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The Use of English as Medium of Instruction and Students' Readiness to Learn in English

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Abstract

This study explored the mismatch between the transition from mother tongue to English medium of instruction and teachers' and students' use of English. The study adopted a mixed method design. A questionnaire was administered to language as well as non-language teachers. Classroom observations were also conducted with non-language teachers who were supposed to use English as a medium of instruction. A group of students participated in focus group discussion, and another group participated in orally administered questions. Furthermore, grade 10 national exanimation results were analyzed. The findings revealed incongruity between the widely held perceptions about the English medium of instruction (teachers and students consider English as the language of science and technology, a language that facilitates future career development, and a language of success) and teachers' and students' use of English as a medium of instruction. The performance of students who made the transition in grade nine is significantly lower than those of others in almost all examination periods. There is an apparent difference in the performance of students who transitioned from a mother-tongue language to English as the medium of instruction at different levels. Generally, students who made the transition in grade seven were found to be superior in terms of achievement on grade ten national examinations to those who transitioned either in grade five or nine. The study uncovered teachers' limited use of English as the medium of instruction and a lack of readiness among students to learn in English.

Introduction

There were different practices in relation to the use of the language of instruction in Ethiopia since the beginning of formal schooling in 1908, when Emperor Menelik II opened the first primary school, Ecole Imperiale Menelik, in Addis Ababa (Fasika, 2014). According to Pankhrust (1969), schools used foreign languages as a medium of instruction, such as French, English, and Italian. During the Italian Occupation (from 1935 to 1941), Ethiopia officially changed the medium of instruction to mother-tongue (Heugh, Benson, Berhanu, & Mekonnen,

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2007; Seifu, 2014). The Italians divided Ethiopia into six administrative regions where the language of instruction was different in all regions (Pankhrust, 1969; Teshome, 1979). When the Italians withdrew, Emperor Haile Selassie's government chose English as the medium of instruction. The first national curriculum, published in 1947, stated that Amharic should be the medium of instruction for all subjects in the first two grades (Grade 1 and 2), with a gradual transition to English beginning in the third grade (Solomon, 2008). Solomon further stated that Amharic became the language of instruction at the elementary level for the first time with the 6-2-4 educational structure of the country.

Following the curriculum, in the revised constitution of 1955, Amharic remained the medium of instruction in elementary schools throughout the country, and English continued to serve as a medium of instruction for the secondary level and above (Heugh et al., 2007). In the 1960s, the study conducted by the Department of Research and Curriculum Development (RCD) of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education on the use of mother-tongue instruction in Ethiopia still maintained Amharic as a medium of instruction at the primary level. Their logic was that children should be taught in a language with which they were familiar. However, it should be noted that a good number of children did not speak Amharic (Heugh et al., 2007).

In 1976, although it was only on paper, the government declared that nationalities were given the right to use their languages for educational and administrative purposes (Heugh et al., 2007; Fasika, 2014; Getachew & Derib, 2006). After the declaration, fifteen local Ethiopian languages (Afan Oromo, Wolayta, Somali, Hadiya, Kambata, Tigrigna, Sidama, Gedeo, Afar, Kafa, Mochigna, Saho, Kunama, Silti, and Amharic) were used for a national literacy campaign (Getachew & Derib, 2006; Katrin & Janine, 2009; Wondwosen & Jan, 2009) in non-formal education modes. In formal education, however, Amharic continued as the only "language of instruction and administration" (Heugh et al., 2007).

The use of mother tongue instruction was put in place in Ethiopia in 1994 with the country's new education and training policy. The policy recognizes the student's mother tongue as an appropriate medium of instruction and stipulates that primary education (grades 1-8) should be delivered in the student's mother tongue. Generally, the policy implicitly states 9th grade as the level of transition from mother-tongue to the English medium of instruction. However, the policy allows regions to select a language and determine and decide the grade level at which the transition from mother-tongue to a selected language medium of instruction occurs. The policy states that nations and nationalities can either use their language as the medium of instruction or choose from a list of languages selected based on the national and countrywide distribution (TGE, 1994). Currently, 51 languages are being used as the medium of instruction in different parts of Ethiopia (MoE, 2016). However, there are different practices among regions in terms of the duration that these languages are used as a medium of instruction. Some regions, for example, SNNPR, Gambela, and Benishangul-Gumuz use mother tongue languages only for the first four grade levels, whereas Tigray, Oromia, and Somali use mother tongue languages for the whole primary school years. There are also regions and city administrations like Afar and Addis Ababa, which use mother tongue languages for the first six years of primary schooling.

The presence of multiple mother-tongue languages in most regions of Ethiopia is a challenge for the effective implementation of teaching in the mother-tongue language. Regardless of the presence of minority mother tongues, regions pick one or two working language(s), in most cases the widely spoken languages in the region, for instructional purposes. As a result, some children are learning in languages other than their mother tongue. This poses difficulty in learning to read and write in the language.

English as a medium of instruction is mandatory in Ethiopia starting from grade nine. On the other hand, English is delivered as a subject starting from grade one. However, although English is taught as a subject from grade one and teachers are supposed to use English while teaching English, the reality on the ground does not show this fact. A good number of students are found struggling with English to learn other subjects. The poor instruction of English in primary schools has strongly affected students' use of English as the medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education. More frustrating is that even English teachers in primary and secondary education are struggling with English to properly use the language as the medium of instruction. In Ethiopia, a transition from Mother tongue to English as a medium of instruction is unavoidable, at least shortly. Hence, the quality and practice of the mother tongue and English medium of instruction need to be explored. Therefore, this study explores the context of mother tongue instruction and its transition into the English medium of instruction. It focuses on the English language as the medium of instruction in Ethiopian primary schools. Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to explore the use of English as the medium of instruction vis-à-vis teachers' and students' practices and perceptions toward the use of the English medium of instruction.

Review of Related Literature

Language can become a barrier to gaining knowledge or developing skills if students are not familiar with the language of instruction. Daby (2015) reports that the nature of school language can be a barrier to the academic achievements of students at the primary level. Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015), in their review of related literature, show that students who are proficient in the language of instruction perform well in subjects taught in that language. They further reported that students who are not proficient in the language of instruction perform poorly in subjects taught in that language.

In arguing for the advantage of teaching in mother tongue languages, Bender, Dutcher, Klaus, Shore, and Shore (2005) indicate that mother tongue instruction increases access and equity, improves learning outcomes, reduces repetition and dropout rates, has socio-cultural benefits, and lowers overall costs that would be expended for education. Similarly, Heugh et al. (2007) describe that learning in mother-tongue is an advantage for students because it allows students to interact with the teacher in ways that enhance effective and efficient learning. Many others recognize the advantages of mother tongue instruction in enhancing children's understanding of the content they learn (Maseko & Dhlamini, 2014) and in laying a cognitive and linguistic foundation for learning additional languages (Ball, 2011). According to Ball, children learn the second language quickly if taught in their mother tongue throughout primary school and gradually transition to academic learning in the second language. Pflepsen (2015) also believes that learning in a mother tongue

lays a solid foundation for acquiring a second language and improves learning outcomes. In emphasizing the importance of providing mother tongue instruction in primary school, Heugh et al. (2007) further report that in the regions where primary schooling is offered with solid mother tongue instruction, students showed higher achievement in grade 8 in all subjects, including English.

The World Bank (2005) report, emphasizing the advantages of learning in mother-tongue languages, indicates that an education system that does not consider local culture and language is characterized by low intake, high repetition, and high dropout rates. According to this report, learners may find it difficult to perceive the relevance of education if given in an unfamiliar language. Learning concepts and developing competencies become complicated if the instruction is in a different language. That is, students may learn little or nothing unless they can understand the language of textbooks and the language used by teachers. Related to this point, Wolff (2005, p. 3) stated, "language is not everything in education, but without language, everything is nothing in education." That is, if learners fail to make simple communication with their teachers, there is little to be gained from spending resources on new curricula, programs, classrooms, textbooks, or technology. Hence, the language teachers use in the classroom is essential.

Apart from the advantages of providing primary education in mother-tongue language, the practice of using mother-tongue language as a medium of instruction at the primary education level varies from country to country. Muthwii (2004), for example, mentioned that in Kenya, the mother-tongue language Kalenjin is used as a medium of instruction in primary classes 1–3, and English or Kiswahili from primary class 4 on, where the children are on average nine years old. In Uganda, the mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction in lower primary classes 1-3 (Humphry, 2013). Edzordzi (2015) reviewed the education policy of Nigeria and indicated that in Nigeria, the child's mother tongue or the language of the immediate community is used as a medium of instruction at the pre-primary level and in the first three years of the six-year primary education. Moreover, English is taught as a school subject. The researcher further indicated that English is used as the medium of instruction and the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community continues to be studied as a school subject from the fourth year onwards.

The use and command of the English language are frequently regarded as indications of upward social and economic mobility. The use of English as a medium of instruction is a highly contested issue in a multilingual context, often with multifaceted political, socio-cultural, and economic implications. While some parents, teachers, and policymakers advocate for the use of English in schools, researchers and pedagogic theorists argue that prolonged mother tongue education matters for learning and knowledge attainment. When it comes to the language of instruction in schools, transitioning to an early grade English medium of instruction or the use of sustained mother tongue instruction at the primary school level are policies worth exploring (Kumi, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

As described in the background section, regions differ in their use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction and the levels that children transit from mother tongue to English

medium of instruction. Once the transition decision is made, teachers and students are expected to use English for teaching and learning purposes entirely. However, the practice appears to be either to use the mother tongue or mix languages in place of using the English language as medium of instruction. The problem seems to be related to the English language competence of both teachers and students. It is common to see the frequent switch between two or more languages in a classroom while teachers are expected to teach in English. Baker (2001) and Owu-Ewie and Eshun (2015) also reported the common practice of language shifting in bilingual or multilingual classrooms. They mentioned that the use of two languages in a bilingual classroom is regularly practiced sometimes without official backing from the policymakers.

Hence, the primary purpose of this study was to explore the use of English as a medium of instruction vis-à-vis teachers' and students' practices and perceptions toward the use of the English medium of instruction. More specifically, the study addressed the following research questions: (1) What is the practice related to the use of English as a medium of instruction? (2) What are teachers' perceptions about students' English language use during instruction? (3) Is there a difference in achievement between students who transit early and who transit late in terms of achievement?

Methods

This research used a mixed-method approach with a focus on the quantitative method and involved the collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data. The mixed-method approach offsets the limitations inherent in each approach and leads to results with greater validity because the method addresses questions from different perspectives and ensures that there are no "gaps" in the data to be gathered (Creswell, 2008). Qualitative as well as quantitative data were collected from teachers and students. Furthermore, data from the secondary source were used.

