A Comparative Study on Male and Female Principals’ Leadership Performance and Leadership Style from Other Stakeholders’ and the Principals’ Perspective in Governmental Primary Schools of Addis Ababa City Administration

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to compare the leadership performance and leadership style of male and female principals working in Addis Ababa governmental primary schools. A descriptive survey method with causal comparative research design was employed to achieve the purpose. Four sub-cities were randomly selected out of ten sub-cities found in the city administration. Then 13 primary schools lead by male school principals and 13 primary schools lead by female principals were selected randomly for this study. Then all the 13 male and 13 female principals were purposely selected for the study to gather data on their own leadership performance and leadership style. Besides, 130 male and 130 female teachers (five male and five female from each school) were randomly selected. As immediate subordinates 29 male and 23 female vice principals working in the sampled schools were also included. Thus a total of 260 five point likert type questionnaires for teachers, 52 questionnaires for vice principals and 26 questionnaires for principals were distributed. Then a total 304 (89.9%) of the questionnaires were successfully completed and returned. In addition, interviews were conducted with 8 WEO heads found in the selected sub-cities (two from each sub-city). Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed during data analysis. Frequency counts, percentages, mean, cross tabulation and t-test were employed. Finally, the study revealed that female principals significantly show superior performance than male principals in three of the five major tasks of principals; i.e in facilitating /setting a school vision, in developing school community relations and in leading the teaching learning process when from other stakeholders’ perspectives. However, when the principals own perspective was considered, no statistically significant difference was found between their performances in all of the five major principals’ tasks. The study also revealed no statistically significant difference between the leadership styles that male and female principals dominantly use in schools. It is found that democratic leadership style was the most commonly employed leadership style by principals of Addis Ababa primary schools. Therefore, it is recommended that the society at large, officials at the different hierarchical structure in particular, should motivate and encourage females to be assigned in school leadership position and females themselves should break the glass ceiling by which the society imposed on them.

Key words: Gender, leadership performance, leadership style
INTRODUCTION

Leadership generally is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organization (House et al., 1999). Thus school leadership is the process of influencing the activities of teachers, students and other stakeholders toward goal achievement. It is the ability of the principal to influence, motivate, and enable the school community to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the school.

Since the school is the place where citizens are cultured to be problem solver and responsible for their own nation as well as to the world at large, influencing all the stakeholders to bring out these citizens is the primary responsibility of principals. Any school is only effective as the leadership that runs it. A principal as a school leader is recognized as a person who sets direction and influences people to follow that direction. A principal sees the future that can be different and better and help others see that picture too. He/she is a coach, an encourager and is willing to take risks today for something better for tomorrow. Lots of duties are supposed to be done by principals including administration of curriculum and teaching, resource allocation, planning and reporting. Their duties also include performance assessment and evaluation, staff development, relationship with community and use of practical skills necessary for surviving policy (MoE, 2010). It is a fact that the aims and objectives of education cannot be achieved until and unless educational policy is properly implemented. Thus principals are primarily responsible individuals to lead all the stakeholders to achieve educational objectives at school level. Therefore, the leadership performance each principal reflect in the school has its own significant for the realization of school objectives.

When one raises the leadership performance of principals, an important question to be answered could be who show better school leadership performance; Male or female? Answering this question with the help of empirical evidences can contribute for effective achievement of the intended objectives at school level. However, it is commonly observed that men highly occupied the school leadership position in Ethiopia without such kind of evidences.

In Ethiopian schools gender plays a significant role in assigning principals at the different level. As a result, there are few number of female school principals across the country. The problem becomes severe as we move from primary to secondary and then to preparatory school levels. This is also true in Addis Ababa city administration, a place where we think is a relatively advanced and gender stereotyping is comparatively minimal. During this study was conducted (2015/16), there is no single female school leader in secondary and preparatory schools of Addis Ababa Governmental
schools. Even at primary school level the number of female principals is almost negligible. In primary schools, from the total of 214 principals only 32 (16.4%) of them are females. However, from the total number of 6694 diploma holder teachers and 3923 degree holder teachers, 54.6% and 47.5% of them are females respectively. Besides, teachers’ carrier ladder shows that there are more experienced female teachers than their male counter parts.

Written literatures indicate that the question whether male and female leaders perform differently, regardless of the situation, is still a debatable issue. The question “Are there differences in the way males and females lead organizations?” has grasped attention. According to Eagly and Johannesen (2001), whether men and women behave differently in leadership roles is a much debated question although there is general agreement that women face more barriers to become leaders than men do. Empirical literatures show inconclusive findings about the comparative potential of male and female leaders in general (Amina et al., 2012; Andersen & Hansen, 2011; Cliff, 2005; Coleman, 2000; Engen & Willemsen, 2004; Feldham, 2009; Janie, 2002; Kawana, 2004;). Similarly, the leadership style they dominantly employ in their work place is open to doubt (Eagly, 2013; Eugenia, 2010; Eagly, Johannesen & van Engen, 2003; Shakeshaft, 1989; Yukl, 2010).

In general, literatures indicate that there is a growing body of research that has studied the leadership potential and leadership styles of men and women across the world. However, in Ethiopia it gets the attention of limited number of researchers only recently. In our society, it seems that leaders have usually been males. It also seems that the assumption that leadership equates with maleness is deeply rooted in both our thinking and language. For example, our common Amharic proverbs such as, “ሴት የማር ቤጋ የወንድ የሹመት” meaning, females are house workers while males are leaders; “ሴት ያሹ የወንድ ያስቀስ” meaning, what ever a female knows the male concludes, and “ሴትና ዝር የወንድ ያስሳት ያስለው” meaning, if females are given official duty, they will abandon their home responsibility, are used by our society at large to exclude females from the leadership position and to belittle their leadership potential. Thus the major purpose of the study is to compare the leadership performance of male and female school principals apart from such kind of gender biased proverbs.

Though it is belived that there is less gender stereotyping in Addis Ababa administration due to its relative advancement in socio-economic situation, the number of female principals is by far less that their male counter parts. They account only 32 (16.4%) out of the total of 214 principals assigned in government primary schools. Primary schools are taken as a target for the study because they are
place in which the generations are indoctrinated to be responsible citizens at the grass root level. Another reason for confining this study at primary level is no female principals are found at secondary level during this study was conducted thus is impossible to compare the leadership performance of male and female principals where females were not assigned in a leadership position.

To sum up this study aimed to examine whether principals’ leadership performance and their typical leadership style is gender related or not. At the same time the study assessed the most commonly employed leadership style in Addis Ababa City administration. Thus the study was targeted to address the following research questions

1. Who (male or female principals) significantly show better leadership performance in each of the five major leadership tasks?

2. Is there a significant difference between male and female principals’ on their leadership style preference?

3. What kind of leadership style is dominantly used by school principals in Addis Ababa City Administration?

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to compare the leadership performance of male and female primary school principals as viewed from other stakeholders’ and the principals’ perspective. Specifically the study was intended to:

- determine whether there is significant difference between male and female principals’ performance in the five major leadership tasks (leading the school vision, developing school–community relationship, leading the teaching-learning process, leading individuals and teams and managing school operations and resources)

- examine whether there is significant difference between male and female principals in the leadership style they dominantly employ

- identify the most commonly used leadership style(s) in governmental primary schools of Addis Ababa
**Assumptions of the Study**

This study was conducted on the basis of the following major assumptions. The first assumption was that all principals despite their gender difference have more or less equal understanding on their roles and responsibilities. The second assumption was that in all the selected schools the teachers’ and students’ characteristics as well as the challenging situations were more or less similar. Regardless of these assumptions the researcher tried to assess the subordinates’ and the principals’ background profile to check whether these variables significantly affect the result of the research or not.

Studies conducted world wide in relation to gender and leadership reported a number of contradictory findings. For instance, in a comparative study on gender and educational leadership in England, Coleman (2000) reported that men are supposed to be aggressive, assertive, decisive, and more inclined to act independently than women did. It is also indicated that female educational leaders tend to adopt a democratic and cooperative style, to pay more importance to vision building for institution, to spend much time to bring change and implement the change and to solve curriculum and teaching matters (Oplatka, 2003). Women intervene more than men in the teaching-learning process, more often they evaluate student progress and demonstrate the kinds of behavior that promote achievement, learning and high morale (Shakeshaft, 1989). Similarly, a number of studies (e.g., Al-Ani and Amzat, 2011; Amina et al., 2012; Celikten, 2005; Delamont, 2000; Eagly, 2013; Eugenia, 2010; Kawana, 2004; Limerick and Anderson, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1990) found female leaders are more effective than males in educational institutions.

In contrast with these findings, a number of other researchers (e.g., Andersen & Hansen, 2011; Cliff, 2005; Janie, 2002; Jirasanghe & Lyons, 1996; Mertz & McNeely, 1998; Samantha, et al., 2014) argued that there is no significant difference in leadership effectiveness and leadership style as a result of gender.

**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

**Research Method**

A concurrent QUAN-qual research approach was employed in investigating whether male and female principals have a significant difference in their leadership performance and leadership style. Causal comparative research design (ex-post facto) was used to compare the leadership performance of male and female principals from the view of other stakeholders (teachers, vice principals and woreda education heads) and the principals themselves. This design was also used to explore the
dominant leadership style employed by male and female principals as this design is recommended an appropriate for such kind of cases (Cohn et al, 2007; Burke & Larry, 2008; Ravid, 2011; Weirsma & Jurs, 2009).

**Participants of the Study**

The participants of the study were principals, vice principals, teachers and woreda education office heads. As the study is aimed to compare male and female principals’ leadership performance and the leadership style they dominantly employ, investigating principals own view on their performance and leadership style was found important to triangulate the results gathered from other stakeholders. Similarly, vice principals and teachers were included as they are immediate subordinates’ of the principals and expected to have relevant information about their principals’ leadership performance and leadership style. In addition, as an immediate superior, Woreda education office heads were included with the belief that they are expected to have relevant information about male and female principals’ leadership performance and the leadership style they dominantly use.

**Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

Totally there are ten sub cities in the city administration. Out of these four (Arada, Addis Ketema, Gullelle and Lideta) sub-cities were randomly selected. Simple random sampling technique was used thinking that the population is more or less similar and then to give equal chance for all of them. Again there are a total of 54 male and 16 female principals working in primary schools of the sampled sub-cities. Out of this number 13 male and 13 female principals and their respective schools were taken as a sample for study. In doing this, simple random sampling was employed to select male principals and their respective schools while purposive sampling was used to select female principals and their respective schools. In selecting the 13 female principals out of the 16 those who were assigned recently were excluded.

After the 13 schools lead by male principals and 13 schools lead by female principals were selected, vice principals and teachers were randomly selected from each of these 26 schools as an immediate respondent. Thus five male and five female teachers (totally ten teachers) were taken from each of the selected primary schools through stratified sampling. Similarly, two to three vice principals were taken to give relevant information on their principals’ leadership performance and leadership style. Therefore, a total of 13 male and 13 female principals, 29 male and 23 female vice principals as well as 130 male teachers and 130 female teachers were taken for study. The stratum (male and female) was used to take more or less equal number of male and female respondents so that it helps to minimize gender biased information (in case if there is). In addition,
eight Woreda education office heads (two from each sub-city) were taken to conduct semi-structured interview about the principals’ leadership performance and dominant leadership style. In doing so, convenient sampling technique was employed as Woreda education office heads were busy and were not that much willing for interview in most cases. (See appendix “A” for detail data about the total population and the sample size from each Sub-city).

**Instruments and Procedures of Data Gathering**

For gathering relevant data in relations to principals’ leadership performance, two sets of questionnaires were prepared. One set of questionnaire was administered for male and female principals and another version of the questionnaire was employed for vice principals and teachers. The questionnaires were prepared on the basis of different literatures written about leadership effectiveness in general and school leadership effectiveness in particular. This includes principals’ roles and responsibilities, duties of school leadership, skill and knowledge needed for effective school leadership. Moreover, different standardized questionnaires prepared to measure leadership effectiveness (for example, the one prepared by Pennsylvania department of education, 2012) were consulted but they are not directly taken for this study. Furthermore, principals’ leadership competencies developed by Ministry of Education in 2012 were taken in to consideration during preparing the questionnaire to gather data about principals’ leadership performance.

In addition to all this, the questionnaires were given for few expertises in the field for validation and important comments were obtained. However, for assessing the leadership style (autocratic, democratic and laissez faire) that male and female principals dominantly used, standardized questionnaire prepared by Sage publication was employed. This tool was chosen because it is commonly recommended to be used in the education setting and found valid and reliable across different cultures (Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Tejeda, Scandura, & Pillai, 2001; Tepper & Percy, 1994; Yammarino, Spangler & Dubinsky, 1998).

Totally, the questionnaire has nine background related questions; forty eight items related with principals’ leadership performance, as well as, eighteen leadership style related questions. Questions prepared to assess male and female principals’ leadership performance address five major areas (leading and facilitating vision of learning, developing school – community relations, leading teaching- learning process, leading individuals and teams, and managing school operations and resources). All the items are likert scale types ranging from Very Low represented by 1 to Very high represented by 5.
In addition to questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight Woreda education office heads (two from each sub-city) to get further information about male and female principals’ leadership performance and the leadership style they dominantly employ. Both the questionnaire and the interview were conducted in Amharic language to make communication simple and to avoid misunderstanding of concepts.

**Methods of Data Analysis**

Data gathered from respondents were analyzed using Statistical Package in Social Science (SPSS version 20). Before further analyses were made, the collected data were first grouped in the different areas and sub-areas of principals’ leadership performance and to their leadership style as discussed above. Frequency counts and percentages were used to compute demographic information of respondents. Mode was used to identify the most commonly utilized leadership style in primary schools of the city administration while cross tabulation was employed to compare male and female principals’ leadership performance and leadership style preference with the different background characteristics of respondents. Group means (X) were used to compare the leadership performance of male and female principals while standard deviations (SDs) were employed to compare the variation among male and female principals’ subordinates’ response.

The t-test was employed to check whether there is a statistically significant difference between the performance of male and female principals as well as to check whether there is a relationship between principals’ gender and their leadership style preference (Cohen et al., 2007; James, 1982; Ravid, 2011). For checking the statistical significance, the alpha level P<0.05 was used (Weirsma and Jurs, 2009; Burke & Larry, 2008; Ravid, 2011).

During the study the issue of consent, confidentiality and anonymity were sufficiently addressed in the study.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A total of 338 questionnaires were distributed to 26 (13 male and 13 female) principals, 52 (29 male and 23 female) vice principals and 260 (130 male and 130 female) teachers who were working in 26 governmental primary schools. Out of these, 23 questionnaires from principals, 46 questionnaires from vice principals and 235 questionnaires from teachers were successfully completed and returned. Thus the rate of return from the distributed questionnaire was 89.94%. Besides, data which were gathered through semi-structure interview from eight Woreda education offices (WEO) heads were discussed to substantiate the data from respondents. In interpreting the
results, the calculated means were used to compare the responses of respondents. In doing so, the level of agreement used is [0.05-1.49] = very low; [1.50-2.49] = low; [2.50-3.49] = moderate; [3.50-4.49] = high; [> 4.5] = very high (Gravitter, 2000). Thus mean scores less than 2.5 show low principals’ leadership performance, mean scores between 2.5 and 3.5 show moderate performance while mean scores greater than 3.5 show high leadership performance. The t-critical =1.960 with df =302 at p<0.05 was employed to check the level of significant between the two means.

1. Demographic Information of Respondents

The study depicted that out of the total number of both male and female principals, the majority (66.7% and 45.5% respectively) are found between thirty one to forty years old. This may indicate that age could not be a major factor for principals’ leadership performance difference in primary schools. Likewise, the majority of both subordinates (teachers and Vice principals) of male principals and female principals (60.9% and 57.7%) are found in the same age range, which may confirm that subordinates’ age has a little effect to bring a significant difference on principals’ leadership performance.

Data from respondents’ background indicate that both male and female principals as well as subordinates teaching experience seems fairly distribute in different stages. In general, data about respondents’ teaching experiences show that there is less opportunity that teaching experience can be a reason for the difference in leadership performance between male and female principals. In the same, way data about principals’ teaching experience indicate that the majority of both male and female principals (41.7% and 36.4% respectively) have more than nine years of teaching experiences which again couldn’t be a reason for their leadership performance. Likewise, it is found that approximately 62% and 67% of subordinates of male and female principals are Diploma holders respectively while approximately 83% and 67% of male and female principals (respectively) are first degree holders. Here, there are more male principals who got their first degree than female principals which in turn may positively contribute for male principals’ leadership performance than their female counterparts.

In sum, it seems that data about respondents’ different variables such as sex, age, teaching experience and educational status could not be a factor for the difference in leadership performance between male and female principals as these variables are nearly equally exist in both groups of schools lead by male and female principals. This in other words means, if a significant difference is
observed between male and female principals’ leadership performance, the difference will not be resulted due to the above variables rather it would be subjected to the principals’ leadership performance only.

2. Male and female principals’ leadership performance

As it is clearly discussed in the methodology part at attempt was made to consult different literatures when designing tools to assess principals’ leadership performance. Finally, five major or comprehensive dimensions were used as a point of comparison their leadership performance.

A. Leading and facilitating vision of learning

It is clearly known that successful educational leaders, particularly school principals need to inspire their subordinates by establishing, implementing and assessing an attractive, worthwhile, and achievable vision of the future. Likewise, principals need to collect and arrange data to help create a vision. Effective school principals are expected to foster learning, student achievement and teacher development, lead towards a shared vision and undertake a continual process of review (Dinham, 2008). It is essential that head of schools share their vision with stakeholders so that they understand the schools goals and work together for achievement (Leithwood, 2010). Therefore, comparing male and female principals’ performance in leading and facilitating their schools vision is acceptable.

To compare male and female principals’ performance on leading and facilitating vision of learning twelve factors were considered (see appendix “B” for the details). Facilitating the realization of a shared vision, leading the change process for continuous improvement, creating an organizational vision, mission, and strategic goals, using multiple data sources to drive effective decision making and systematically guiding staff through the change process are among some of the factors by which both male and female principals perform with out statistically significant difference when both subordinates’ and the principals’ perspective is considered. Though the difference is not statistically significant data from such respondents indicate that female principals’ performance was rated higher than their male counterparts. Moreover, the response from subordinates clearly show that female principals show a statistically significant difference in their performance of leading the process of setting, monitoring and achieving challenging goals, responding to educational developments that affect school environment and building a collaborative work environment with a t-calculated (-2.005,-2.763 and -2.155) respectively.
Generally, the t-value (-1.967) derived from the overall variables which can indicate principals’ performance of leading and facilitating vision of learning shows that statistically significant difference is observed between male and female principals’ performance. In addition, the overall mean average 3.66 from male principal subordinates and 3.85 from female principal subordinates indicate that females show relatively better performance than males. Contrary to subordinates’ response, the grand mean from male and female principals’ response (4.01 and 4.03) do not indicate a wide gap between their performance in relation to leading and facilitating the school vision. Besides the t-value (-.099) indicate that the difference between the two grand means is not statistically significant. However, in support of data from subordinates, data from interview indicated that female principals spent much of their time to realize their school vision than their male counterparts. They better communicating their school vision to their subordinates and exert efforts to realize the vision. For example, one of the interviewee clearly stated this when he said “in most cases I observe female principals exert their maximum effort to communicate their school vision and work to achieve the vision”. Vision, goals, and mission became strongly situated in the vocabulary of principals who wished to succeed in the evolving environment of school reform (Hallinger, 2005). More specifically, Oplatka (2003), found that female educational leaders tend to adopt a democratic and cooperative style, to pay more importance to vision building for institution.

B. Developing school–community relations

The society particularly the surrounding community is the owner of the schools. Thus principals are expected to work with teachers, parents, students, and members of the community as coaches and mentors so that students’ accomplishments will be maximized. Similarly, they need to build productive external alliances with parents, the community, and non governmental organizations. The leader articulates and models a clear vision of the school’s culture that involves students, families, and staff (NCEERA, 2014). The principal must regularly inform the community about the conditions, achievements, and needs of the school (Barter, 2001). Therefore, comparing male and female principals’ leadership performance in this aspect is quite significant.

In comparing male and female principals’ leadership performance in developing school-community relation eight variables were used (See appendix “C” for details). Among these variables are connecting the school with the community, involving parents and communities in improving student learning, designing structures that result in parent and community engagement and engaging a wide range of stakeholders when formulating strategic plans. The responses from subordinates
indicate that statistically significant difference was observed between male and female principals’ performance in consulting with key people and groups when making decisions, in engaging a wide range of stakeholders when formulating strategic plans and in involving parents and communities in improving student learning with a t-value -2.279, -2.169 and -1.976 respectively. However, statistically significant difference was not observed in the rest of the variables and when the principals themselves response was concerned even if females’ performance was rated higher than their male counterparts by their subordinates. Besides, the SDs show there is less variation among subordinates of female principal than those of male principal subordinates.

In sum, the grand mean average 3.65 from male principals’ subordinate and 3.85 from female principals’ subordinate show that, female principals show relatively better performance than males in developing school-community relation. Moreover, the t-value (-2.140) calculated from these two mean scores confirmed that the difference between the two group means is statistically significant which again support that female principals’ performance significantly differ from their male counterparts in developing school community relation.

In addition to comparing male and female principals’ leadership performance from their subordinates’ perspective, an attempt was also made to compare male and female principals’ performance from their own perspective. Thus the result showed that male principals rate their own performance in developing school community relation with a grand mean score 3.97 while female principals rate their performance in the same aspect with a grand mean score 3.77 which is quite contrasting with the result gathered from their subordinates point of view, though the t-value 0.844 indicates that the difference between the two grand means is not statistically significant. Empirical literatures found that female leaders rate their performance less than male leaders rate their own performance, this may be due to the socio-cultural trends. A particular study by Samantha, Lisa and David (2014) revealed that when followers’ ratings are separately examined, women are rated as significantly more effective than men. In contrast, when self-ratings are examined, men significantly rate themselves more effective than women rate themselves which is quite similar with this specific result.

On the other hand data from WEO heads interview support the responses of subordinates of male and female principals. For instance, one of the WEO head uttered that “females better communicate stakeholders about their school situation and often consult with them to search for solutions” In support of his observation, another WEO head clearly put that female principals can build better school community relationship than their male counterparts when he said “…most of the
time female principals can easily and better communicate about different school affairs with different stakeholders, particularly with the surrounding community than males”. A study conducted in Namibia concluded that, woman school leaders are more effective than their male counterparts as they are caring, well organized and good at communicating and establishing relations with others (Kawana, 2004). Amina and associates found that female institutional heads found to be comparatively better in motivating their team for hard work and keeping coordinal relationship with staff and parents (Amina et al., 2012).

Therefore, it is possible to conclude that female principals show better performance on developing school community relation than their male counter parts as far as both subordinates and WEO heads point of views were concerned.

C. Leading the Teaching and Learning Process

The main responsibility of school leaders is leading the instruction. As a result school leaders are also named as instructional leaders (Hallinger, 2005). Thus instructional leaders are expected to perform a number of activities which can enhance students’ academic achievement. The instructional leader needs to have up-to-date knowledge on three areas of education: curriculum, instruction, and assessment (DuFour, 2002). The school leader assures a standards aligned system is in place to address the linkage of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and data on student learning and teacher effectiveness based on research and best practices (NCEERA, 2014).

Thus comparing principals’ on the potential they have to lead the teaching learning process has paramount importance to take immediate action through training and other mechaehisms. Thus similar to other core tasks, different variables (points) were used to compare male and female principals in this aspect. Among the twelve specific points used for comparing them (See appendix “D” for details) statistically significant differences were observed in their performance of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning programs and monitoring the progress of teachers and staff with a t-value -2.252 and -2.722 respectively when only subordinates rating was concerned. Similarly, female principals’ performances were found significantly better than theoir male counterparts in creating a suitable instructional environment for teachers and students, in conducting and maintaining school’s performance evaluation information and in supervising and conducting staff professional development and training programs with t-calculated -2.423, -2.591 and -2.090 respectively.
In general, the over all mean average 3.64 and 3.86 indicated that female principals better perform in leading the instruction than their male counter parts when viewed from their subordinates’ perspective. Moreover, the SDs 0.80 and 0.74 respectively from these mean scores clearly show that there is less variation among female principal subordinates’ than their male counterparts which again means there is high uniformity on female respondents response than that of males. Furthermore, the t-value (-2.435) indicates that the overall mean of male and female subordinates response is statistically significant. This shows that female principals better lead the teaching learning process than male principals as of their subordinates view is concerned. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that as far as their subordinates perspective is concerned female principals show a relatively better performance than their male counterparts in leading the teaching learning process in primary schools of Addis Ababa.

In addition, data from interview with WEO heads support that female principals better perform in various instructional leadership activities than male principals. One of the WEO head replied that “though females perceived as less effective by the society, they are effectively and efficiently leading the schools in our woreda better than male principals”.

Findings done somewhere else also revealed more or less similar results. For instance, a study conducted to compare male and female primary school principals’ leadership effectiveness in Cyprus from parents’ perception indicate that female principals were perceived by parents as more effective than male principals in setting directions, developing people, redesigning schools and instructional leadership (Orphanos, n.d). Moreover, Shakeshaft (1989), clearly put that women intervene more than men in the teaching-learning process, more often they evaluate student progress and demonstrate the kinds of behavior that promote achievement, learning and high morale.

D. Leading individuals and teams

Leader effectiveness is occasionally measured in terms of the leader’s contribution to the quality of group processes, as perceived by followers or by outside observers Leading individuals as well as teams are very significant to run the teaching learning process effectively. Principals are expected to lead individual teachers, students and other stakeholders so that they can contribute their maximum to make schools effective. Likewise, principals need to develop different teams on the basis of various issues to run both curricular and co-curricular activities. According to Yukl, effective leaders help followers to create agreement about objectives, priorities, and strategies (Yukl, 2010). As of Yukl the effectiveness of a group or organization requires at least a moderate degree of collective
identification. It is obvious that the performance of schools largely depends on each and every stakeholder’s effectiveness as an individual and as a team. Besides, Barge states that as schools are comprised of different groups, with different and sometimes opposing interests effective principals need to understand the nature of conflict and develop practical skill to manage it (Barge, 1994).

It is obvious that effective leader needs to enhance group cohesiveness, member cooperation, member commitment, and member confidence which enable the group to achieve the intended objective. Therefore, one common indicator of leader effectiveness is the extent to which the performance of the team or organization facilitated.

Thus male and female principals were compared in relation to their performance to lead these teams as well as individuals in schools. In doing so eight specific items such as developing networks to support individuals and teams, managing the complexity of human interactions and relationship, interacting with a broad and diverse population of internal and external stakeholders and establishing and implementing clear expectations, structures, rules, and procedures for students and staff were used (see Appendix “E” for details). Unlike the above major tasks of school principals, no statistically significant difference was observed between male and female principals performance in this domain, even if female principals’ performances were rated higher that their male counter parts in most of the items.

In sum, though the t-value (-0.965 ) confirmed that the difference between the two means is not statistically significant, the overall mean 3.67 and 3.7 from subordinates of male and female principals’ response (respectively) indicate that female principals reflect a relatively better performance in leading and developing individuals and teams. However, data from WEO heads interview show a contradictory result. Most of the heads stated that females better communicate and solve both individual and group problems than male principals. They also clearly put that female principals better convince individuals and groups to contribute their skill and knowledge to bring a positive change. One of the WEO head stressed that “…in schools with female principals there are less conflict among individuals and groups than those which lead by males”. More clearly, another principal uttered “More than male principals, females better handle different groups and better lead schools smoothly as well as solve problems by persuasion”.

In relation with this Eagly and colleagues (1995) cited in Yukl, 2010 found that women managers were more effective than males in positions that required strong interpersonal skills.
Besides, the study conducted by Hagberg (2000), also found women managers are ranked higher in teamwork, stability, motivation, recognizing trends, and acting on new ideas.

**E. Managing school operations and resources (Administrative leadership)**

Side by side with their instructional tasks principals are also expected to perform different administrative activities which help for the smooth running of the teaching learning process. Unless different resources at school are effectively and efficiently utilized it abstracts the teaching learning process. Leaders assign tasks, determine resource requirements, and coordinate interrelated activities (Yukl, 2010). They need also encourage and facilitate efforts to improve quality, productivity, and utilization of resources. Effective leaders promote and defend unit interests and help to obtain necessary resources and support. Well managing administrative activities and school resources are among the different responsibilities and duties of school principal in the Ethiopian context. Thus principals are expected to effectively run different operational activities in schools and effectively and efficiently utilize scarce resources. As a result this aspect is considered as one point of comparison of male and female principals’ performance in this study.

Similar to all the above major areas of comparison, different specific criteria or variables were used to compare male and female principals performance in this aspect. Here eight items such as mobilizing, allocating and utilizing resources to support student and staff learning, reporting to the community and stakeholders on effective use of school resources and establishing systems for organizing all available resources to better serve the school were used (See appendix “F” for the details). Among the different such kind of items, female principals performances were rated significantly higher than their male counterparts only in reporting to the community and stakeholders on effective use of school resources, in strategically designing various forms of communication on resource utilization and in taking action when resources are not being used efficiently and effectively with t-values -2.160, -2.094 and -2.472 respectively when their subordinates rating were considered. Furthermore, the SDs indicate that there is a relatively less variation among female principals’ subordinate than that of males.

However, the t-value -1.818 from the grand means does not confirm that the difference between the two mean scores is statistically significant even if the over all mean 3.55 from male subordinates’ response and 3.74 from female subordinates’ response indicate that female principals better perform than their male counterparts. Like leading individuals and teams, data from WEO heads interview seems to contradictory with data from questionnaires. One of the head replied that
“female principals tried their best to effectively and efficiently utilize school resources than males”. The head added that “female principals often follow rules and procedures when performing administrative activities better than males”. A study by Wangui and colleagues on principals’ gender and management effectiveness found no significant relationship between the principles gender and their effectiveness in personnel management, student management and financial management (Wangui et al., 2015).

3. Male and female principals’ leadership Style

Leaders use different types of leadership style to effectively lead the organization they are assigned. One leadership styles can be appropriate for a peculiar situation and with a particular individual or groups while another leadership style can be suitable for another situation. The situation, the behavior and motivation of subordinates and the leader’s characteristics can determine the appropriate leadership style that one leader employs it (Yukl, 2010). Despite of this fact, it is common that leaders dominantly use a single leadership style for various situations and regardless of the subordinates’ behavior. With regard to this male and female principals’ peculiar leadership style was assessed. As a result the question whether principals’ gender affect their leadership style preference both from the perspectives of the subordinates and the principals was examined using a standardized leadership style assessment questionnaire prepared by Sage publication.

### Male and female principals’ leadership Style

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Style</th>
<th>Subordinates of Male principals (N=151)</th>
<th>Subordinates of Female principals (N=130)</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Male principals N=12</th>
<th>Female principals N=11</th>
<th>t-test</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autocratic</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-1.530</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>.530</td>
<td>3.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laissez faire</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.187</td>
<td>3.62</td>
</tr>
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</table>

X= calculated mean with mean average difference 0.26 and 0.41 with in the 1st and 2nd group respectively, SD is the standard deviation while t-crit. =1.960 with df=302 at p<0.05 * shows significant at α<0.05

In general, the table clearly depicted both subordinates’ and principals’ responses indicate that democratic leadership style is dominantly used by both male and female principals with out statistically significant difference. This again shows that gender could not affect principals’ leadership preference. Besides the study revealed that, as far as data collected through questionnaires...
both from subordinates and principals considered, democratic leadership style is the most dominantly used leadership styles by primary school principals of Addis Ababa governmental primary schools followed by laissez faire leadership style while autocratic leadership style is the least commonly used leadership style by primary school principals of the study area.

Contrary with data collected from respondents, data from WEO interview indicate that female principals most commonly use democratic style while male principals most frequently employ autocratic leadership style. For example, one of the WEO head replied “In most of the cases, female principals often try to lead the school by discussion, convincing their followers and by consulting each stakeholder, while males often use power to lead their school”. Similar observation was forwarded by another WEO heads. Empirical literatures show inconclusive result in this aspect as it is discussed in detaile in the introduction.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In general situations, both theoretical and empirical literuturs show inconclusive answers for the question “whether leadership effectiveness is gender related or not”. Similarly, leadership style preference of male and female leaders in general and school principals in particular is open to doubt. However, data gathered from teachers and vice principals as subordinates and from the principals themselves through questionnaires substantiated by data from Woreda Education Office heads’ interview revealed the following major findings.

- When subordinates perspective (substantiated by WEO heads interview) was considered a statistically significant difference was observed between male and female principals on their performance on three of the five major tasks or areas. Female principals performances were rated significantly better that male principal’s performance in leading and facilitating the school vision, in developing school community relation and in leading the teaching learning process where as statistically significant difference was not observed between male and female principals’ performance with regard to leading individuals and teams and managing school operations and resources.

- On the other hand no statistical significant difference was observed between male and female principals performance in all of the five major tasks of school principals when the principals themselves perspective was considered
The study also revealed that no statistically significant difference was found between the leadership style male and female principals’ dominant employ when both subordinates and principals perspective was observed.

It was also found in this study that democratice leadership is the most common leadership style that was used by principals of Addis Ababa governmental primary school followed by laissez faire leadership style when both subordinates” and the principals themselves perspective were considered.

**Recommendation**

On the basis of the major findings and the conclusions made the following recommendations were made.

Subordinates perspective indicate that female principals better perform in schools particularly in building a school vision, in leading the teaching learning process and developing good relationship with the surrounding community. Therefore, woreda education office, sub-cities and the Addis Ababa Education Bureau should encourage female teachers to come to the school leadership position contrary to the present situation.

Female teachers themselves should develop self confidence and break the glass ceiling so that they have to contribute a lot for the next generation in leading schools and by being a role model for their students.

The society at large should change the stereotyped view for female leaders rather should motivate and encourage them to fill the different leadership position found in schools.
REFERENCE


strength, leadership style, and context. Leadership Quarterly, 12, 53–73.


Brenda, K. H. (2011). Teacher's Perception of their Principal's Leadership Style and the Effects on Student Achievement in Improving and non-improving schools: University of South Florida,


MoE .(2010) Continuous Professional Development for Primary and Secondary Teachers, Leaders and Supervisors in Ethiopia: Practical Skills in Mentoring Ministry of Education Addis Ababa Ethiopia


Orphanos., S. (n.d). Are women better than men in running elementary schools?” The parents’ perspective. University of Frederick


Shawn T. M. (2009). Relationship Between the leadership Styles of Principals and School Culture; Georgia Southern University


Appendix A

Figures showing the summary of the population and the number of sample principals, vice principals and teachers take from each of the sample sub-cities.

Figure 1. Number of Total principals, V/principals and teachers from sample sub-cities

Figure 2. Number of sample principals, V/principals and teachers from sample sub-cities

Sources: Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau Education Statistics 2008 E.C (quick data)
## Appendix B

### Principals’ performance in leading and facilitating vision of learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Subordinates of Male principals (N=151)</th>
<th>Subordinates of Female principals (N=130)</th>
<th>t-test</th>
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<th>Female principals N=11</th>
<th>t-test</th>
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<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>1.1</td>
<td>Facilitating the realization of a shared vision of continuous school improvement.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
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<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>-0.196</td>
<td>3.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Leading the process of setting, monitoring and achieving challenging goals</td>
<td>3.76</td>
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<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.85</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>Leading the change process for continuous improvement.</td>
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<td>3.82</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>-0.647</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Responding to educational developments that affect school environment.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>*-2.763</td>
<td>4.08</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>Creating an organizational vision, mission, and strategic goals</td>
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<td>0.91</td>
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<td>1.6</td>
<td>Using multiple data sources to drive effective decision making</td>
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<td>1.07</td>
<td>-1.87</td>
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<td>Building a collaborative work environment</td>
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<td>Systematically guiding staff through the change process</td>
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<td>1.14</td>
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<td>-1.924</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
<td>Seeking feedbacks from others on strengths and limitations</td>
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<td>1.10</td>
<td>Operating in a fair and equitable manner with personal and professional integrity.</td>
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<td>1.16</td>
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<td>-1.288</td>
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<td>1.11</td>
<td>Serving as a role model for students, teachers and other stakeholders</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.01</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
<td>-1.532</td>
<td>4.25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>Demonstrating excellent leadership and organizational skills</td>
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<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.94</td>
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<td>Mean Average</td>
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<td>0.72</td>
<td>*-1.967</td>
<td>4.01</td>
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</table>

**Level of agreement:** [0.05-1.49] = very low; [1.50-2.49] = low; [2.50-3.49] = moderate; [3.50-4.49] = high; [> 4.5] = very high;

X = calculated mean with mean average difference 0.45 and 0.41 with in the 1st and 2nd group respectively, SD is the standard deviation while t-crit. =1.960 with df=302 at p<0.05 * shows significant at α<0.05
## Appendix C

### Principals’ performance in developing school–community relations

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<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<td>SD</td>
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<td>Connecting the school with the community.</td>
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<td>2.2</td>
<td>Involving parents and communities in improving student learning.</td>
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<td>*-1.976</td>
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<td>2.3</td>
<td>Using community resources to improve student learning.</td>
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<td>0.93</td>
<td>-1.001</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Establishing expectations for the use of culturally responsive practices</td>
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<td>0.96</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Designing structures that result in parent and community engagement</td>
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<td>1.09</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-1.321</td>
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<td>Engaging a wide range of stakeholders when formulating strategic plans</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
<td>Supporting continuous professional growth of self and others through inquiry</td>
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<td>0.91</td>
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<td>Consulting with key people and groups when making decisions</td>
<td>3.59</td>
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**Level of agreement:** [0.05-1.49] = very low; [1.50-2.49] = low; [2.50 - 3.49] = moderate; [3.50-4.49] = high; [> 4.5] = very high;

X = calculated mean with mean average difference 0.26 and 0.31 with in the 1st and 2nd group respectively, SD is the standard deviation while t-crit. = 1.960 with df=302 at p<0.05 * shows significant at α<0.05
## Appendix D

**Principals’ performance in leading teaching and learning**

<table>
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<th>NO</th>
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<th>Subordinates of Male principals (N=151)</th>
<th>Subordinates of Female principals (N=130)</th>
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<td>X  SD</td>
<td>X  SD</td>
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<td>3.1</td>
<td>Ensuring the instructional content taught is aligned with the national academic content standard.</td>
<td>3.98 1.04</td>
<td>4.02 0.90</td>
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<td>4.42 0.51</td>
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<td>Ensuring effective instructional practices that meet the needs of all students</td>
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<td>3.73 0.90</td>
<td>.574</td>
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<td>Advocating for high levels of learning for all students</td>
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<td>3.77 0.99</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>Promoting and sharing relevant research</td>
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<td>3.45 1.08</td>
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<td>3.33 0.65</td>
<td>3.55 0.93</td>
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<td>Encouraging and facilitating the effective use of data by staff</td>
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<td>Monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning programs.</td>
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<td>Developing, monitoring, and evaluating a plan that improves student achievement</td>
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<td>Monitoring the progress of teachers and staff</td>
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<td>Holding all staff accountable for setting and achieving rigorous performance</td>
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<td>Creating a suitable instructional environment for teachers and students</td>
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<td>Conducting and maintaining school’s performance evaluation information</td>
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<td>Supervising and conducting staff professional development and training programs</td>
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<td>3.92 0.92</td>
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**Level of agreement:**
- [0.05-1.49] = very low
- [1.50-2.49] = low
- [2.50-3.49] = moderate
- [3.50-4.49] = high
- [> 4.5] = very high

X = calculated mean with mean average difference 0.76 and 0.58 with in the 1st and 2nd group respectively, SD is the standard deviation while t-crit. = 1.960 with df=302 at p<0.05 * shows significant at α<0.05
# Appendix E

## Principals’ performance in leading individuals and teams

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<td>-0.598</td>
<td>3.83</td>
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<td>Supporting staff in planning and implementing research-based professional development</td>
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<td>Interacting with a broad and diverse population of internal and external stakeholders</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
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<td>Establishing and implementing clear expectations,</td>
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<tr>
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<td>structures, rules, and procedures for students and staff</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Articulating the need for change and its impact on people</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>1.01</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>-0.694</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and service</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>Expressing relevant issues and ideas in a convincing manner</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-0.224</td>
<td>4.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>-0.965</td>
<td>3.91</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Level of agreement:** [0.05-1.49] = very low; [1.50-2.49] = low; [2.50-3.49] = moderate; [3.50-4.49] = high; [> 4.5] = very high;  

X = calculated mean with mean average difference 0.26 and 0.25 with in the 1st and 2nd group respectively, SD is the standard deviation while t-crit. = 1.960 with df=302 at p<0.05  

* shows significant at α<0.05
Appendix F

Principals’ performance in managing school operations and resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Subordinates of Male principals (N=151)</th>
<th>Subordinates of Female principals (N=130)</th>
<th>t-test</th>
<th>Male principals N=12</th>
<th>Female principals N=11</th>
<th>t-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Creating a nurturing learning environment that addresses the physical and mental health of all students and staff.</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>-1.381</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Mobilizing, allocating and utilizing resources to support student and staff learning.</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>3.51</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>-0.933</td>
<td>3.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Establishing procedures and practice to staff and students for conducive learning</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>-0.671</td>
<td>3.67</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Modeling professional ethics, policies and legal codes of professional conduct</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>-1.654</td>
<td>3.83</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Reporting to the community and stakeholders on effective use of school resources.</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>-2.160</td>
<td>3.58</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>Establishing systems for organizing all available resources to better serve the school</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>-1.623</td>
<td>3.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>Strategically designing various forms of communication on resource utilization</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>-2.094</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>Taking action when resources are not being used efficiently and effectively</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>-2.472</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Average</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>-1.818</td>
<td>3.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level of agreement:** [0.05-1.49] = very low; [1.50-2.49] = low; [2.50-3.49] = moderate; [3.50-4.49] = high; [> 4.5] = very high;

X= calculated mean with mean average difference 0.26 and 0.41 with in the 1st and 2nd group respectively, SD is the standard deviation while t-crit. =1.960 with df=302 at p<0.05 * shows significant at α<0.05