

# A Study on Determinants Associated with Principals Instructional Leadership Role Behavior in General Secondary Schools

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## ABSTRACT

The source of school principals' failure to be instructional leaders lies in both organizational contexts and set of knowledge, skills and expectations they bring to their roles. Hence, the main purpose of this study was to scrutinize the determinants associated with principals' instructional leadership role behavior in general secondary schools in Amhara national regional state, Ethiopia. A model hypothesizing the influence of determinant factors on principals' instructional leadership role behavior was tested. From a sample of 30 randomly selected general secondary schools, 372 sample teacher and 54 principal respondents were participated in the study. While principals were included comprehensively, proportionally stratified random sampling procedure was used to select sample teachers. Questionnaires for principals and teachers were used to examine the personal, school and woreda level determinant factors associated with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. The results demonstrated that principals' instructional leadership role behavior was highly contingent up on principals personal antecedents and contextual factors in which they work. Among principals personal antecedents, teaching experience, principalship experience and specialization were found to be significantly associated with instructional leadership performance in a positive direction. In relation to school level factors, greater availability of instructional resources and school professional norm that greatly value participation of principals in instructional matters had a significant positive association with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. But greater role diversity and lack of principals' expertise in curriculum and instruction had a significant negative association with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. Furthermore, the results revealed that principals' active engagement in instructional leadership role could be influenced by woreda level administrative related issues. In general, from the findings of this study, it could be inferred that any attempt to understand the concept of instructional leadership without taking into account the contexts in which they work could be an incomplete picture. Hence, the concept of principals' instructional leadership responsibility should be placed into the broader contexts (principals personal, school and woreda level contexts) in which they work. The contexts in which principals work could also provide appropriate standard for the recruitment system and development of principals' instructional leadership capacity.

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## 1. Background of the study

Researchers, policymakers and practitioners are increasingly recognized the role of school leaders in developing high performing schools (Darling-Hammond, LaPointe, Meyerson, Orr & Cohen., 2007). In recent years in particular, a great deal of attention is devoted to the instructional leadership role of school principals. The analysis of global literature on educational leadership consistently portrayed the importance of instructional leadership in the efforts to raise and sustain the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Hallinger, 2011; Hallinger & Heck, 1996). Research synthesis also supported the inferences that instructional leadership has demonstrated the greatest impact on students learning when compared with other leadership models (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006; Robinson, 2007).

Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe (2008), in their meta-analysis of leadership effects studies, reported that principals who focused on instructional leadership had produced a stronger impact on

student achievement. They further explained the effect of instructional leadership on student learning by comparing with transformational leadership effect and reported that the effect of instructional leadership on student outcomes was found three to four times as great as that of transformational leadership. Similarly, many research studies have consistently demonstrated strong instructional leadership as one of the most important determinants of all school activities associated with school effectiveness (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991; Robinson et al., 2008; Hallinger 2011; Leithwood et al. 2006). Principals perceived by their staff as strong instructional leaders were associated with statistically significant gains in students' reading and mathematics scores; their test scores were higher than those of students with average or weak leaders (Andrews & Soder, 1987).

In generally, studies have revealed the rational for why school personnel should focus on enhancing capacities for instructional leadership as a force for school success (Hallinger 2003, 2011; Heck and Hallinger, 2014; Robinson et al. 2008). If educational organizations are aspiring to achieve success in

schools, uplifting the instructional leadership capacity of principals seems to be a natural way to proceed, especially in the context of current global trend towards school accountability to improve their success. Principals thus, need to be instructionally focused in order to deliver quality school leadership that makes difference in the core business process of the school. Lockheed and Verspoor (1991) asserted that principals should devote considerable time to coordinate and manage instruction; they should be highly visible in the school; and stay close to the instructional process. It is also stated that three-fourth of principals' time shall be allocated for instructional matters (Tompkins and Trum as cited in Temesgen, 1998).

Albeit instructional leadership is a fundamental tenet of school principals' responsibilities and principals consistently believe that they should devote more time to this important function, they perform neither often nor well. Teachers generally do not perceive principals as instructional leaders. In connection with this, local studies in Ethiopia, though few in numbers, (for example, Temesgen Melaku, 1998; Teshale Getachew, 2007; Adugna Amente, 2014; Wondimu Oumer 2014; Kemal Ahmed, 2016) reported that most school principals have not yet prioritize instructional leadership and hence, held as passive and missing activity. The local studies demonstrated that most school principals were not effective in their instructional leadership role. These findings confirm other study findings especially those in developing countries that argued even though instructional leadership is critical in the realization of successful schools, it is hardly ever practiced (e.g., Hallinger and Taraseina, 1994; Taole, 2013; Tedla, 2012). It was found that only one-tenth are devoted to providing instructional leadership among the many tasks that principals perform (Tedla, 2012). This leads to the need to understand the determinants behind principals' failure to perform instructional leadership role to the desired level particularly in general secondary schools in Ethiopia. The primary goal in this article was, therefore, to explain why instructional leadership role is so poorly performed in most schools.

The factors that define instructional leadership effectiveness have been examined in the literature. The literature indicates that the contexts in which leaders' work play an important role in influencing the scope of principal leadership. They constrain and enable the work of a principal (Hallinger et al., 1996; Temesgen, 1998). Hallinger (2003) also indicated that the suitability or effectiveness of a particular leadership model is linked to factors in the external environment and the local context of a school. Likewise, in their review of the literature on organizational leadership and successful schooling, it is depicted that principal leadership is shaped by principal personal and contextual characteristics (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan and Lee 1982; Hallinger and Heck 2011). Hallinger and Heck (2011) reported that yet findings do not resolve the issue how principals achieve an impact on school outcomes as well as the interplay with contextual forces that influence the exercise of school leadership. Explaining how contexts are important in studying principal leadership effects, Kenneth Leithwood (2001) reported that school leaders always find themselves immersed in multiple contexts, each of

which makes unique demands on what they need to do. Until more contextually sensitive models of leadership are available, administrator preparation will be sorely incomplete, by design. Moreover, Leithwood (2005), in a review of the findings of case studies in seven countries, identified features of the organizational or wider social context in which principals' work that impact on their practices include: student background factors, school location, school size, government or public versus non-government designation of schools and school level. Furthermore, Witziers et al. (2003) concluded that a better conceptualization of educational leadership is needed and that future research should focus on mediating variables and context factors.

Having the aforementioned arguments in mind, the researcher felt that it is worthwhile to investigate the determinants associated with principals' instructional leadership performance. Hence, the study was guided by the following research questions.

1. To what extent do principals' instructional leadership role behavior differ and or relate with principals' personal antecedents (age, experience, qualification, specialization and level of experts in curriculum and instruction
2. To what extent do selected school level factors influence the instructional leadership role behavior of principals?
3. What are the perceived factors associated with principals' instructional leadership role behavior at woreda/district level?

## 2. Objectives of the Study

This research was designed to examine the determinant factors influencing principals' instructional leadership role behavior. The study has the following specific objectives. It was undertaken to:

- examine the influence of principals' personal antecedents like age, work experiences and their level of expertise in curriculum and instruction on their instructional leadership role behavior;
- examine principals' instructional leadership role behavior variation across principals' level of qualification and specialization;
- determine the influence of some selected school level factors on principals' instructional leadership role behavior; and
- identify woreda/district level factors that are associated with principals' instructional leadership role behavior.

## 3. Conceptual Framework of the study

This study was relied on two major variables: instructional leadership behavior and determinants associated with instructional leadership. The conceptual framework of this study was based on thoroughly consultation of related literature in the field. The framework conceptualizes principal instructional leadership role behavior as influenced by different principals' personal and contextual factors. The determinant factors associated with principal instructional leadership role behavior are classified at three levels: personal, school and woreda level contexts.

**Determinants of Principals Instructional Leadership Behavior**

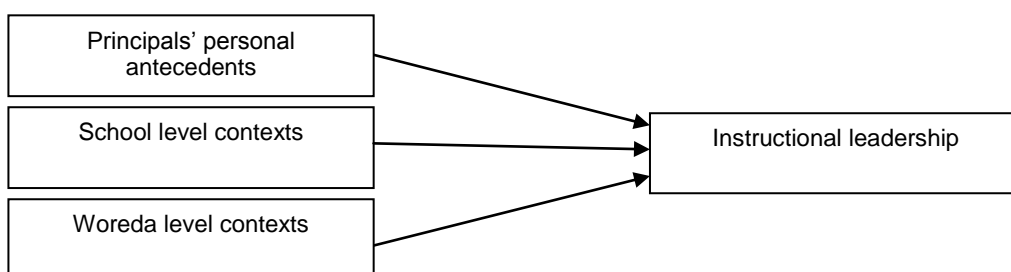
The source of school administrators' failure to be instructional leaders lies in both organizational contexts in which they work and set of skills, beliefs and expectations they bring to their roles. In this regard, numerous leadership frameworks and theories have posited that situations and contexts are crucial for establishing effective leadership (Goldring, Huff, May & Camburn, 2008; Fiedler, 1993; Dwyer, 1984; Bossert et al., 1982; Hallinger, 2005). Thus, it is imperative to view the principal's role in school effectiveness through a conceptual framework that places the principal's leadership behavior in the context of the school organization and its environment (Hallinger, Bickman and Davis, 1996). For instance, in their review of the literature on principal effects, Hallinger & Heck, (1996) identified contextual variables of interest to principals including student background, community type, organizational structure, school culture, teacher experience and competence, fiscal resources, school size, and bureaucratic and labor features of the school organization. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) also noted three barriers to exercising instructional leadership that form the gap between intentions of principals to lead learning and daily professional practice in schools: expertise in relation to all subject areas that comprise the secondary school curriculum; time to lead as a means to improve teaching and learning; and norms and environment of the school site.

Thus, the determinants associated with instructional leadership, in this article, are those factors that are assumed to have an influence on principal instructional leadership performance. They are conceptualized as principals' personal antecedents, school level contexts and woreda level contexts. Personal antecedents are personal characteristics of principals that are assumed to influence principal instructional leadership practice. They include age, work experiences, qualification, level of principals' experts in curriculum and instruction and specialization. School level contexts are school characteristics that can put an influence on principal instructional leadership practice. The selected school level characteristics treated are

availability of instructional resources, school size (student size, teaching staff size, and non teaching staff size), role diversity and professional norm. Woreda level contexts are woreda characteristics assumed to have an influence on principal instructional leadership practice. The treated factors are woreda level education officials' emphasis and their actual expectations regarding principals' recognition and promotion requirements, as well as other woreda level administrative issues ( like rules and regulations, financial and supply delivery, numerous reporting requirements, teacher transfers, deployment of teachers, teaching materials delivery) that were supposed to influence principal instructional leadership role behavior.

**Instructional Leadership Behavior**

In this article, instructional leadership behavior is conceptualized as school principals and vice principals' behaviors or practices in defining the school mission, managing instructional program and promoting positive school learning climate (Hallinger, 1983, 1990). Defining school mission refers to the principal's and vice principals' behaviors or practices primarily in relation to framing and communicating the school goals. Managing instructional program is about principals' behaviors or practices focusing on managing the technical core of the school. This dimension incorporates three functions: supervises and evaluates instruction, coordinates the curriculum, monitors student progress. Promoting positive school learning climate refers to the principal's and vice principals' behaviors or practices emphasis on shaping academic structures and processes includes several functions: protects instructional time, develops professional development, maintains high visibility, provides incentives for teachers, and provides incentives for learning. Principal instructional leadership role behavior is measured in terms of the frequency of the principals' engagement across three dimensions of instructional leadership. It is through these lenses that the researcher wanted to examine principals' behavior in their instructional leadership role.



**Figure 1:** Hypothetical model of determinants associated with instructional leadership behavior

**4. Research methods**

This research was both survey of cross-sectional and correlational in nature. The research applied antecedents' effects design of principal instructional leadership, which aimed at investigating determinants associated with principal instructional leadership role behavior. Survey design generally helped to gather data with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be described, or determining the

relationships that exist between specific events (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison, 2007). An explanatory research design was used to determine whether and to what degree association exist between principal instructional leadership and different determinants related with principal instructional leadership (Cresswell, 2012).

#### 4.1. Sampling and Sample size

This study was situated in Amhara national regional state in Ethiopia. In the year 2017, Amhara national regional state had 10 zones. Of which, 30 sample schools from five of 10 zonal districts located in Amhara National Regional State were participated in the study. Within these 30 schools, 526 participants were assumed to participate in the study. But only 426 completed the questionnaires, with a response rate 81%. Of these participants, 372 and 54 were teachers and principals respectively. All principals and vice principals (69) were comprehensively included to participate in the study due to study nature and manageability of their total size. Proportionately stratified random sampling procedure was applied to select sample teachers from 30 sampled schools. While selecting sample schools, those schools having principals with less than two years of work experience of principalship in his/her current position in that particular general secondary school were excluded in the study. This was because principals are supposed not to have adequate stay due to short time range and newness of the school context. Accordingly, two general secondary schools (one from Gondar city and one from Dessie city) were excluded from the study due to this reason. By the same fashion of selecting sample schools, teachers with less than two years of stay in those schools were excluded from the sample as they were supposed not to have adequate stay and experiences in the school to rate principals' instructional leadership role behavior.

#### 4.2. Instruments

Two measures were used: principal instructional leadership role behavior measure and measure of determinants associated with principal leadership. A standardized instrument of Hallinger's PIMRS was adapted to measure principal instructional leadership behavior. The items of principal instructional leadership behaviors were prepared in five point likert scale. All the items on principal instructional leadership behaviors were the same in content for both teachers and principals, except wording. A total of 50 Likert type closed-ended items classified into three different major scales (defining school mission (10items), managing instructional programs (15items) and promoting positive school learning climate (25items)) were included in the teachers and principals questionnaire.

In relation to determinants measure, 33 items on perceived factors associated with principal instructional leadership role behavior were developed. The development of these items was firmly based on consultation of literature and previous research works in the area, and by analyzing the mandates, duties and responsibilities of the school principal as per several policy documents of the country, Ethiopia. Thus, 33 items on perceived determinant classified into three different major scales (principal personal antecedents, school level contexts and woreda level contexts) were part of the questionnaire for both teachers and principals. The principal personal antecedents' aspect of the questionnaire contains items designed to obtain information on personal characteristics (age, gender, experience, qualification and specialization). The items were also designed to obtain views on some selected school level contexts that could have

potential influence on principal instructional leadership role behaviors. These items address the extent of instructional resources, school size, role diversity and state of professional norm of each school. Regarding the contexts at woreda education offices level, items were designed to obtain views of respondents on Woreda level officials' interest/emphasis, their actual expectations regarding principals' recognition and promotion requirements, as well as other woreda level administrative issues that have potential influence on principal instructional leadership activities.

#### 4.3. Data Analysis Methods

The data gathered through questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Frequency counts, percentage and mean were applied to examine some of the determinants associated with principals' instructional leadership role behaviors. The researcher runs t-test to see if there were any significant differences in instructional leadership role behavior across qualification and specialization. The correlation analysis was used to see the nature and extent of principal instructional leadership role behavior in relation to principals' age, experiences, and some selected school and woreda level context variables.

#### 5. Results

Principal instructional leadership performance can be determined by a number of factors. Among others, principals' personal antecedents, in-school and out of school context variables are cases in point. In this study, thus, analysis was made on determinants in relation to actual principal instructional leadership role behavior. For ease of analysis, determinants' associated with principal instructional leadership were categorized in into three groups such as principals' personal level antecedents, school level determinants' and woreda/district level determinants'.

##### 5.1 Principals' Personal Antecedents Associated with Principals' Instructional Leadership

In relation to personal antecedents associated with principals' instructional leadership, in this research, principal characteristics like age, teaching experience, principalship experiences, principals' expertise in curriculum and instruction, specialization and qualification were treated as personal antecedent variables. The analysis of data, as portrayed in Table 1, shows many of principals' personal antecedent variables considered in the study were demonstrated a significant association with principals' instructional leadership role behavior, except principals' age and qualification which have a weak but still positive relation with principal instructional leadership. In particular, principals teaching and principalship experiences had moderately strong and significant positive association with principal instructional leadership role behavior reported as ( $r = 0.46, N = 54, p < 0.01$  and  $r = 0.39, N = 54, p = 0.01$  respectively). Implied in these findings is that there is active engagement of principals in instructional leadership activities in a school where principals are more experienced both in teaching and principalship.

**Table 1: Principal instructional leadership in relation to principals’ personal antecedents (age, teaching and principalship experiences and level of principals experts**

Variables		Age	Teaching experience	Principalship experience	Lack of expertise in curriculum & instruction
Instructional leadership	Pearson Correlation	.105	.460**	.390**	-.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.451	.000	.004	.000
	N	54	54	54	53

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regarding principals’ lack of expertise in curriculum and instruction, respondents were asked to respond to the question “To what extent does principals lack of expertise in curriculum and instruction influence principals’ instructional leadership practice? In this regard, the findings in the present study revealed that principals lack of expertise in curriculum and instruction had strong significant negative correlation with instructional leadership role behavior reported as ( $r = -0.546, N = 53, p < 0.01$ ). This shows the likely high possibility for reduced principals’ active engagement in instructional leadership role as the gap of principals’ expertise in curriculum and instruction increase. Putting it differently, narrowing the principals expertise gap in curriculum and instruction

contributes significantly for the success of principals in their instructional leadership role.

Concerning principals’ specialization, the findings in the present study revealed that perceived principal instructional leadership role behavior significantly varies due to principals’ specialization in favor of principals who specialized in EDPM. The mean score of principals perceived instructional leadership role behavior was higher in those principals who specialized in EDPM and related fields than those principals who specialized in non-EDPM fields. But a significant variation was not found on principals instructional leadership behavior due to principal qualification, however, the correlation was positive and small in favor of principals holding MA degree.

**Table 2: Mean value and Independent T-test results of Principals instructional leadership based on their qualifications and fields of specializations**

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-test	df	sig(2-tailed)
Qualification	BA/BSC/BED	30	3.1581	.64809	-0.978	52	0.332
	MA/MSC/MED/MPHIL	24	3.3416	.72849			
Specialization	EDPM	16	3.6894	.42297	0.001	52	3.437
	NON-EDPM	38	3.0504	.68879			

**5.2 In-school Determinants Associated with Principals’ Instructional Leadership**

School professional norm, instructional resources, school size and role diversity were some of the selected school level factors investigated. Accordingly, the data analysis revealed that principals instructional leadership role behavior had a significant positive relation with professional norms that greatly value principals participation in different instructional decisions in schools reported as ( $r=0.25, N=425, p<0.01$ ). Likewise, instructional resource had demonstrated a significant positive correlation with principals instructional leadership role behavior

reported as ( $r=0.37, N=426, p<0.01$ ). The findings imply that professional norm that greatly value principals’ participation in instructional matters and positive presence of instructional resources could facilitate principals’ active engagement in instructional leadership role. On the other hand, school size had shown negative but not significant correlation with instructional leadership role behavior reported as ( $r = -.156, N =54, p >0.05$ ). This shows that the active engagement of principals in instructional leadership role could decreases as the size of school increase.

**Table 3: Instructional leadership behavior in relation to professional norm, instructional resources, school size**

Variables		Professional norm	Instructional resource	School size	Role diversity
Instructional leadership	Pearson Correlation	.246**	.369**	-.156	-.138**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.259	.005
	N	425	426	30	406

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Regarding role diversity respondents were asked to respond to the question:”To what extent does the diversity of roles in your school influence principals instructional leadership practice? In this regard, the data analysis in the present study revealed that role diversity had significant negative relation with principals instructional leadership role behavior reported as ( $r=-0.138, N=406, p<0.01$ ). This finding indicates that the

increased role diversity of principals could increasingly hamper their active engagement in instructional leadership role. Simply put, the more the roles of principals are diversified in school the lesser is the success of the principals in instructional leadership role behavior. This finding confirms the existing literature (Mulford, 2003), which states that most principals experience great difficulty in devoting their time to instructional

leadership role due to a large variety of administrative responsibilities. It is usually reported that principals typical performs a large variety of tasks each day, only a small percentage of these tasks relates directly to instructional leadership.

**5.3 Woreda level Determinants Associated with Principals' Instructional Leadership**

Pertaining to woreda level factors, woreda level education officials' emphasis and other woreda level administrative

issues that were supposed to influence principal instructional leadership role behavior were considered. Accordingly, the analysis of data showed that the emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction by woreda level officials had significant positive correlation with principals instructional leadership role behaviors reported as ( $r= 0.356, N =54, p <0.05$ ). This implies that the higher emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction by woreda level officials has moderate and significant positive association to principals' instructional leadership role behavior.

**Table 4: Principals instructional leadership behavior in relation to the emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction by woreda officials**

Variables	Instructional leadership
Emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction by woreda officials	Pearson Correlation .356** Sig. (2-tailed) .010 N 52

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Further analysis was carried out to investigate the actual expectation of the woreda education officials regarding their top priority requirements for recognitions and promotions of principals. In this regard, the respondents were asked to rank possible requirements for principals to get recognition and promotion in the order of their importance, (i.e. 1 for the best recognized, 2 for the second best, 3 for the third best, 4 for the fourth best, 5 for the fifth best, and 6 for the sixth best). But for analysis purpose, the responses of respondents for each requirement were grouped into three categories. That is, if respondents ranked the requirement first and second, then it is the most important requirement, if respondents ranked the requirement third and fourth, then it is important requirement and finally, if respondents ranked requirement fifth and sixth, then it is least important requirement. The analysis revealed political involvement, administrative/managerial efficiency and

loyalty, as the top three most important requirements for recognition and promotion of principals since they attracted average frequencies of 134, 115 and 78.5 respondents respectively. Meanwhile, gender priority, informal relationship and competency in instructional leadership were ranked as first top three least important by 76.5, 66.5 and 57 of average frequencies of respondents in the same order. Implied in these findings is that school leadership in Ethiopian general secondary schools is highly affiliated with politics in which principal are forced to focus on political activities first where the instructional leadership role had received less importance. This utterly has erroneous implication for principals. Due to this reason principals might start to discern and focus on what their higher officials expects of them and consequently start to deemphasize the principals' core business in school- leading teaching-learning activities.

**Table 5: Views on Principals' Recognition and Promotion Requirements**

Requirements	Most important			Important			Least important			Total
	T	P	x	T	P	x	T	P	x	
Political involvement or membership	235	33	134	74	13	43.5	59	8	33.5	422
Administrative/managerial efficiency	201	29	115	120	17	68.5	49	8	28.5	424
Loyalty to higher administrative officials	141	16	78.5	136	17	76.5	93	21	53	424
Competency in instructional leadership	134	13	73.5	135	35	85	100	6	57	423
Informal relations with higher officials	102	22	62	149	16	82.5	117	16	66.5	422
Gender priority	100	12	56	137	21	79	132	21	76.5	423

T=teachers, P=principals, x= mean

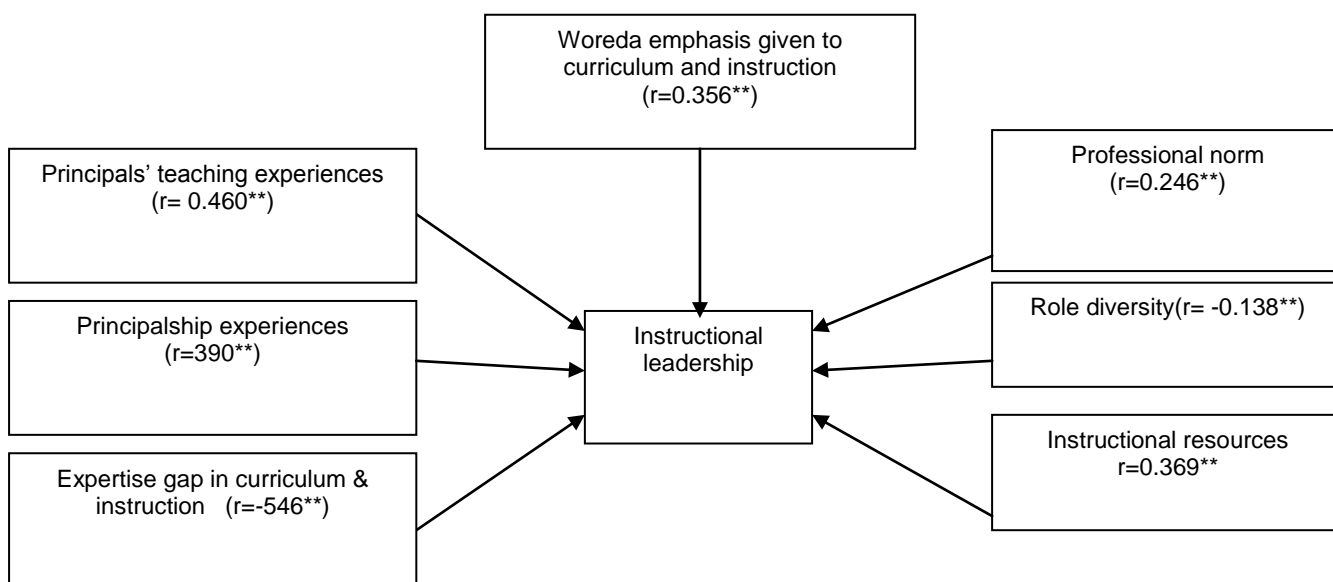
In relation to other administrative issues, nine woreda level administrative factors were listed and both teachers and principals were asked to rank them according to their degree of seriousness in constraining principals' active engagement. For analysis purpose again the responses of respondents for each factor were grouped into three categories. That is, if respondents ranked a factor first, second and third, then it is the most serious factor, if respondents ranked a factor fourth, fifth and sixth, then it is a serious factor and finally, if respondents ranked a factor seven, eighth and ninth, then it is least serious factor. The analysis of data depicts that financial and supply delivery problems; none instructionally focused

directives, polices, rules and regulations; numerous reporting requirements; and teaching materials delivery problems were found to be the first top four most serious constraints since they attracted 149.5, 144, 143.5 and 120.5 average frequencies of the participants in the same order. On the other hand, unexpected meeting at Woreda education office, limited regular supervisory support, untimely teacher transfers and delay substitute of or deployment of teachers, were ranked as first top four serious constraints by 78, 74.5, 73.5 and 57.5 respectively. Frequent reshuffling/ transfer of principals, however, ranked as the least serious by 72 average frequencies of respondents.

**Table 6: Some Administrative issues of primary concern at Woreda Level in relation to instructional leadership**

Challenges	Most Serious			Serious			Least Serious			Total
	T	P	x	T	P	x	T	P	x	
Financial and supply delivery problems	261	38	150	88	10	49	19	6	13	422
Non instructionally focused directives, polices, and regulations	249	38	144	101	6	54	18	10	14	422
Numerous reporting requirements from Woreda office	247	41	144	95	8	52	26	5	16	422
Teaching materials delivery problems	208	33	121	134	13	74	26	8	17	422
Unexpected meeting at Woreda education office	214	24	119	81	24	53	73	6	40	422
Limited regular professional supervisory support	197	26	112	94	21	58	77	7	42	422
Untimely teacher transfers	188	24	106	148	8	78	40	22	31	430
Delay substitute of or deployment of teachers	186	26	106	130	19	75	52	9	31	422
Frequent reshuffling/ transfer of principals by Woreda office	165	25	95	72	13	44	128	16	72	422

T=teachers, P=principals, x= mean



**Figure 2: Final model of determinants associated with principals' instructional leadership behavior, using Pearson product moment correlation coefficients(r)**

**6. Discussion**

The main goal of this study was to investigate the determinants associated with principal instructional leadership role behavior. The determinant factors such as principals' personal antecedents and contextual factors (school and woreda level characteristics) and their influence on perceived instructional leadership role behaviors were examined. Among principals' personal antecedents, age, specialization, qualification, teaching experience and principalship experiences were considered. The findings revealed that perceived principal instructional leadership role behavior differed significantly due to principals' specialization. That is, the mean score of principals perceived instructional leadership role behaviors was higher in those principals who specialized in EDPM and related fields than those principals who specialized in non-EDPM. The possible explanation here is the belief that principals who specialized in EDPM fields acquire important knowledge, skills and exposure during their training and this in turn could help them to do better in their instructional leadership responsibilities. This finding correspond with prior studies (e.g., Bush, 2008), which demonstrated that leadership preparation; induction and on-site learning contribute to improved knowledge, confidence,

people skills, problem-solving and ability to influence. This finding is also supported by leadership literature, which asserts school leadership programs were created in promoting excellence in the teaching and school leadership professions by producing instructional leaders who are committed to meet the needs of their schools by serving stakeholders and pursuing shared purposes (Sergiovanni, 1998). Likewise, national policies for recruitment adopted in many countries prioritize leadership and managerial qualifications with the assumption that leadership qualification provides school leaders with the necessary tools to steer the school towards its aims (ETUCE, 2012, MOE, 2012).

Principals' lack of expertise in curriculum and instruction, on the other hand, had shown strong and significant negative correlation with instructional leadership role behavior of principals. Stated otherwise, addressing the principals' expertise gap in curriculum and instruction could make a significant positive difference in principals' instructional leadership role. This finding confirms prior research (e.g, Hallinger & Murphy, 2013), which affirmed the importance of expertise in teaching and learning as an underpinning for principals who seek to enact instructional leadership role. The effective schools literature also described principals as

instructional leaders who were hip deep in curriculum and instruction, with the capability to create a shared vision of learning focused on results for students (e.g., Bossert et al., 1982; Cuban, 1988; Edmonds, 1979; Hallinger & Murphy, 2013).

Furthermore, the findings of present study disclosed that principals from different range of teaching and principalship experience had shown a significant positive association with perceived principal instructional leadership role behavior. It is indicated that the mean score of perceived instructional leadership role behavior was significantly higher in principals with long years of experiences in teaching and principalship than principals with short years in teaching and principalship experiences. The finding of this study is consistent with prior findings (Hallinger, 1983; Leithwood et al., 1990), which suggested that the number of years of prior teaching experience of a principal is positively associated with instructional leadership activity. Cognizant of these fact, national policies for recruitment adopted in many countries prioritize teaching and principals experiences with the belief that the teaching experience ensure that a school leader has a solid foundation and knowledge of the school system and pedagogy (ETUCE, 2012) as well as a leadership experiences to provides school leaders with the necessary tools to steer the school towards its aims. Literature also suggests that prospective principals need to have a minimum of a teacher qualification, work experience and professional development courses. These findings have a lot of implication on principal selection and recruitment system. On the other hand, the result of presented study showed no significant difference on perceived principal instructional leadership role behavior across a range of age group, albeit weak and positive relationship.

In relation to professional norm, the findings of present study revealed that professional norm that greatly value principals' participation in educational matters has shown a significant positive correlation with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. This finding is consistent with prior studies (e.g., Temesgen, 1998), which reported principals' instructional leadership had positively related with professional values that greatly values principals' participation in curriculum and instructional issues. Putting differently, Hallinger and Murruphy, 2013; Cuban 1988) stated that professional norms which state educational decision is the teachers' domain militate against principals instructional leadership activities. Similarly, the findings in the present study revealed that instructional resource had moderate and significant positive correlation with instructional leadership activities. This is finding is consistent with the previous studies (Lockheed and Verspoor, 1991; Temesgen, 19980), which revealed that the instructional improvement effort of principals is highly constrained by the chronic shortage of materials, operating funds and staff development resources. The finding shows that positive presences of instructional resources facilitate principals' active engagement in instructional leadership role in school. Regarding school size, the findings of the present study revealed that school size had negative correlation with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. This finding confirms the literature which denotes that school size and

structural complexity could limit the capacity of principals to enact two particular instructional leadership functions: managing the instructional program and coordinating the curriculum (Hallinger et al., 1983; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This depicts that the active engagement of principals could decrease instructional leadership role as the size of school increase. However, the present finding contradicts with prior study (e.g., Temesgen, 1998), which revealed positive contribution of larger teaching staff size to principals instructional leadership role behavior.

With regard to role diversity, findings in the present study revealed that role diversity had negative correlation with instructional leadership role behavior. This finding confirms prior literature which indicates that the principal finds it difficult to maintain a focus on key instructional leadership tasks while they are in a great difficulty in balancing their variety of administrative roles with their instructional responsibilities (Hallinger, 2015), as well as in the face of an unrelenting series of requests, crises and meetings initiated by others (Cuban, 1988; Marshall, 1996, 2004; Hallinger and Murruphy, 2013). This finding in general indicates that the increased role diversity of principals hampers their active engagement in instructional leadership role (Temesgen, 1998). Simply put, the more the roles of principals are diversified in school the lesser is the success of the principals in instructional leadership role behavior.

Pertaining to woreda level factors, the findings of the present study revealed that perceived emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction by woreda level officials had moderate and significant positive association with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. This finding general speaks the higher the emphasis placed on curriculum and instruction by woreda level officials the better the chance for principals to achieve the success in instructional leadership role. This could be, perhaps, due to the principals' expectation that their performance could be judged by higher officials in accordance with the emphasis they placed for principals to act. However, the investigation of the actual expectation of the officials have made it clear that they expect principals to be political leader first, administrative/managerial efficiency second, loyalty priority third, instructional leadership fourth, informal relationship fifth, and gender sixth as the priority requirements for recognitions and promotion of principals. This finding confirms Hallinger and Murphy (1988, 2013), which stated that most superior officials expect principals to be building manager first, political statesperson second and instructional leader third. Moreover, Cuban, 1988 and March, 1978 early stated that most school systems have traditionally placed a higher priority on managerial efficiency and political stability than on instructional leadership. Cuban (1988) indicated that promotions into administrative positions have often been more associated with gender, political clout, and visibility than instructional leadership expertise or potential. This finding utterly has erroneous implication for principals seeking for promotions and recognitions. Due to this reason principals, perhaps, begin to discern and focus on what their higher officials expects of them and consequently start to deemphasize the principals' core business in school- leading teaching-learning activities.

Furthermore, the present study revealed that principals instructional leadership role behavior was hampered by many administrative factors at woreda level: among other, numerous reporting requirements; non instructionally focused directives, policies, rules and regulations; and teaching materials delivery problems which were found to be the first top four most serious constraints in the same order. Meanwhile, untimely teacher transfers, delay substitute of or deployment of teachers, teaching materials delivery problems and limited regular supervisory support were ranked as first top four serious constraints respectively. Frequent reshuffling/ transfer of principals by Woreda office was also ranked as the least top serious constraint of principal instructional leadership. This finding corresponds with prior literature and study (e.g., Temesgen, 1998).

## 7. Conclusion

This study was amid at investigating the determinants associated with principals' instructional leadership role behavior in general secondary schools. Based on the findings reported in the present study, the researcher appeared to conclude that principals' instructional leadership was highly contingent up on principals personal antecedents and contextual factors in which they are working in. Among principals' personal antecedents, teaching and principalship experiences as well as principals specialization were found to

be significant determinants of instructional leadership role behavior of principals. Likewise, level of principals' expertise in curriculum and instruction could significantly determine the extent of principals' active engagement in instructional leadership role. In relation to school level factors, greater availability of instructional resources and professional norm that greatly value participation of principals in instructional matters had significant positive association, whereas greater role diversity had significant negative association with principals' instructional leadership role behavior. Furthermore, it was learned that active engagement of principals in instructional leadership role was influenced by woreda education officials' emphasis and other woreda level administrative related issues. In general, in this study, it could be inferred that any attempt to understand the concept of instructional leadership without taking into account the context in which they work could be an incomplete picture. Principals' instructional leadership responsibilities should be placed into the broader contexts of the school in which they work. Hence, the contexts in which principals work could provide appropriate standard for the recruitment system and development of principals' instructional leadership capacity.

### Declaration of Conflict of interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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