The sampling procedures used were both random and purposive sampling. Nearly all regions and the two city administrations in Ethiopia were included in the study. A total of 16 languages were selected purposively out of 51 languages that are used as the medium of instruction in the country. After identifying the languages, 19 zones were randomly selected. A total of 57 schools were randomly selected from 19 zones.

A total of 1279 respondents (607 students who provided written responses for three uniformly administered oral questions, 300 students who participated in FGDs, 273 non-mother tongue language teachers, and 99 non-mother tongue language teachers for classroom observations) were included in the study. The determination of sample size is an issue that bothers researchers, and there is no clear answer for this (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) as it depends on the level of accuracy required and the heterogeneity of the population characteristics being investigated, as well as the kind of analysis to be conducted on the data (Somekh & Lewin, 2005). According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), for a population of size 1 million with a margin of error of 0.05, the minimum sample size required is 384. Considering this fact, the sample size used in this study was considered sufficient at α = 0.05.

The sampling procedure used for selecting non-language teachers for completing the questionnaire was random, and five teachers were selected from each school using a lottery method. Besides, two non-mother tongue language teachers were randomly selected from each school, and those willing were observed while teaching. Two groups of students were included in this study. One group participated in focus group discussion, and the other participated in orally administered questions. Those students who could express their ideas were purposively selected with the help of school principals and participated in 52 FGDs conducted in different language groups. Students from grades 5, 7, and 9, depending on the level of transition in each region, were selected randomly from those classes where classroom observations were carried out. Teachers who were observed were not used for completing the questionnaire. The researchers employed four types of data collection instruments: FGD protocol, questionnaire, classroom observation checklist, and three orally presented questions that required written responses from students. In addition, the researchers used five years 10th-grade national examination results as proxy indicators of differences in the performance of students who transit in grades 5, 7, and 9. The research team collected 10th-grade national examination letter grades of students who took the national examinations during 2011/12 to 2015/16 academic years from the National Education Assessment and Examination Agency (NEAEA). Letter grades were collected on eight subjects: English, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Civics, Geography, and History. Since the data obtained from NEAEA were letter grades, the analysis was made by converting letter grades to their numeric equivalents (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and F=0). Letter grades may not clearly show the actual performances of students. However, the researchers believe that letter grades may provide a rough estimation of students' performance. The researchers analyzed only the results of government schools to ensure similarity in terms of the use of mother-tongue languages and English as the medium of instruction. In addition, the analysis was made only for students who sat for all courses during the examination. The scores for Amharic were excluded from the 2011/12 results to maintain similarity with the results of the subsequent years. The average performance of students was determined based on the eight subjects mentioned above.

Data collection took place with the help of trained field assistants. Teachers completed the questionnaire on their own with the help of data collectors. The data collectors for each data collection site conducted interviews and FGDs. Data collection from students with orally administered questions was done in the following manner. Right after the classroom observation and before students were dismissed, a brief description was given of the subsequent task. After the description, one student from each table was asked to remain seated. The rationale for selecting one student from each table was to discourage support they may get from each other. An average of six students represented each class. The data collectors distributed a blank sheet of paper to each student and read the following three questions one after the other. The questions were: How old are you? What is your native language? How many school friends do you have? The researchers assumed that these questions would not be difficult for grade 5, 7, and 9 students. The written responses were collected mainly from grades 5, 7, and 9. Quantitative data were entered and cleaned using statistical software SPSS version 21 and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data were analyzed using NVivo 11, qualitative data analysis software.

Results and Discussion

Use of English by Teachers

Although teachers are expected to use English as the medium of instruction at grade levels decided by the respective region, the existing practice appears to be different. The quantitative data collected through a questionnaire revealed that only 9.5% of non-language teachers used English exclusively while teaching non-language subjects. Most teachers used English mixed with Amharic or another mother-tongue language while teaching. Figure 1 shows the languages used by teachers while teaching non-language subjects.

Figure 1

Teachers' Language Use while Teaching
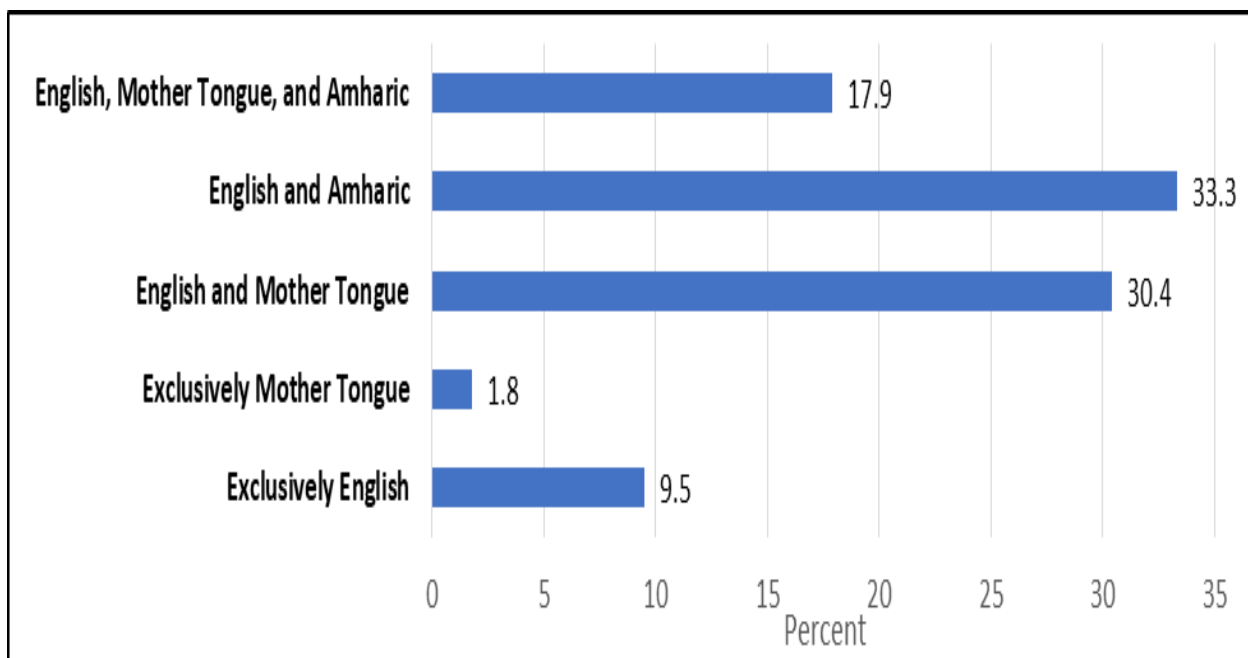
As Figure 1 shows, 33.3% of non-language teachers used a combination of English and Amharic, and 30.4% used English and another mother tongue. Examination of the data by region reveals that the proportion of teachers who exclusively use English as the medium of instruction in all regions is small. As shown in figure 2 below, no teachers from Afar, Oromia, or Harari reported exclusively using English while teaching at the transition level. Relatively sizable proportions of teachers from Gambela, Somali, and Tigray exclusively used English at the transition grade level. On the other hand, 90.0%, 81.0%, 46.7%, and 45.5% of teachers from Oromia, Tigray, Harari, and Somali, respectively, used mother-tongue languages while teaching students at their transition grade level. Mixing English with Amharic during instruction was not a common practice in Tigray, Somali, and the Oromia Regional States.

Figure 2

Language Use of Teachers During Instruction, by region
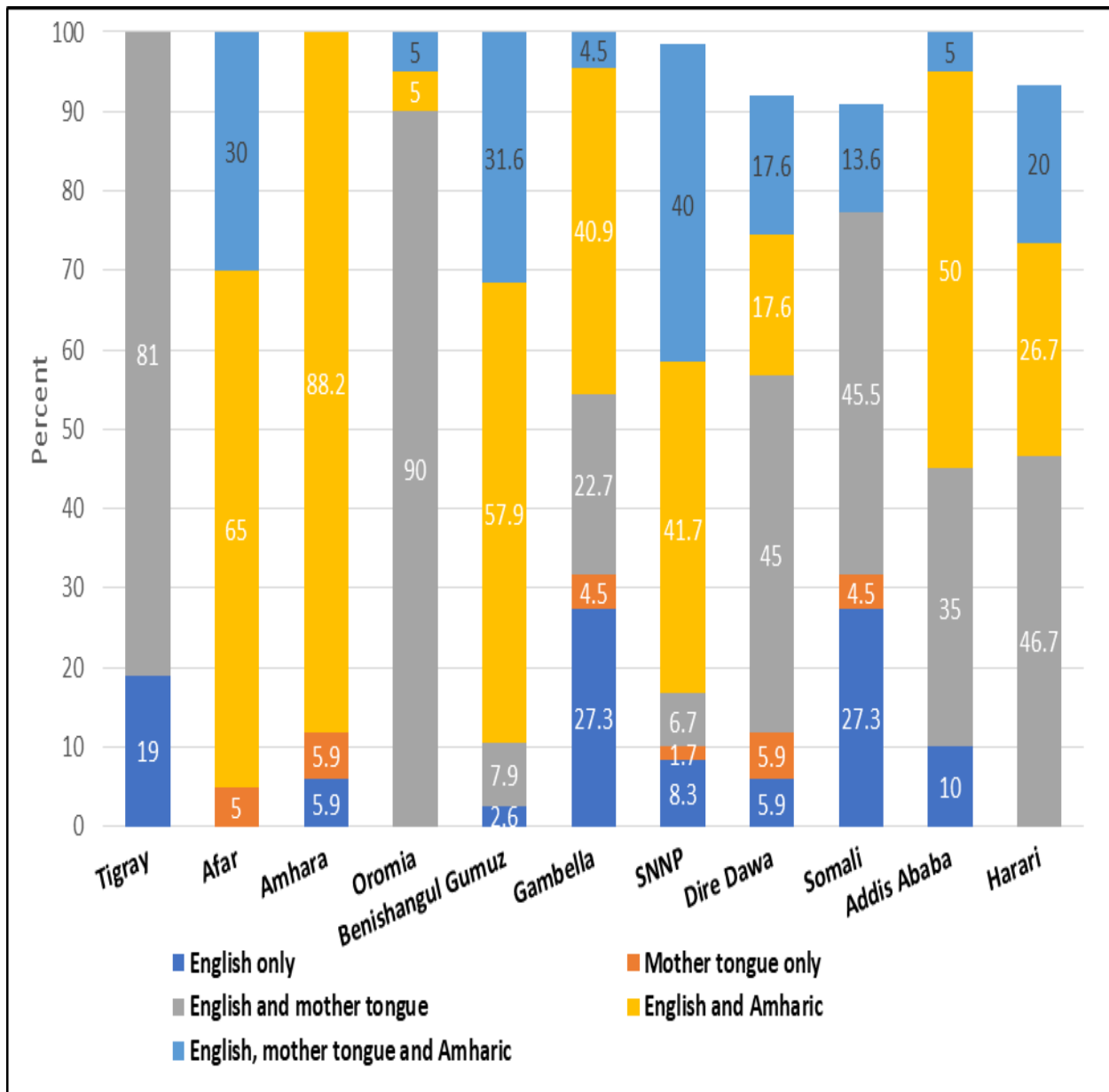
Further examination of the data by transition level shows that using mixed languages during teaching is a common practice across all transition levels. For example, 65.6% of teachers teaching grade 9 and above reported that they use English and shift to a mother tongue when teaching non-language subjects. Moreover, 33.7% and 41.6% of grade 7 teachers indicated that they shift to the mother tongue and Amharic while teaching non-language subjects. Only 4.5% of grade 7, 10% of grade 5, and 15.6% of grade 9 teachers reported using English exclusively when teaching non-language subjects.

Table 1

Distribution of Language Use by Level of Transition

Level of transition	What language do you use to teach your subject at this grade level?												Total	
	English only		MT only		English & MT		English & Amharic		English, MT, & Amharic		Non - response			
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Grade 5	12	10.0	2	1.7	11	9.2	53	44.2	33	27.5	9	7.5	120	44.0
Grade 7	4	4.5	3	3.4	30	33.7	37	41.6	13	14.6	2	2.2	89	32.6
Grade 9	10	15.6	-	-	42	65.6	1	1.6	3	4.7	8	12.5	64	23.4
Total	26	9.5	5	1.8	83	30.4	91	33.3	49	17.9	19	7.0	273	100.0

Note. MT is mother tongue.

Teachers who participated in this study were asked about their colleagues' use of English during instruction. The study uncovered similar patterns of language use among non-language teachers as perceived by teachers who participated in the study. For example, 32.6% of teachers perceived that their colleagues who are teaching non-language subjects use English and shift to a mother tongue while teaching and 34.4% of the same respondents reported that their colleagues, teaching non-language subjects use English and Amharic. A significant proportion (19.8%) of the respondents indicated that their colleagues who are teaching non-language subjects also use a mix of three languages (English, a mother tongue, and Amharic).

Teachers' use of English as the medium of instruction was also observed in 99 classrooms. The observations found that in 19 classrooms (4 in grade five, 1 in grade six, 12 in grade seven, and 2 in grade nine), i.e., in19.2% of the classrooms observed, none of the teachers were using English while teaching non-language subjects. This is quite large compared to the 9.5% of non-users obtained from a self-report questionnaire. Moreover, in 46 classrooms (17 in grade five, 1 in grade six, 12 in grade seven, 1 in grade eight, and 15 in grade nine), teachers were using the English language rarely, while they used mother tongue languages predominantly. On the other hand, mixing English with other languages while teaching non-language subjects was common in 25 classrooms (10 in grade five, 7 in grade seven, and 8 in grade nine) out of all classrooms observed. Only in 32 classrooms (17 in grade five, 2 in grade six, 6 in grade seven, and 7 in grade nine) teachers were using English often while teaching non-language subjects. The average time teachers spent using English as the medium of instruction was 21.04 minutes, with a standard deviation of 12.57 minutes out of the total possible 40 minutes. The minimum and maximum time spent teaching in English were 0 minutes and 40 minutes, respectively.

Teachers' Perception of Students' Level of Understanding

As mentioned earlier, teachers' use of a mother tongue alongside English while teaching non-language subjects can be partly explained by their perception of students' increased understanding of subjects taught in English and their mother tongue. Figure 3 presents teachers' perception of their students' level of understanding of subject matter taught only in English.

Figure 3

Teachers' Perception of Students' Understanding of Subject matter Taught Only in English
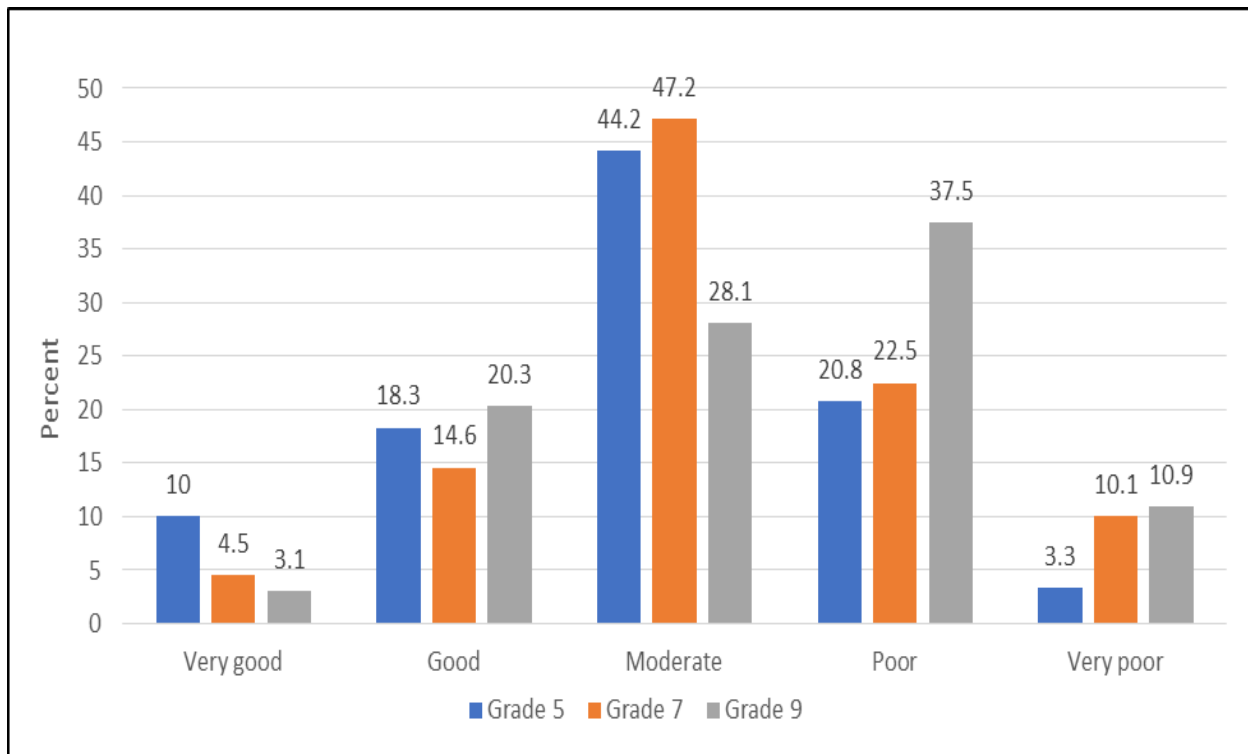
When examined by level of transition, a larger proportion of teachers teaching in regions with a grade 5 transition judged their students' understanding as very good compared to teachers in grade 7 and grade 9 regions, and a larger proportion of teachers in grade 9 regions rated their students' understanding as "poor" compared to teachers in other regions. In a related question, teachers were asked to estimate the proportion of students in their class who could understand the subjects taught only in English. About 30.8% of the teachers estimated that less than 25% of their students understood, 37% estimated that 25–49% of their students understood, and only 1.5% estimated that 75% or more understood subjects taught in English. The data generally show that most teachers perceived the English language skill of their students as poor.

Analysis of Written Responses

The researchers analyzed the written responses of 607 students and found that 315 students out of 607 (51.9%) understood the first question ("How old are you?") and responded to it appropriately. The remaining 48.1% of students were unable to respond appropriately (disregarding any spelling errors). One of the inappropriate responses to the question was, "I am fine thank you." Of the students who answered appropriately, only slightly more than a quarter of students asked did not make any spelling errors (28.7% of the total 607 students). The proportion

of students by grade level that answered appropriately and without spelling mistakes was 16.8% for grade 5, 37% for grade 7, and 32.7% for grade 9.

Similarly, 288 students (47.4%) understood the question "What is your native language?" and responded appropriately, with or without spelling errors. The proportion of students who responded appropriately increased at higher grade levels—32.4% for grade five, 56.1% for grade seven, and 59.8% for grade nine. Only 15.5% of the total students (14.7% in grade 5, 12.6% in grade 7, and 24.3% in grade 9) responded to the question without grammatical and spelling errors.

The third question posed to children was, "How many school friends do you have?" The analysis of the written responses shows that 270 students (44.5%) understood the question and answered appropriately, with or without spelling errors. The majority of students (55.5%) did not respond appropriately. The proportion of students who answered the third question without errors was 17.5% (13.9% of fifth graders, 18.7% of seventh graders, and 22.4% of ninth graders).

The proportion of children who understood and answered all three questions with or without errors was 28.7%. Most of these students were in Somali Region, Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa. Table 2 presents further details.

Table 2

The Proportion of Students Who Answered all Questions Correctly by Region

Region	N	%
Addis Ababa	64	50.0%
Afar	18	23.7%
Amhara	14	36.8%
Benishangul	1	1.8%
Dire Dawa	10	50.0%
Gambela	11	16.4%
Oromia	11	25.0%
SNNPR_Hadiya	10	23.8%
SNNPR_Sidama	7	16.7%
SNNPR_Wolayita	2	6.5%
Somali	15	68.2%
Tigray	10	24.4%
Total	174	28.7%

When examined by student grade level, 40.8% of seventh graders, 33.6% of ninth graders, and 13% of fifth graders answered the three questions appropriately, regardless of spelling or grammatical errors. Only 27 students (4.4%) gave three appropriate responses without errors. This result shows that most children who took this simple oral test have difficulty understanding even simple questions when presented in English. This implies that many students might have difficulty in learning subjects in English.

Students' Views on the Use of English as the Medium of Instruction

Students who participated in focus group discussions had mixed views on using English as the medium of instruction. Among those who had positive views, most raised points related to the usefulness of English for further education and for widening one's knowledge, understanding, and development of communication skills. Others, for example, FGD participants from Amhara, considered English an international language and believed that using it as a medium of instruction in schools helps students join the world community. There are students, for example, FGD participants from Addis Ababa, who believed that the use of the English medium of instruction allowed them to be more precise in what they learned because they have difficulty understanding some concepts and technical terms presented in mother tongue language. These students further indicated that the problem they encounter with the introduction of the English medium of instruction is short-lived. They can easily cope and start to comfortably learn in English. Students who participated in FGDs from Amhara also reflected a similar view and stated that the English medium of instruction enabled them to understand scientific concepts quickly.

In contrast, many students stated negative views about the use of English. Students who transitioned in grade 9, for example, argued that most of them do not understand English and the subjects taught in it and thus scored poorly on examinations. These negative views are attributed to three points. First, some believed that their poor performance in English and subjects taught in English was due to their weak background in English in lower grades. Second, others felt the teachers themselves could not communicate well in English, often switching to the mother tongue while teaching. For example, one of the students said, "there are teachers who cannot teach in English." Third, some students thought English was difficult simply because students neither try to communicate in English nor read materials written in English in other contexts. According to these students, even if teachers assisted them, students often score low, and this, in turn, discourages teachers.

On the other hand, most FGD participants argued that using mixed languages during instruction is not a luxury; it is instead a matter of following or not following their teachers. Students from Benishangul Gumuz, for example, stated, "Code shifting is meaningful as it helped us understand the concepts instead of knowing only the title of the subject." Other students from Sidama emphatically expressed that they would understand the lessons better and learn if there was code shifting. Students who participated in one of the FGDs conducted in the Sidama zone stated:

> If we learn only in English, we cannot understand what is taught. How can one understand without translation? We understand what is taught in English if it is translated into our language or Amharic. Otherwise, more than 50% of the class may not follow the teacher and cannot understand what is taught.

Most students believe that a teacher who teaches only in English may not have attentive students in the class. The majority of students may not follow him/her. Students from Tigray also indicated that they have problems understanding the subjects taught in English only. They believe that translation to their mother tongue would help them learn better.

Analysis of Grade 10 National Examination Results

One of the research questions this study attempted to answer was 'What, if any, is the difference in achievement between students who transit in early grades and those who transit in later grades?' Accordingly, the study examined five years of national examination scores of grade 10 students. Table 3 presents the average performance of students of different transition levels. In all cases except for the 2015/16 academic year, the average performance of students who made the transition at grade 7 exceeded that of students who transitioned either at grade 5 or 9. The gap between the performance of students who transitioned at grade 5 and grade 7 decreased significantly in the 2014/15 academic year, and in 2015/16 the performance of students who made the transition at grade 5 exceeded those of students who transitioned at grade 7. The school environment, the socioeconomic conditions of parents, the training of teachers, and the situations where the teaching-learning process takes place are almost the same for all regions. Gaining experience in teaching in English and the longer time available for learners to develop English language skills may partly explain the difference. However, the performance of students who made the transition at grade 9 is significantly lower than those students who made the transition at grade 5 and 7 in almost all examination periods. The difference is statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. The different transition levels employed by regions may be one of the factors that may explain differences in achievement among students of different regional states and city administrations.

Table 3

The Distribution of Mean and Standard Deviation of Scores by Transition Level and Year

Transition Level	Year									
	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Grade 5	1.88	0.550	1.96	0.561	1.87	0.595	2.10	0.612	2.24	0.600
Grade 7	2.08	0.622	2.15	0.642	2.06	0.676	2.22	0.657	1.88	0.498
Grade 9	1.89	0.577	1.97	0.598	1.84	0.643	2.08	0.658	1.95	0.555

Further analysis of the data by region shows similar results. Afar, Amhara, Harari, Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa, as a group, performed significantly better than the other regions. However, the analysis also revealed statistically significant differences within levels of transition. As the data in Table 4 show, the performance of students in the Somali Region was found to be significantly better than that of students from Tigray and Oromia. Similarly, when we look at the grade 7 group, the performance of students from Dire Dawa city administration is consistently and significantly lower than other students from the same category for almost all periods. This within-group difference may show that it may not be the transition level but rather other unidentified factors that are important for explaining differences in achievement scores of grade 10 national examinations. In other words, the difference could be attributed to factors other than the transition level.

Table 4

The Distribution of Mean and Standard Deviation of Grade 10 Scores by Region and Year

Regions	2011/12		2012/13		2013/14		2014/15		2015/16	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Tigray	1.87	0.555	2.00	0.590	1.81	0.638	1.97	0.651	1.65	0.452
Oromia	1.87	0.574	1.94	0.583	1.81	0.620	2.08	0.643	2.03	0.538
Somali	2.28	0.590	2.40	0.653	2.38	0.726	2.52	0.706	2.21	0.682
Afar	2.00	0.499	2.12	0.526	2.08	0.579	2.66	0.523	1.94	0.512
Amhara	2.10	0.626	2.15	0.647	2.06	0.678	2.21	0.661	1.84	0.479
Harari	2.19	0.636	2.31	0.675	2.19	0.683	2.30	0.724	1.89	0.556
Addis Ababa	2.06	0.607	2.16	0.622	2.09	0.671	2.26	0.623	2.16	0.523
Dire Dawa	1.68	0.559	1.77	0.571	1.94	0.592	2.11	0.583	1.94	0.513
Benishangul Gumuz	1.88	0.575	1.85	0.529	1.84	0.605	2.01	0.652	2.01	0.557
SNNPR	1.89	0.547	1.98	0.564	1.88	0.597	2.12	0.609	2.27	0.600
Gambela	1.74	0.542	1.74	0.482	1.59	0.470	1.86	0.553	1.90	0.488

Similarly, the performance of students from Gambela Regional State is consistently and significantly lower than that of others in the same transition level. The proportion of students who scored 2.0 and above was analyzed by the transition level. Figure 4 presents the results of the analysis.

Figure 4

The Proportion of Students Who Scored 2.0 and Above
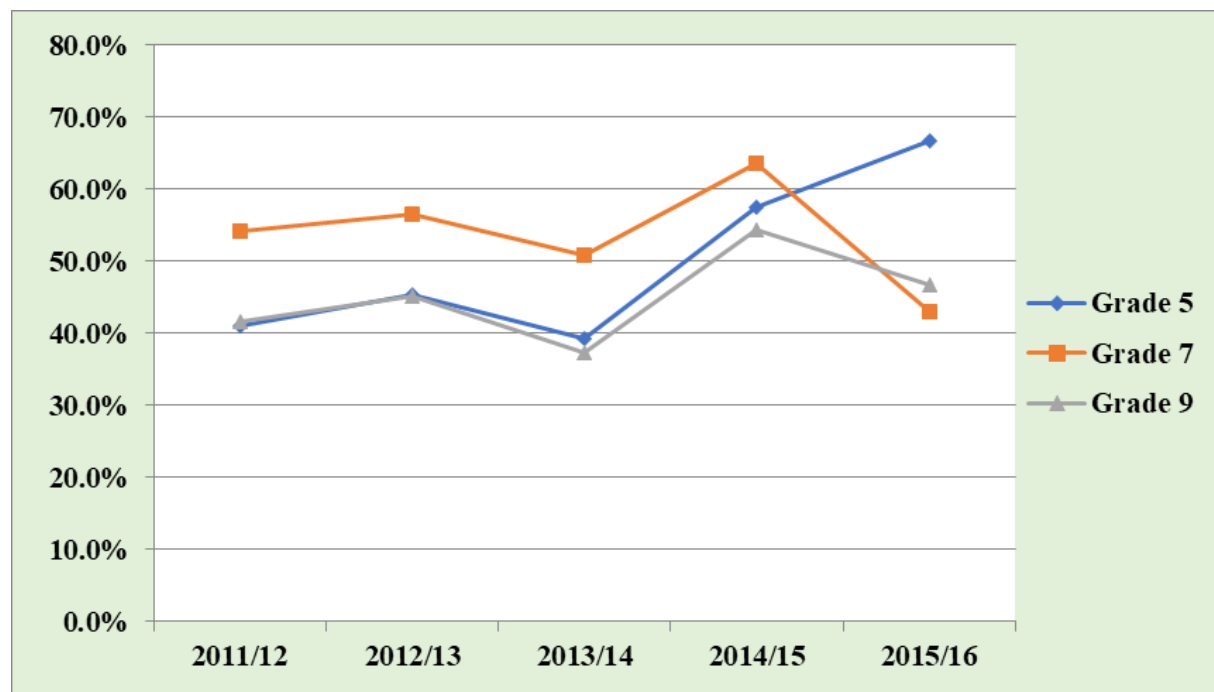
As Figure 4 shows, the proportion of students who scored 2.0 and above in four of the five examination periods is higher for students who made the transition at grade 7 than those who made the transition either at grade 5 or 9. On the other hand, the proportion of students who transitioned at grade 5 is significantly higher than students who transitioned in either grade 7 or 9 in the 2015/16 grade 10 national examination results. The pattern shows that the performance of students who transitioned at grade 5 began improving after the 2012/13 academic year and exceeded the performance of students who transitioned in grades 7 and 9 by 2015/16.

The analysis of letter grades for English subject by the level of transition also revealed similar results.

Table 5

Letter Grades for English Subject by Level of Transition

Year	Letter grade	Level of transition		
		Grade 5	Grade 7	Grade 9
2011/12	A	1.9%	4.2%	2.4%
	B	7.0%	10.9%	7.7%
	C	57.2%	58.0%	55.4%
	D	33.8%	26.8%	34.4%
	F	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
2012/13	A	1.8%	3.9%	3.0%
	B	19.3%	25.0%	19.1%
	C	50.1%	48.5%	48.6%
	D	27.3%	21.7%	27.8%
	F	1.4%	0.8%	1.4%
2013/14	A	2.2%	4.4%	3.0%
	B	15.7%	21.1%	15.9%
	C	46.4%	45.8%	43.1%
	D	31.2%	25.3%	32.6%
	F	4.5%	3.3%	5.4%
2014/15	A	4.7%	7.5%	5.9%
	B	27.5%	32.2%	27.2%
	C	42.9%	40.1%	40.9%
	D	20.3%	16.5%	21.0%
	F	4.6%	3.6%	5.0%
2015/16	A	9.1%	2.1%	0.7%
	B	33.4%	6.5%	15.0%
	C	37.5%	53.1%	59.6%
	D	16.0%	38.1%	17.2%
	F	4.0%	0.2%	7.5%

The proportion of students who scored As and Bs in English is consistently higher for students who transitioned in grade 7 than those who transitioned either in grade 5 or grade 9 for all examination periods except 2015/16.

As described earlier, there is an apparent difference in the performance of students who transitioned from a mother-tongue language to English as a medium of instruction at different levels. Generally, students who made the transition in grade 7 were found to be superior in terms of achievement on grade 10 national examinations to those who transitioned either in grade 5 or 9. The performance of students who transitioned in grade 9 is consistently lower, even compared to those who transitioned in grade 5. Other factors remain similar (for example, teacher training, availability of materials, the skill of teachers, and the like) for all regions and city administrations; middle-grade transition (grade 7) can explain the better performance of students on grade 10 national examinations. The data also indicate that the performance of students who transitioned at grade 5 is improving. This finding is in congruence with the positive perception of teachers toward an early transition to English as a medium of instruction.

Students' Views about the Level of Transition

Students who participated in focus group discussions had mixed views on the transition to the English medium of instruction. For example, students in regions with a grade 5 transition felt that this early transition was better for their education. They mentioned that early transition helped them get more preparation time for regional and national examinations. Some even felt it would be helpful to transition earlier than grade 5. FGD participants in regions with a grade 7 transition stated, "Had the transition been earlier, those students who had difficulty in learning in English might have developed better understanding skills because of early exposure to the language." Others mentioned that transition at grade 4 or 5 would allow students to practice the language with their childhood mind setup and tacitly favored early transition. Students who participated in the FGDs from the Amhara region also favored early transition to the English medium of instruction.

Other FGD participants (e.g., students from Dire Dawa) expressed their view that if they properly learn all subjects in their mother tongue, even up to grade 8, they may not encounter problems understanding what is taught in English. According to these respondents, the issue is not about the transition level but what matters most is the competence of teachers to teach in mother tongue languages effectively. The participants of the FGDs believed that it is the responsibility of teachers to help students develop the required skill but they feel that the teachers themselves lack this skill.

In short, despite advancing different views about the transition to English, many appeared to support transition at an earlier grade. Among those students who transitioned at grade 5, many advocated for transition at an earlier grade. Among the students in regions with the transition at grade 7, there was a general preference for transition at grade 5 or earlier. Moreover, similarly, the students in regions with a grade 9 transition tended to cite the benefits of transitioning at grade 7 or earlier. For example, students from the Somali regional state who participated in the FGD stated, "It would be to our advantage if we learn the main subjects in English starting from grade seven. However, teachers' capacity to teach in English has to be enhanced."

Conclusions and Implications

Ideally, the transition to a second language should be preceded by readiness from the users' side in the language of the medium of instruction. Although teachers were expected to use exclusively English as the medium of instruction after transition, most teachers failed to use English while teaching non-language subjects in all transition levels exclusively. Shifting from English to mother-tongue or Amharic was a prevalent practice in most classrooms. The education and training policy of the country clearly states English as the medium of instruction beyond grade 8. However, only about 16 percent of the teachers teaching in grade 9 were exclusively using English to teach subjects other than languages. All others were using mixed English with mother tongue languages while teaching non-mother tongue subjects.

Students also admitted that they have difficulty learning English subjects and believe that their teachers have difficulty using English for teaching. Teachers also believe that students have difficulty understanding what is taught in English. This lack of readiness to learn in English is in contrary to the way they consider English as the language of science and technology, a language that facilitates future career development, and a language of success. However, despite their problem with learning in English, most of these students still prefer an early transition to English, assuming that they will benefit from an early transition in their future learning and career development.

Generally, students who made the transition at grade 7 appeared to be better in terms of achievement on grade 10 national examinations than those who transitioned either at grade 5 or 9 in four of the five examination periods. The performance of students who transitioned at grade 9 appeared to be consistently lower, even compared to those who transitioned at grade 5. This result shows that early transition appeared to be an advantage for students.

The results of this study have far-reaching implications for major stakeholders. In this regard, regional states and city administrations should think about strategies to improve the English language skills of primary school teachers and should encourage teachers to use English during classroom instruction. Furthermore, special attention should be given to the training of teachers who are supposed to use English as a medium of instruction.

The Ministry of Education (MoE), in collaboration with the regional state education bureaus and city administration education bureaus, should also conduct more in-depth research about the use of the mother tongue and the transition grade level to English as the medium of instruction and students' readiness to learn in English. Further investigation of the effects of the three points of transition on students' levels of achievement would be beneficial for decision-making and policy dialogue.

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The Association between Organizational Culture and Teachers' Organizational Commitment in Bahir Dar Polytechnic College, the State of Amhara

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Abstract

This study attempted to examine the relationship between the organizational culture and teachers' organizational commitment in Bahir Dar Polytechnic College–in Ethiopia. It investigated the status of organizational culture, the level of teacher commitment, the relationship between the organizational culture and the organizational commitment of teachers in the college, and the influence of the former variable over the latter. The study employed the correlational design of the quantitative research approach in which 93 teachers were involved to fill in the questionnaire. These participants were recruited through a systematic random sampling technique. Data were analyzed using descriptive (mean, standard deviations, and one sample t-test) as well as inferential statistics (correlation and multiple linear regression). Results indicated that the college has a well-solidified organizational culture. It also revealed that the affective and continuance commitments toward the college kept teachers at the college. In addition, organizational culture as a whole and its four components all alike correlated with every organizational commitment dimension strongly and positively. On the other hand, involvement and adaptability had only moderate positive relationships with normative commitment, and the same applied to the association between mission and continuance commitment. Moreover, three of the four components of organizational culture – mission, consistency, and involvement – significantly predicted the commitment of teachers in the college. Hence, the insights into organizational culture laid down by this study help the college to get the best out of its employees by regularly examining and redesigning its organizational culture to eventually boost all dimensions of teachers' organizational commitment.

Introduction

Organizational culture (OCr) is an elusive concept with varying but closely related definitions (O'Donnell & Boyle, 2008).For Khazanchi et al. (2007) and Sułkowski (2009), it refers to a collection of norms, beliefs, values, and essential claims shared among organizational employees. In other words, it is considered as an adhesive that directs employee behavior and shapes decision-making in organizations. According to Balzac (2011), it is a set of values and beliefs of members of an organization that explain the behavior and performance of the organization. For Balzac organizational culture refers to a system of shared orientations that hold the organization together and give it a distinctive identity. For Yildiz (2014) it is a set of goals and

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values shared among organizational employees and a knowledge source in organizations. For Schein (2017) it is the accumulated shared learning of a group that solves problems of external adaptation and internal integration. Accordingly, it is considered to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and behave in relation to those problems.

Cameron and Quinn (2011) suggest that OCr serves to distinguish between a successful and a failing organization. Denison et al. (2004) and Lapiṇa et al. (2015) complement that OCr is a complex issue that is directly connected to the performance and effectiveness of organizations implying that organizations are more effective if they have established a strong culture (Saeed & Hassan, 2000). Yilmaz and Ergun (2008), for instance, found that while a mission is the most prominent factor in fostering the overall organizational performance, involvement mostly determines employee satisfaction. Similarly, according to these authors, adaptability and consistency influence the ability of employee innovativeness more. In the same line, Indiya et al. (2018), and Yamin and Nur (2017), recommend the need for a well-established OCr for any organization because there is a strong positive relationship between OCr and organizational performance.

OCr has, therefore, been conceptualized and measured in various approaches. Different scholars have developed different frameworks of OCr, with little consensus among them, (e.g., Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Cunliff, 2008; Denison et al., 2004; Ehtesham et al., 2011; Hatch, 1993).The framework utilized in the current study to examine the influence of OCr on organizational commitment (OCt) of Bahir Dar Polytechnic College (BDPC) teachers is Denison's model of measurement (Denison et al., 2004). That is because we found it more inclusive of other frameworks than the others. According to this model organizations with an effective culture of performance display four traits: involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission. It was employed because it has been utilized widely and provides a simple, yet comprehensive analysis of the culture of an organization (Kabigting et al., 2019).

According to Denison et al. (2004) involvement, which is more or less equivalent to Cameron and Quinn's (2011) clan, refers to building the capability or empowerment of employees, creating a sense of ownership, team orientation, and responsibility for employees. Consistency, closely related to the hierarchy of Cameron and Quinn (2011), refers to the existence of a common mindset and a high degree of conformity among leaders and followers even in situations where there are diverse points of view. It focuses on the degree of integration and coordination, abiding by core values and agreement as foundations of a strong organizational culture. Consistent organizations have highly committed employees, key guiding values, a distinct method of carrying out tasks, a tendency to promote from within, and a clearly established set of do's and don'ts. In general, consistent organizations possess a well-established culture grounded on shared beliefs, values, and symbols that are widely recognized and abided by employees. Adaptability, adhocracy for Cameron and Quinn (2011), refers to translating the demands of the organization into action or the features of organizational change in response to the demands of customers and markets. It involves building a culture of organizational learning, change orientation, and concern for customers. A component with close parallels to Cameron and Quinn's (2011) market, mission refers to creating a culture of dependence on a shared vision, defining a strategic direction, and

identifying goals and objectives, and performance expectations among the employees in an organization. By defining a social role and external goals for the organization it provides purpose and meaning to shape current behavior by envisioning a desired future state besides delivering clear directions and goals that serve to define the right course of action for the organization and the teachers.

The report by Denison et al. (2004) about the functions of the four traits of OCr unveils clear patterns of behavior. That is, involvement and consistency address organizations' internal dynamics but not organizations' interaction with the external environment. Adaptability and mission, on the other hand, emphasize the relationship between organizations and the external environment. Involvement and adaptability focus on an organization's capacity for flexibility and change whereas consistency and mission emphasize the capacity for stability and direction of an organization.

Cameron and Quinn (2011) have viewed OCr by categorizing it into two dimensions which they subdivided into four sub-dimensions. These included the internal focus and integration dimension that incorporated clan (collaborate) and hierarchy (control) as well as the external focus and differentiation dimension that also incorporated adhocracy (create) and market (compete) sub-components. Clan refers to a culture of an organization that concentrates on internal maintenance with flexibility, concern for people, and sensitivity for customers whereas hierarchy is a culture of an organization that focuses on internal maintenance with a need for stability and control. On the other hand, according to these authors, adhocracy is a culture profile of an organization that concentrates on external positioning with a high degree of flexibility and individuality while market refers to a culture profile of an organization that focuses on external maintenance with a need for stability and control. According to Cameron and Quinn (2011) and Masood et al. (2006), an organization dominated by a clan culture is characterized by a warm and supportive environment just like parental interaction among employees, and a strong team spirit where everybody facilitates, nurtures, mentors, and supports the other whereas the hierarchy environment is identified as a rule reinforce. Organizations characterized by a dominant culture of adhocracy culture, on the other hand, are rule breakers that demonstrate entrepreneurial, visionary, innovative, creative, risk-oriented, and focused to the future while organizations with a dominant culture of market or competition are tough and demanding one from the other forms of culture.

Deshpande and Farley (1999) also developed a four-dimensional model of corporate culture that is closely related to Denison et al.'s (2004) framework. It incorporated competitive culture, entrepreneurial culture, bureaucratic culture, and consensual culture. It is possibly related to Denison et al.'s (2004) involvement, entrepreneurial culture to adaptability, competitive culture to a mission, and bureaucratic culture to consistency. A model adopted by Messner and Schafer (as cited in Messner, 2013) is still the other model that involved nine cultural dimensions put forward by the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) study to examine the relationship between OCr and employee commitment. It included power distance, institutional collectivism, in-group collectivism, assertiveness, future orientation, uncertainty avoidance, performance orientation, gender egalitarianism, and humane orientation. These dimensions in one way or the other reflect Denison et al.'s (2004) four traits of OCr. Closer

scrutiny of the two OCr groups informs that power distance, institutional collectivism, assertiveness, gender egalitarianism and humane orientation in one form or the other informs about involvement whereas in-group collectivism and uncertainty avoidance have the components of consistency. Similarly, future orientation has elements of mission and performance orientation that possess features of adaptability.

Just like OCr, organizational commitment (OCt) has varying definitions. For Dennis (1998) it is a state in which employees consider their organization, share its objectives, and have a desire to remain in its membership. Meyer and Herscovitch (2001, p. 1) it "(a) is a force that binds an individual to a course of action of relevance to a target and (b) can be accompanied by different mindsets that play a role in shaping behavior."Faloye (2014) and Meyer and Allen (1991) conceptualized it as a multidimensional construct that indicated a relative strength of identification, involvement, and loyalty of an individual to an organization. According to Hakim (2015), OCt is the desire and willingness of employees to remain in the organization and devote themselves to its success. Employees with strong OCt continue employment with the organization (Ghani et al., 2004).OCt is, therefore, very essential because it determines the continuity, sense of duty, job satisfaction, performance and other behavioral, emotional and cognitive characteristics of employees (Agwu, 2013; Bigleyet al., 2002; Rashid, et al., 2003).

Although there are several models that portray the dimensions of OCt (Liu &Bellibas, 2018), a three-dimensional model that incorporates affective, continuance, and normative commitments, developed by Allen and Meyer (1990), was used in the current study to examine its association with OCr. Affective commitment (AC) refers to the emotional attachment of employees toward their organization (Boichuk&Menguc, 2013). In view of this, the component of commitment employees opt to stay in the organization is not because they need to, but because they want to do so (Fernandez-Lores et al., 2016). According to Malaysia (2016, p. 19), this component of commitment is grounded on three main aspects: "the development of psychological affinity to a firm; association with the organization; and they wish to remain as a member of the organization". Continuance commitment (CC), on the other hand, refers to employee commitment due to the perceived costs one would suffer from leaving the organization or the costs that the employee associates with leaving the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990; Boichuk&Menguc, 2013; Cak et al., 2015). According to these sources, it also implies that employees in organizations stay for a longer period because they believe that a better job alternative is not available. Lastly, normative commitment (NC), also called mandatory commitment, represents the sense of necessity that the employee feels about continuing to stay in the organization. It refers to an employee's feeling of obligation to remain in the organization (Wasti& Can, 2008). Employees with a sense of NC are willing to make personal sacrifices for their organization because they believe that it is the right and moral responsibility to do so (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Many scholars of the field argue that organizational culture and the organizational commitment of employees are closely associated factors. A wide range of literature (e.g., Acar, 2012; Asghar et al., 2015; Azadi et al., 2013; Boon &Arumugam, 2006; Brewer &Clippard, 2002; Hakim, 2015; Inanlou&Ahn, 2017; Johari, 2003; Messner, 2013) explain not only the presence of a direct relationship between OCr and OCt but claim that OCr determines employee commitment

as well. In the same line, Desselle et al. (2018) assert that OCr contributes much to employee longevity. They all assert that OCr is a significant tool for improving employee commitment. That is, a good OCr enhances employee commitment and the inverse holds true. Brewer and Clippard (2002) also contend that the better the adjustment between stated and perceived values, the better the OCt will be.

Mixed findings were also reported with respect to the relationship between the traits of OCr and the overall OCt. For instance, while Asghar et al. (2015), Denison and Neale (2011), Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012), and Singh and Verghese (2015) unveil a significant and positive relationship between employee involvement and OCt, Azadi, et al. (2013) and Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012) found out a significant correlation between adaptability and employee commitment. Moreover, Asghar et al. (2015) and Hakim (2015) found a positive relationship between consistency and OCt. Nonetheless, the mission did not correlate with OCt in all the above-mentioned studies.

Similarly, findings about relationships among the traits of OCr and the components of OCt were mixed (Cohen, 2000; Geiger, 1998; Johari, 2003). According to these sources, certain traits of OCr have positive relationships with certain components of OCt, and negative or no relationship with other components. On the other hand, Hai et al. (2018) inform that all the traits of OCr have positive and statistically significant relationships with every component of OCt. They also assert that each trait of OCr has a significant and positive impact on each OCt.

Nonetheless, while investigating the effect of OCr and OCt on employee performance basing Deshpande and Farley's (1999) model. Johari (2003) found varying relationships among the components of OCr and OCt. According to Johari, consensual culture (involvement) has a negative correlation with AC but a positive correlation with CC and NC. Entrepreneurial culture (adaptability) showed a positive correlation with CC but negative and no significant correlation with CC and AC consecutively. Competitive culture (mission) demonstrated a positive correlation with CC but a negative correlation with AC and no significant correlation with NC. Bureaucratic culture (consistency) was correlated with none of the commitment components implying that this type of culture could not induce employees' level of commitment to the organization. Overall NC has no correlation with three components of culture and a negative correlation with consensual culture (involvement) whereas their corporate culture and organizational commitment have significant correlations.

According to the findings by Dickson et al. (2004), in-group collectivism (consistency) did not only demonstrate strong correlations with all the dimensions of OCt, the strongest being with AC but also predicted AC and NC strongly. But it did not explain CC. Performance orientation did not only correlate positively and strongly with the three employee commitment factors but also influenced them positively and strongly. Humane orientation correlates with AC but only at an insignificant level to the other two components of OCt. Uncertainty avoidance correlates with all three commitment components. Institutional collectivism also has a bit of correlation with AC. Power distance (involvement) correlates negatively with AC and NC, albeit did not predict them. But its correlation with CC is not significant. According to Dickson et al., (2004) assertiveness, future orientation, and gender egalitarianism all did not show a significant correlation with all

commitment dimensions. Multiple regression analysis suggests a small negative power of gender egalitarianism (involvement) for AC and NC.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework of the Study
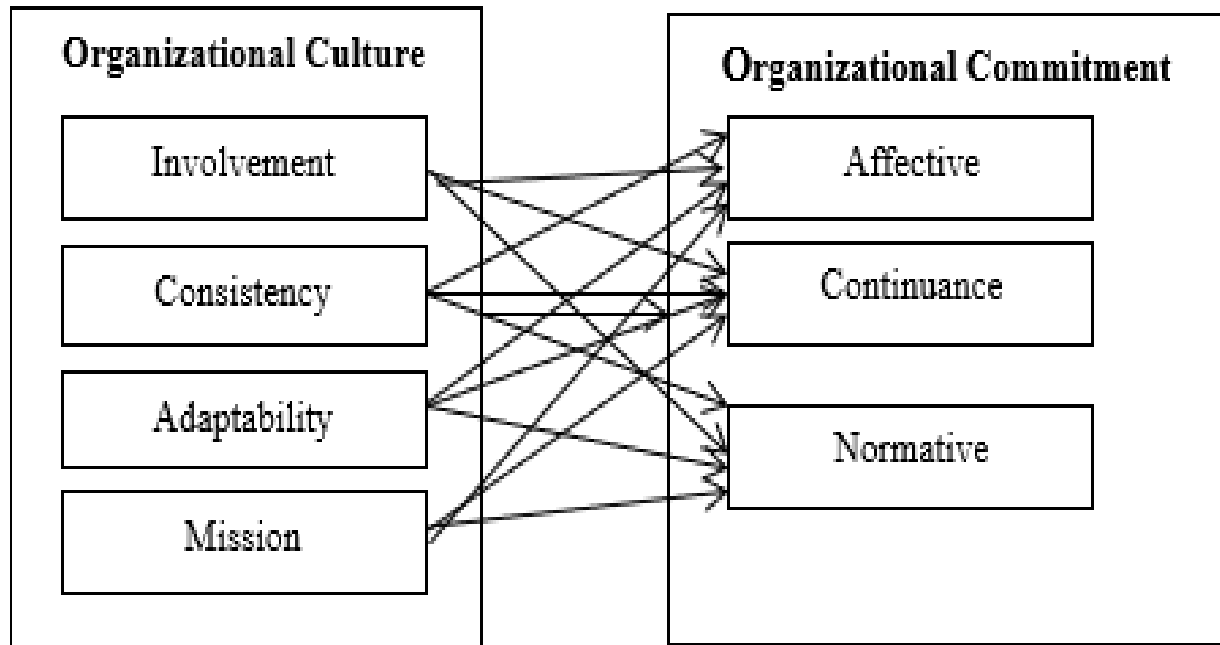
Problem Statement

The selection of BDPC was just triggered by the informal discussions held with some colleagues teaching in the college by one of the investigators of this problem. Teachers used to echo their complaints about the inconvenience of their work environment and the consequent apathy among the teachers, as described in Porter et al. (1974) and Steers (1977). The discussions implied that most teachers have an intention to leave their college if they get any other alternative.

The researchers thought that examining the influence of OCr components on OCt may assist the college under investigation in identifying its prevailing problems on the issue with the intention that its output can render a significant contribution to teachers' OCt. The output of the study might also help the college to establish an institutional culture that can bring about better teachers' commitment.

The readings the researchers made looking for remedial solutions for the problem they sensed galvanized their interest more in the quest for examining the two variables in the context of BDPC. That is because findings pertaining to the influence of OCr on OCt across different study findings are inconsistent. Besides exclusive attention paid to the business sector, immense sources of literature (e.g., Aranki et al., 2019; Azizollah et al., 2016; Inanlou&Ahn, 2017; Messner, 2013;

Meyer &Herscovitch, 2001; Mitic et al. 2016; Rastegar & Aghayan, 2012), confirmed the inconsistent and controversial findings about the association of the two variables.

Though there are few local and international studies, which the researchers could access, that focus on higher education institutions (Ashenafi & Ephrem, 2021; Batugal & Tindowen, 2019; Srinivasan et al.,2020; Tasew & Narula, 2019), the models and methodologies they employed were less comprehensive and not contextually fit the current target area nor were their recommendations applicable for Education and Training Technical and Vocational (TVET) colleges. These altogether triggered the researchers to carry out an investigation in the context of BDPC.

Accordingly, this study attempted to examine the relationship between the components of OCr (involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission) and OCt of teachers in BDPC. To that end, the following research questions guided the study: (1) What are the components of OCr predominantly observed in BDPC? (2) What dimensions of OCt kept teachers of BDPC stay in the college? (3) Is there a significant relationship between OCr and OCt of teachers in BDPC? (4) Are there significant relationships among the components of OCr and the OCt of teachers in the college? (5) To what extent do the components of OCr explain the OCt of teachers in the college?

Methods

This study employed correlational survey research design, a variant of the quantitative approach. This design was employed because according to Cohen et al. (2018), Creswell (2014) and Gay et al. (2012) a study that measures relationships among variables and the strength of relationships among variables requires a correlation survey design. The study targeted teachers of BDPC as its study population where 120 teachers were drawn out of 275 through a systematic random sampling technique. The sample size is adequate because it meets the requirements of Pallant (as cited in Cohen et al., 2018) and Tabachnick and Fidell (2013) who suggest that at least 50 plus eight times the number of independent variables suffices to run regression analyses safely.

In the study, data were collected through a questionnaire organized on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from *1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)*. The instruments employed to measure OCr (involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission traits) were adapted from Denison's (Denison & Neale, 2011) OCr survey whereas those utilized to measure the dimensions of OCt were adapted from Allen and Meyer's (1990) questionnaire. After data were collected and encoded reliability tests were conducted. To that effect, composite scores were calculated to represent the scores obtained from each of the subscales. As can be seen from Table 1, the reliability coefficients of all the subscales of the two variables (OCr and OCt) were found acceptable enough to proceed to the analysis phase.

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients of Instruments

Variables	Variable dimensions	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Organizational culture	Involvement	9	.865
	Consistency	9	.882
	Adaptability	9	.825
	Mission	9	.915
Organizational commitment	Affective commitment	6	.826
	Continuance commitment	6	.827
	Normative commitment	6	.827

The data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through SPSS 23 statistical tool. The mean, standard deviations, and one sample t-test were the descriptive statistics applied to summarize and present descriptive data whereas correlation and multiple linear regression were the inferential statistics utilized. One sample t-test was applied to analyze the status of OCr and teachers' OCt in the college. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the relationship among the components of OCr and OCt. Finally, a multiple linear regression was employed to examine the extent that each independent variable (IV) or trait of OCr explains the dependent variable (DV) or the components of OCt among teachers. In this effort, all the safety measures (Cohen, et al., 2018) including singularity, multicollinearity, singularity, outliers, normality, and homoscedasticity were checked.

Results

Out of a total of 120 questionnaires distributed, 93 (77.5%) were found usable. The rest 27 (22.5%) were rejected because few were unreturned, others incomplete and still other few with more than one check for a single item instead of only one. The utility rate of the questionnaire is, however, adequate. That is because, as a rule of thumb, as low as a 50% response rate is tolerable for studies of this type to generalize about the population (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell, 2014; Gay et al., 2012). Moreover, the data collected does not prohibit from running regression analysis because it is beyond the requirements of Cohen et al.'s (2018) formula of sample size determination, which suggests sample size shall be $\geq 50 + (8 \times$ the number of IVs).

The State of Organizational Culture and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

The first two research questions are intended to explore the features of OCr in BDPC and the OCt of its teachers. These were measured through mean scores. To that effect, the average or test value (M = 3.00) was employed as a benchmark to determine the status of the sub-scales of the two variables. In line with this, Table 2 depicts that the mean scores of all the traits of OCr,

including the entire picture of OCr, are higher than the test value and significantly different (at p < 0.01 or p < 0.05) from it. This implies that there exists a well-solidified OCr in BDPC, the dominant culture being adaptability followed by involvement (M = 3.47 and 3.33 consecutively).

Table 2

One-Sample t-test on the Status of Organizational Culture (N=93)

Variable	Test value = 3.00				
	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Involvement	3.33	.774	4.064	92	.000
Consistency	3.20	.781	2.434	92	.017
Adaptability	3.47	.698	6.489	92	.000
Mission	3.19	.885	2.057	92	.043
Organizational culture (overall)	3.30	.692	4.115	92	.000

With respect to OCt, nonetheless, mixed results were obtained (see Table 3). That is, although the mean scores of the three dimensions of teachers' OCt are higher than the test value, only AC and CC are significantly different from the test value (t = 5.290, df = 92, p < 0.01 and t = 3.849, df = 92, p < 0.01, respectively). This implies that it is their emotional attachment toward the college and the perceived costs they probably face, if they leave the college but not a feeling of responsibility and obligation to remain in the college that kept teachers at BDPC.

Table 3

One-Sample t-test about Organizational Commitment of Teachers (N=93)

Variable	Test value = 3.00				
	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Affective commitment	3.44	.804	5.290	92	.000
Continuance commitment	3.32	.799	3.849	92	.000
Normative commitment	3.11	.797	1.365	92	.175
Organizational commitment (Overall)	3.49	.800	5.891	92	.000

Relationships among Traits of Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment

As portrayed in Table 4, the overall OCr and its four traits – consistency (r=.729), mission (r=.704), involvement (r=.698), and adaptability (r = .663) – have all a strong and positive correlation with OCt. In addition, in most cases, each trait of OCr has demonstrated a strong relationship with every component of OCt, except the relationships between involvement and NC (r = .457), adaptability and NC (r = .433) as well as mission and CC (r = .440), all at p<0.01, which were moderately positive. On the basis of the strength of relationships, it can be argued that involvement has higher relationship with CC followed by AC and NC whereas consistency has higher relationship with AC followed by NC and CC. Similarly, while adaptability has a significant

association with AC, CC, and NC consecutively the same holds true with the association of mission with AC, NC, and CC (all at p < .01).

Table 4

Correlation Coefficients between *Organizational Culture and Organizational Commitment* (N=93)

Variables	Organizational commitment (Overall)	Affective commitment	Continuance commitment	Normative commitment
Involvement	.698**	.595**	.623**	.475**
Consistency	.729**	.617**	.549**	.558**
Adaptability	.663**	.519**	.512**	.433**
Mission	.704**	.647**	.440**	.551**
Organizational Culture (Overall)	792**	.678**	.598**	.575**

Note. p** < 0.01 (2-tailed).

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Table 5 depicts the predictive power of IVs, the four traits of OCr, over the DV. The R^2 value (.638) implies that the four traits of OCr altogether explain 63.8% of the variance of teachers' OCt in BDPC. The table also informs that mission explained teachers' commitment (β=.309, P < 0.01) most followed by consistency (β=.303, P < 0.05) and involvement (β=.259, P < 0.05) subsequently. Nonetheless, adaptability (β=.028, P > 0.05) does not have statistically significant power to predict teachers' commitment. Hence, mission, consistency, and involvement significantly influence the commitment of teachers. Moreover, an F statistic of 38.722 with a *p-value*< 0.01 explains that the R-value is statistically significant and hence the variation explained by the model is not due to chance.

Table 5

Regression Analysis of the Effect of Organizational Culture Traits on Organizational Commitment

Model	Standardized coefficients (Beta)	T	Sig.	R^2	F
(Constant)		2.245	.027	.638	38.722
Involvement	.259	2.603	.011		
Consistency	.303	2.621	.010		
Adaptability	.028	.243	.809		
Mission	.309	3.118	.002		

When we observe the influence of each trait of OCr on every dimension of OCt mixed findings were found. Table 6 unveils that teachers' involvement has significant and positive influence on their AC and CC (β = .227, p < .05; β = .462, p < .01, respectively) whereas

consistency has a strong positive influence on affective and normative commitments ($\beta = .284$, p $< .05$; $\beta = .396$, p $< .01$, respectively). Likewise, while mission has a significant and positive influence on affective and normative commitments ($\beta = .426$, p $< .05$; $\beta = .369$, p $< .01$, respectively) adaptability did not have significant contribution in the variance of all commitment dimensions.

Table 6

Regression Analysis of Organizational Culture Traits on Organizational Commitment Dimensions

Variables	Affective commitment	Continuance Commitment	Normative Commitment
Involvement	.227*	.462**	.084
Consistency	.284*	.152	.396**
Adaptability	-.165	.107	-.198
Mission	.426**	-.037	.369**
F	22.009	15.258	13.377
R^2	.500	.410	.378

Note. The entries in the table are standardized βs; *p<0.05; **P<0.01

The result also showed that the traits of OCr altogether had stronger predictive power on AC ($R^2 = .500$) than on the other dimensions of commitment. That is because the IVs in combination explained 41.0% and 37.8% of CC and NC of teachers, consecutively. That is, since the aggregate effect of the traits of OCr explained 50% of the variability in teachers' AC, one can infer that OCr has the strongest effect on the AC of employees than it does on the other two dimensions.

Discussion

The State of Organizational Culture and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Here it is attempted to examine the state of the components of OCr established in the college and the extent of teachers' OCt. Regarding OCr, results displayed that all traits of OCr are well solidified in the college, despite the differences in levels of significance. That means the college has a set of norms, beliefs, and values that may promote participatory decision-making, coordination, and flexibility. Leaders of the college also do not work to empower teachers to build their capacity, attempt to create a team spirit to ignite their commitment and build a sense of ownership at all levels. In addition, results inform that all such practices have enabled the realization of consistent, well-coordinated, and well-integrated culture with favorable interpersonal relations between leaders and teachers. This in turn helped them to effectively manage the college even with diverse points of view reflected frequently and conflicts then after. Moreover, although it is a fact that internally well-integrated organizations suffer from the difficulty of realizing change or external adaptation, the current study demonstrated the success of BDPC in creating internal integration and external adaptation. This indicates that the college is

customer-driven, risk-taking, change-oriented, and in a continuous improvement. Furthermore, findings unveiled that BDPC has a vision with clear goals.

Implicitly, the favorable OCr displayed in BDPC has far-reaching implications. According to the framework put in place by the study to gauge whether there is a well-established OCr, as a whole, the effectiveness of the college in its job performance is likely favored by OCr because it seems to have realized the features of Denison et al.'s (2004) four traits of OCr. Despite the fact that this study did not measure the job performance of teachers and the effectiveness of the college, in line with findings of prior studies (e.g., Denison et al., 2004; Lapiņa et al., 2015; Indiya et al., 2018; Saeed & Hassan, 2000), the current finding informed that the OCr of the college has a favorable contribution for the job performance of teachers and the effectiveness of the college at large. In addition, the results of this study inform that BDPC is in a better situation to establish all forms OCr in congruence   with Cameron and Quinn (2011) who contend that OCr determines the success or failure of organizations but contrasted with Srinivasan et al. (2020) who found low involvement, consistency, and mission and medium adaptability.

With respect to the status of OCt, on the other hand, the results portrayed that the teachers have the affective and continuance but not the normative commitments. That is, in accordance with Allen and Meyer (1990) and Meyer and Allen (1991), the teachers remained in the college due to their emotional attachment to the college and the perceived costs they may suffer from leaving but not due to their moral obligation. Since meeting AC is the most valuable means of retaining employees and securing organizational effectiveness (Luchak&Gellatly, 2007; Ortiz et al., 2013; Singh & Gupta, 2015), the current finding implies that BDPC is considered to have met its primary concern to retain its teachers. In addition, AC is positively correlated with organizational citizenship behaviors (Mahal, 2012; Meyer et al., 2002) and is a negative predictor of teachers' absenteeism, workplace stress, and turnover (Singh & Gupta, 2015; Vandenberghe et al., 2004; Wasti, 2005) and hence good status in AC guarantees success and fruitfulness in job performance. Moreover, as the current result revealed, teachers of BDPC remained in the college due to their CC which involves the cost-benefit analysis they make on whether to remain in the college. This finding corroborates prior findings by different scholars in the field (e.g., Allen & Meyer, 1990; Mahal, 2012; Meyer & Allen, 1991) who advocate that leaving an organization exposes to a consequence of costing accumulated investments such as pension plans, seniority benefits, college-specific skills acquired so far and the social networks established and the benefits therefrom by employees.

Regarding NC, it seems that the teachers do not have the readiness to extremely sacrifice for their college. To the optimal, they did not feel morally obliged to stay in the college because outputs of data analysis disclosed no significant difference between the obtained mean score and the test value in this respect, albeit the calculated mean score is a little bit greater than the test value. Hence, it can be said that teachers at BDPC are willing to remain in the college so long as a better job alternative is not available outside. This corresponds with Singh and Gupta (2015) who found out those employees often demonstrate NC to an organization when they are obliged to repay the organization for investments made to them in such forms as training and development. In line with Singh and Gupta (2015), other than due to AC and CC, the teachers of BDPC who

remained in the college or who have the NC practices are those with an obligation to repay the benefit of training and development. Alike Ortiz et al. (2013) who argue that NC has a positive relationship with engagement, the current finding also implies that the teachers of BDPC seem engaged in their task instead of browsing for better-paying jobs.

Relationship between Organizational Culture and Teachers' Organizational Commitment

Findings about the relationships between independent and dependent variables depicted that the overall OCr and its traits have a strong positive relationship with the overall teachers' OCt. This finding complements earlier findings by different researchers (e.g., Acar, 2012; Aranki et al., 2019; Asghar et al., 2015; Azadi et al., 2013; Azizollah et al., 2016; Boon & Arumugam, 2006; Brewer &Clippard, 2002; Desselle et al., 2018; Dickson et al., 2004; Ehtesham et al., 2011; Hakim, 2015; Inanlou & Ahn, 2017; Johari, 2003; Messner, 2013; Sabri et al., 2013) all of who advocate that OCr is a tool that contributes highly in fostering the overall employee commitment in organizations. For instance, in a study on the relationship between organizational culture and employee commitment, Inanlou and Ahn (2017) pointed out that involvement, flexibility and consistency, as traits of OCr, are positively related to organizational commitment.

The current findings demonstrated a strong positive relationship between each trait of OCr with the overall OCt have both consistency with and discrepancy from earlier findings. To begin with, the current finding is in line with Asghar et al. (2015), Jigjiddorj et al. (2020), Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012), and Singh and Verghese (2015) who found a strong positive correlation between each trait of OCr with the overall OCt. Alike Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012) as well as Rastegar and Aghayan (2012), for instance, there was a significant correlation of OCt with involvement and adaptability but not with consistency and mission, implying that the latter two types of culture could not induce employees' level of commitment. The current finding also complemented Asghar et al. (2015) and Hakim (2015) who found a positive association between consistency and OCt implying that employee commitment is a function of coordination, integration, and agreement. In addition, the current finding advanced earlier findings by Azadi, et al. (2013) and Nongo and Ikyanyon (2012) about the positive relationship between adaptability and employee commitment. This informs that the teachers of BDPC exhibit the highest OCt when they perceive that there is a culture of creativity, knowledge acquisition and transfer, quick reaction to current trends, and ability to anticipate future changes; all of which are adaptability traits.

Regarding the pairwise correlations among each IV with every DV, in most cases, strong relationships were demonstrated among each pair except for the moderate positive relationships of involvement and adaptability with NC as well as a mission with CC. The findings of the current study are inconsistent with earlier findings. For instance, Johari (2003) notifies: a positive correlation of consensual culture (involvement) with CC and NC but a negative correlation with AC; a positive correlation of entrepreneurial culture (adaptability) with NC but a negative and no significant correlation with CC and AC consecutively; a positive correlation of competitive culture (mission) with CC but a negative correlation with AC and no significant correlation with NC; no correlation at all of bureaucratic culture (consistency) with every component of commitment.

The findings of the current study have both consistencies and discrepancies with previous studies. Alike Sharma and Singh (2017) and Tasew (2019) who reported organizational culture traits have a significant predictor of organizational commitment dimensions, the current finding demonstrated not only a strong relationship between consistency (in-group collectivism) and all the dimensions of OCt but the former predicted AC and NC strongly as well. Unlike Dickson et al.'s finding, however, consistency is lacking to predict CC. In congruence with Dickson et al., (2004) and Mitic (2016), the current finding also revealed that adaptability (performance orientation) and consistency (uncertainty avoidance) did not only correlate positively and strongly with all three employee commitment factors but also influenced them with the same magnitude. Nonetheless, albeit it matched with Dickson et al.'s (2004) finding in demonstrating a correlation between involvement (humane orientation) and AC, the current finding contrasted with Dickson et al. (2004) who found an insignificant relationship between involvement with the other two dimensions of OCt. In contrast to Dickson et al. who found only a weak correlation between institutional collectivism (involvement) and AC, the current study has revealed a significant relationship between involvement and all three dimensions of OCt. In the same pattern, the current finding contrasted with Dickson et al. (2004) who displayed a negative correlation of power distance (involvement) with AC and NC and no significant correlation of this variable with CC. Contrary to Dickson et al., who revealed that involvement (assertiveness as well as gender egalitarianism) and mission (future orientation) have no significant correlation with all commitment dimensions, the current finding made known significant relationships among each component of independent and dependent variables.

Mixed results were also found in the current study in attempts made to examine the influence of the IVs on the DVs. For instance, like the finding by Batugal and Tindowen (2019) and Hai et al. (2018), involvement (clan) explained CC and AC significantly but did not predict NC in contrast to Hai et al. Consistent with Dickson et al. (2004), involvement did not predict NC but explained AC unlike it did in Dickson et al.'s finding. In line with Hai et al. (2018), consistency predicted NC and AC but contrasted in that it did not explain CC significantly. The current findings also unanimously aligned with Dickson et al. (2004) in the cases where consistency predicted AC and NC strongly and not CC. On the other hand, the current finding where adaptability did predict none of the dimensions of OCt significantly contrasted not only Dickson et al. (2004) but Hai et al too. (2018) both of who revealed that adaptability has influenced all three employee commitment factors positively and strongly. Finally, the current finding advanced the outputs of Hai et al. (2018) regarding a strong predictive power of mission on AC and NC but contrasted in that it did not explain CC, implying that focusing more on a mission may hinder the CC of teachers in BDPC.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study it was learned that organizational culture has a strong relationship with and an influence on teachers' organizational commitment. The consistencies and discrepancies of the current findings with earlier research findings conducted across varying contexts of study settings

notify that the relationship among the components of organizational cultures and organizational commitment rely on the cultural contexts of the specific social group and the organizations they established. Given that a committed workforce boosts organizational performance, the insights into organizational culture laid down by this study could help BDPC get the best out of its teachers by regularly examining and redesigning its organizational culture to eventually boost all dimensions of teachers' commitment and organizational effectiveness at large.

Experiences inform that organizational culture and organizational commitment evolve over time through the development of an organization. Since both individual and organizational behaviors are so dynamic, dictated by the dynamic socio-economic contexts, any sort of teachers' commitment observed today may not be sustained any longer. Therefore, further studies shall better look at changes in organizational culture and teachers' commitment through longitudinal perspectives. In addition, since the current study was held on the teachers' commitment level and did not pursue to examine its possible consequences, the future research can see the problem from this direction too. The inconsistent findings about the association of the two variables and the influence of the IV over the DV call for further exploration that involves one-to-one interviews and focus-group discussions across all relevant data sources that likely produce more context-based and tangible findings. Further research also needs to be conducted in order to widen the understanding of college managers and teachers about the functions of organizational culture and its effect on teachers' organizational commitment in all TVET colleges in the State of Amhara and the country at large.

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Women's Leadership in Ethiopian Higher Education: Development, Contribution, Quality and Preference

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Abstract

Women are underrepresented in higher education leadership across the world and Ethiopia is no exception. Although women leadership in Ethiopian higher education is a relatively new practice, its development has not been well examined. The present paper aims to address this lacuna by examining women senior leadership development, contribution, quality and preference based on the views and experiences of twelve women senior leaders drawn from ten public universities. The participants are current and past vice presidents at public universities of different generations and types. The results indicate that although women have made significant progress in gaining senior leadership positions, senior leadership remains to be a men's club where women are rarely invited. The results also reveal that women have perceived leadership quality and contributions. The findings show that among the various senior leadership positions women prefer and assume a research and community service vice president position and this goes to the extent of associating this position with women. The results suggest that enhancing women leadership development requires providing training, mentoring and other opportunities specifically aimed at advancing women to senior leadership positions, and ensuring sustainability of women leadership development programs.

Introduction

Enhancing quality in higher education and addressing social responsibilities requires higher education institutions (HEIs) to have strong leadership because effective leadership is central to a HEIs' success (Braun et al., 2009; Hofmeyer, Sheingold, Klopper, & Warland, 2015). This makes leadership one of the most important aspects that need to be taken into consideration for any institution's future (Council for Excellence in Management and Leadership, 2001). Leading a HEI is not an easy task and it is becoming increasingly demanding and challenging in this day and age for different reasons, among others, the expansion of programs and student numbers, expectation of the society, and expectation to deal with not only national but also global issues (Black 2015; Gilmore, Hirschorn & Kelly, 1999; Kezar & Holcombe, 2017; