged.

Keywords: School Leadership; School Effectiveness; Opportunity to Learn; Time Spent on Tasks

Back Ground of the Study

Introduction

School leadership has become a priority in education policy agendas internationally. It plays a key role in improving school outcomes by influencing the motivations and capacities of teachers, as well as the school climate and environment. Effective school leadership is essential to improve the efficiency and equity of schooling [1]. Evidence indicating that leadership is a critical component of school improvement has accumulated and principals are interested to lead schools and are, therefore, in many ways, responsible for improving school [1]. As countries are seeking to adapt their education systems to the needs of contemporary society, expectations for schools and school leaders are changing. Many countries have moved towards decentralization, making schools more autonomous in their decision making and holding them more accountable for results. Similarly, the requirement to improve overall student performance while serving more diverse student populations is putting schools under pressure to use more evidence-based teaching practices [1].

School effectiveness is a concept that is difficult to define and even more difficult to measure. To most educational planners, 'effectiveness' is the measure of factors that enhance a child's learning, irrespective of their background. While many models of school effectiveness exist, the Five-Factor model suggests that leadership, is acquisition of basic skills, a secure environment, high student expectations, and frequent performance assessment are critical elements of effectiveness [2].

In opportunity to learn (OTL): A high impact strategy for improving educational outcomes in countries Educational Quality Improvement Program (EQUIP II) identified and justified eight factors of a foundational opportunity to learn: Amount of instructional time available in the school year; Frequency of school closures and distance from students; Teacher attendance; Student attendance; Student-teacher ratios; Availability and use of instructional materials; Time-on-task within the school day and within lessons; and Development of reading skills in early grades [3].

In Ethiopia, Ministry of Education (MOE, 2013) is employing important activities of measuring students' competence using

National Learning Assessment (NLA) and Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA). The result obtained from such activities suggests that and it is vital to take intervention action to improve the quality of education and students' performance. To improve student academic achievement school leaders have strong effect in improving the quality of education at different level. As a result of these trends, the function of school leadership across the countries is now increasingly defined by a demanding set of roles which include financial and human resource management and leadership for learning [4].

According to MOE (2013), principals demonstrate knowledge of skills and abilities needed for minimal effective leadership. They are in the process of refining their skills and understandings to fully integrate their knowledge and skills. They monitor the situation in their school and respond appropriately. All principals at this level are expected to meet; Understand the importance for a school to have a shared mission, vision, beliefs, and goals, possess knowledge of school learning goals, initiate formal and informal discussions that address curriculum, instruction, and assessment issues, understand the importance of developing effective professional learning communities and result-oriented professional development, understand the importance of continued personal learning, professional development and understand the importance of non-fiscal resources (e.g., personnel, time, materials, etc.) in the effectiveness of a school [5].

However, in the schools where different studies focused on, it seems as time use of principals are subjected to different criticism and they are not as such effective in improving their schools [6]. Thus, conducting study on this particular issue was really appropriate. Hence, the study attempts to explore how secondary school principals currently spend their time and (how principals or school leaders time use) related this time decisions with school effectiveness in Gabi-Rasu, Afar national region state, Ethiopia would be assessed. Hence, this research is necessary to give current information about how principals use their time to engages organizational management's activities, how this may vary across the schools in the study area and to examine the relationship between school leadership behavior allocations of their time and school effectiveness in Gabi-Rasu, Afar region [4,7]. Thus, the study has the following specific main research objectives: i) to explore the major activities being made by principals as a school leader in the study area ii) to explore the proportion of time for each activities iii) to explore the extent to which school principals are effective in terms of time use iv) to analyze the relationship between principal time-use and school outcomes.

Material and Methods

Design of the Study

Obviously, the type of a research design varies depending on the nature of the issue researchers want to investigate. Researchers obliged to plan their research design and the way to be conducted. Indeed, to achieve the intended objectives of this study, explanatory design was employed. Quantitative data was collected at one point in time mainly to see the effect of principals' time use on students' effectiveness. That means, cross sectional self-rating survey employed.

Source of Data

The intended study, both primary and secondary data were used. These two sources helped the researcher to get more related and convergent data on the issue. The primary data was obtained from different principals using self-rating survey. The researcher has enough secondary sources on Grade 10th GESSE of the sampled schools.

Sampling Population and Sampling Techniques

The study population was divided in to strata on the bases of principals as a leader by school level, i.e., GPSS (9-12) and GSS (9-10) and Preparatory School (11-12) in Zone level. Gabi-Rasu Zone is one of the five Zones in Afar National Regional State of Ethiopia. According to the Education Statistics Annual Abstract (MOE, 2014) there are 296 public and private secondary schools of Afar region. From these 183 public and 13 private secondary schools 29 public and 2 private are found in Gabi-Rasu Zone so that they are the study population. Out of this researcher sample size were Gabi-Rasu Zone secondary schools 29 private and public secondary school (90.5%) were selected using purposive sampling technique. This is because the researcher is working this part of the region and it is easy to access the required data and it makes the study more valid.

Sample Size Determination

In this study, the sample size was determined using Kothari's population proportion formula for finite population indicated by Kothari (2004) and Kothari (2004:177) (See appendix-C).

Data Gathering Instrument and Procedure

Method of Data Collection and Instrument: Survey was conducted for this study and their questionnaire has two sections. The section A, aimed to address the background information of the respondents. Section B, on the other hand, contained 43 principals' activities, items designed to elicit information on principals' Self-ratings time-use behavior. These 43 items were also categorized in to six major activities such as: administration, instructional program, organizational management, day-to-day instruction, internal relation, external relation and others. Basically, the questionnaire asked the sample principals about the amount of time he/she spent on different activities during a typical week in the survey.

Procedure of the Study: The researcher made an appointment with each principals' right after the appointment and general introduction about the purpose of the study and its procedure, the researcher has allowed each principals to rate his/her time use performances by him/ herself. Their school sites were selected by each sampled principals as a convenient palace for the self-rating process. Each sample principals consumes about 50 minutes on average to administer the questionnaire. The researcher intervene the process only when the sampled principals need a sort of explanation about the items.

Data Analysis

The data for the study was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Frequency and percentage were employed for the descriptive part. Inferential statistical techniques such as one sample t-test, and Pearson product moment correlation were also used. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 alpha-level. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version-25 was employed to conduct the analysis.

Results and Discussion

Major Leadership Activities Made by School Principals

The number of hours allotted in one week for all categories tasks varied from respondents to respondents. The total time on tasks was determined by a mean of the six categories of task area plus the area labeled as other 43 activities. The greatest amount was reported in the area of administration with a mean of 30.8 hours, organization management with a mean of 24.5 hours and other activities with a mean of 18.73 hours. The least amount of was reported in the area of instruction program with a mean of 4.63, internal relation with a mean of 11.5 hours, day-to-day instruction with a mean of 7.17 hours and external relation with a mean of 4.62 hours. All categories of leadership activities of school principals are statistically significant role in Gabi-Rasu Zone, Afar national regional state (their all p-values are less than 0.05) (Table 1).

Categories of tasks	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	P-value
ADMINISTRATION TASK	30.8222	1.56554	949.545	.02930
ORGANIZATION MANAGEMENT TASK	24.5416	1.71348	671.718	.03207
INSTRUCTION PROGRAME TASK	4.6385	.98923	88.497	.01851
INTERNAL RELATION TASK	11.5763	1.99051	230.211	.03725
DAY-TO-DAY INSTRUCTION TASK	7.1749	1.46844	151.907	.02748
EXTERNAL RELATION TASK	4.6289	1.91132	45.537	.03577
OTHER TASK	18.7392	1.53097	549.292	.02865

Table 1: Major Leadership Activities of School Principals in Categories and Their Average Allotted Time per Week

Proportion of Time Spend to the Tasks they are Engaged Often

Principals' Time Use for Administration Tasks: Behalf of the school principals spend an average of 30.80 hours on administration-related activities; this average time is also allotted for different administrative tasks. Among the others, managing student services activities such as records and reporting have consumed 17 percent of the total time that principals allotted for administrative tasks.

The percentage of managing student discipline on the other hand accounts 16.9 percent of principals' administrative time. Supervising students and managing schedules of the school, on the other hand, account 15.64 and 13.79 percent of principals' time respectively. Moreover, fulfilling (non, SpEd) compliance requirements/paper work; Preparing, implementing, administering standardized tests for 10.77 percent and managing students attendance-related activities are also part of principals' administrative tasks that cover 12.8, 10.7 and 11.59 percent of the administrative time. The table also indicates that though activities related to the fulfillment of special education requirement are parts of principals' administrative task, school principals in the study area have only devoted 0.51% of their administrative time for this issue (Table 2).

Based on the above data, it is possible to argue that with the exception of issues related to special education requirements, the various elements within the administrative category have more or less consumed equal amount of principals' administrative time. Indeed, the absence of special education program in most of the sampled schools were one of the main reasons for its low share percentage. This by itself might also implicate that the efforts being made to address the issue of students with special needs is still in its infant stage.

Principals' Time Use for Instructional Tasks: Overall, the above table shows that out of the various instructional activities, school principals spent most of their time for utilization of school meetings. It accounts 28.78 percent of the time devoted to the instructional activities. With the percentage of 24.67, Planning, facilitating professional development for teachers as one element within the instructional category is the second most important activity of school principals in the study area. Sampled participants

RESPONSIBILITY	Min.	Max	Mean	%
ADMINISTRATION				
Managing student services (e.g., records, reporting)	5.50	5.50	5.50	17%
Managing student discipline	3.50	5.50	5.21	16.9%
Supervising students	3.50	5.50	4.82	15.64%
Managing schedules (for the school, not personal schedule)	2.50	5.50	4.25	13.79%
Fulfilling (non Sp Ed) compliance requirements/paperwork	2.50	5.50	3.96	12.85%
Preparing, implementing, administering standardized tests	1.50	4.50	3.32	10.77%
Managing students attendance-related activities	2.50	5.50	3.57	11.59%
Fulfilling special education requirement (e.g. meetings with parents)	0	1.5	0.16	0.51%
INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMME				
4.63				
Utilizing school meetings	.50	2.50	1.33	28.78%
Planning, directing after-school/summer instruction	.50	1.50	.57	12.33%
Planning, facilitating professional development for teachers	.00	1.50	1.14	24.67%
Planning, facilitating PD for prospective principals	.00	1.50	.60	12.98%
Developing an educational program across the school	.00	.50	.26	5.62%
Releasing or counseling out teachers	.00	.50	.10	2.16%
Evaluating curriculum	.00	.00	.28	6.06%
Using assessment results for program evaluation	.00	.50	.30	6.49%
ORGANIZATIONAL MANAGEMENT				
24.54				
Managing budgets, resources	5.50	5.5	5.50	22.44%
Managing non-instructional staff	4.5	5.5	5.14	20.90%
Maintaining campus facilities	2.5	5.5	3.57	14.57%
Developing and monitoring a safe school environment	2.5	5.5	4.03	16.44%
Dealing with concerns from staff	1.5	4.5	2.32	9.46%
Hiring personnel	.00	.00	.00	0%
Interacting or networking with other principals	.00	.50	.30	1.22%
Managing personal, school-related schedule	2.50	5.5	3.62	14.77%
INTERNAL RELATION				
11.57				
Interacting socially with staff about school-related topics	.5	5.55	2.92	25.28%
Interacting socially with staff about non-school topics	2.5	5.5	3.85	33.33%
Developing relationships with students	.5	2.5	1.39	12%
Counseling students and/or parents	.5	5	1.76	15.23%
Attending school activities (e.g., sports events, plays)	.00	2.50	.28	2.42%
Communicating with parents	.5	2.5	.82	7.09%
Counseling staff (about conflicts with other staff members)	.00	.00	.00	0%
Informally talking to teachers about students, not related to instruction	.5	.5	.5	4.32%
Day-to-Day Instruction				
7.17				
Preparing, conducting classroom. Observations.	.5	5.5	1.39	19.41%
Formally evaluating teachers, providing instruct. Feedback	.5	3.5	1.30	18.15%
Informally coaching teachers	.5	2.5	1.28	17.80%
Teaching students (e.g., tutoring, after-school)	.5	2.5	1.35	18.85%
Implementing required professional development	.5	1.5	.96	13.40%
Using data to inform instruction	.5	2.5	.85	11.87%
External Relations				
4.58				
Working with local community members or organizations	.5	3.5	1.87	40.82%
Utilizing district office meetings or other communications initiated by the district office	.5	4.5	1.80	39.30%
Communicating with district office to obtain resources for school (initiated by principal)	.00	2.80	.75	16.37%
Fundraising	.00	1.50	.16	3.49%

RESPONSIBILITY	Min.	Max	Mean	%
ADMINISTRATION				
Others	18.72			
In transition between activities	4.5	5.5	5.3	28.31%
call, or paperwork when topic or recipient is uncertain	5.5	5.5	5.5	29.38%
Interacting with the researcher	.5	2.5	1.10	5.87%
Personal time (e.g. bathroom, lunch, personal call)	4.5	5.5	5.25	20.04%
Engaging in self-improvement/professional development	.50	4.5	1.53	8.17%

Table 2: Proportion of Time Spend to the Tasks

have also mentioned that they spent 12.33 and 12.98 percent of their instructional time on planning, directing after-school and planning, facilitating PD for prospective principals. In the study area principals, however, rarely engaged in instructional activities such as using assessment results for program evaluation (6.49 percent), evaluating curriculum (6.06 percent) developing an educational program across the school (5.6 percent) and releasing or counseling out teachers (only accounts 2.16 percent).

Though it is a common knowledge for every one of us that school principals are expected to involve and encourage teachers in curriculum development related activities, in the study area, such activities were not touched by the good majority of school principals. Though why school principals are shying away from such instructional activities might be one good research question for future researchers who are curious on the issue, the seriousness of the issue and inadequacy of principals’ knowledge might be raised as reasons.

Principals’ Time for Organizational Management Activities: The amount of time allocated for organizational management activities. As indicated in the below table school principals devote 24.5 percent of their total time for management activities. Out of this, managing budgets and resources took 22.44 percent. Managing non-instructional staff and maintaining campus facilities also share 20.90 and 14.57 percent respectively. Developing and monitoring a safe school environment and managing personal, school-related schedule as managerial activities also consume 16.44 and 14.77 percent respectively. School principals, however, spend little or no time in hiring personnel and interacting or networking with other principals (Table-3).

Principals Time-use Behaviors	Passing the test	Fail the test
School principals with rate in the top half of all principals in time-use behavior	55.17%	44.82%
School with principals’ rated in the bottom half of All principals based on time-use behavior	44.82%	55.17%

Table 3: Percentages of principals’ expected to pass or fail a test versus student academic achievement

Both Figure 1 and 2 are deals about Principals time-use Behaviors

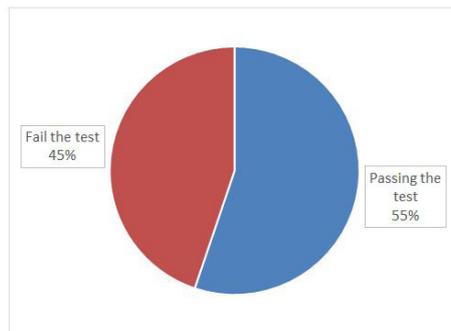


Figure 1: Pie-Chart for Top Half of all principals

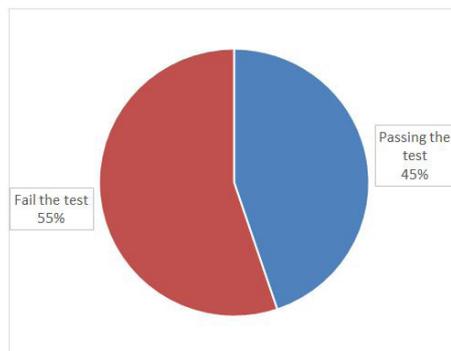


Figure 2: Pie-Chart for bottom Half of all principals

Principals’ Time for Internal Relation Activities: Maintaining good internal relation among staff members is one of the main leadership activities of school principals. Indeed, school principals in the study area devote 11.55 percent of their working time for their activities. Like the other categories, the time allocated for internal relation is divided in to various tasks. Based on the below table the two most important leadership tasks under the internal relation category are interacting socially with staff about non-school topics (covers 33.33 percent) and interacting socially with staff about school-related topics (consumes 25.28 percent). Counseling staff and attending school activities (e.g. sport event) as element of internal relation, on the other hand, share minimum time.

The data implicate that school principals had very low social relation with their staff. Poor social relationship among staff members, on the other hand, seriously hampers the effectiveness of their schools. Knowing this fact, school principals in the area should improve their social relation with other staff members in general.

Principals’ Time for Day-to-Day Instruction: School principals in the study area spend 7.6 percent of their working time for day-to-day instruction activities. Day to day instruction as one category of school leadership activity includes tasks like Preparing, conducting classroom, observations/walk-troughs (19.4 percent), formal evaluation of teachers, providing instruction and feedbacks (18.1 percent), teaching students (18.8 percent), informally coaching teachers (17.8 percent), implementing required professional development (13.4 percent) and using data to inform instruction (11.8 percent) [8].

The above data illustrates that all the elements within the day to day instruction fairly share the allocated time for the category.

Principals Time for External Relation Activities: As a school leader, principals are also expected to establish good external relation with the surrounding community members, leaders and officers. In average, school principals in the study area, have allocated 4.58 percent of their working time for external relation activities. Having the significance of external relation in mind, it is possible to say that the allocated time is insignificant. Out of this, working with local community members or organizations took 40.8 percent of the allocated time. Next to this, school principals devote 39.3 percent of time for utilizing district office meetings or other communications initiated by the district office. In the study area, principals’ engagement in fund raising activities was very low [9].

Principals’ Time for Other Activities: School principals in the area have also engaged in other personal and miscellaneous activities. Such activities cover 18.72 percent of school principals’ working time. Out of this, paper works and transitions between activities cover 29.3 and 28.3 percent respectively. Private activities such as private calling, bathroom and lunch took 20.04 percent. School principals, however, devote list amount of time (8.1 percent) for their personal development.

The Extents of Schools Principals’ Effectiveness

To determine principles’ effectiveness, the difference between effective school and ineffective school percentage of pupils at the school gaining more GESSE Grade A-C. The principals in the top or in the bottom half of the distribution for time-use behavior, among schools with principals in the top half of the distribution 55.17% would pass the test and 44.82% percent would fail. For school with principals in the bottom half of the distribution the expectation is opposite-only 44.82 percent of the school pass the test and 55.17% would failed. In other word, school with principals in the top half of the distribution in terms if time-use behavior would have 10.35 percent higher passing rate (Table 3) [10-12].

Relationship between Principals’ Time-Use and School Effectiveness

To interpret the 0.063 correlation, if this represents the weak relationship between school leadership and student achievement (Table 4).

		Percentage of Pupils at the School More GESSE Grade	Principals Time-use Behaviors
Percentage of Pupils at the School More GESSE Grade A-C	Pearson Correlation	1	.063
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.750
	N	29	29
Principals Time-use Behaviors	Pearson Correlation	.063	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.750	
	N	29	29

Table 4: Correlation of principal time-use and school effectiveness

Summary and Conclusion

Summary of the Major Findings

The large set of job responsibilities which principals make decisions about how to allocate time to engaged large set of job responsibilities. These time-use decisions are important for examine the daily activities of principals, on what activity principals

often engaged, to what extent principals effective as evidenced by the relationship between principal time use and school effectiveness. In order to answer the research question the population of this study (N=29) consisted of principals' in Gabi-Rasu Zone. The principals' were employed in general preparatory secondary school and general secondary high school and had more than two years' experience as a school leader. Based on the analysis made the study has come up with the following findings.

1. When principals in, administration, organization management, day-to-day instruction, instructional program, internal relation and external relation. Find that, on average principals engaged almost 30.82 hours of in their week taking care of administration responsibility managing student service, managing student discipline, supervising student and managing schedule. They engaged an addition of 24 hours in their week managing budget, managing non- instructional staff, monitoring a safe school environment, managing personnel and school related schedule. In contrast, principals' on average engaged a little over 4 hours and 7 hours in their week in instructional and day-to-day instruction respectively from these two categories' of activities principals' engaged in more in utilizing school meeting, planning, facilitating professional development for teachers, preparing, conducting class room observation formally evaluating teachers and informally coaching teachers.

2. As the average percent (proportion) of the school day principals engaged to the given category: administration 17.43 hours(29.5%), organization management 13.47 hours(22.8%), internal relation 9.22 hours(15.6%), others 8.5 hours(14.43%), instruction program 4.69 hours(7.56%) and external relation 3.44 hours(5.84%). As the average proportion of school principals report no time in evaluating curriculum 0 percent, hiring personnel 0 percent and counseling staff 0 percent. The survey found that many of the principals' time-use practice in this survey have a demonstrative effect on student achievement.

3. The correlation of principals' time-use and school effectiveness the weak relationship, weak relationship tells us the school principals' time-use and school effectiveness are significant. We may need to consider another variable for this study.

Conclusions

Based on the finding of the study the following conclusions were drawn: principals' time spent on in instructional program, external relation, day-to-day instruction that may affect student test score. This study found that principals' whose choose more engaged in organizational management, administration and internal relation. The result indicate that principals use of time more engaged in (administration, organization management, other activity and internal relation) tasks by contrast, time-use indicating less engaged on (instructional program, external relation and day-to-day instruction) task showed negative school effectiveness.

Principals to influence on student academic achievement principals use of time actively Administration task: Managing student discipline managing student attendance related activity, preparing, implementing and administration standard test, Management organization: developing and monitoring a safe school environment, Day-to-Day instruction: Implementing required professional development and using data to inform instruction. Instructional program: Planning, facilitating PD for prospective principals Developing an educational program across the school, Releasing or counseling out teachers, Evaluating curriculum, Using assessment results for program evaluation and Planning, facilitating professional development for teachers, Internal relation: Communicating with parents, Counseling staff (about conflicts with other staff members) and Informally talking to teachers about students, not related to instruction, External relation: Fundraising and Other: engaging self-professional development.

The survey instrument identified in the roles leading special education, hiring personnel, evaluating curriculum, and counseling staff principals do not have special skill or competence. Principals in this survey said that the value of their other tasks and internal relation more than the instruction program, external relation, day-to-day instruction and internal relation portion of their jobs. As stated before, they spend the majority of their time on instructional program and value it the most.

Our finding implication the correlation between leadership time-use and school effectiveness weak relationship, consider the correlation 0.063, If this represents the true relationship between principal leadership and student achievement, then educators must accept the conclusion that the leadership behavior of the principal in a given school has almost no effect on the achievement of the students in a school. If the principal spent double time on instructional program, external relation, day-to-day instruction, the achievement of the students in the school will be about the same as would be expected.

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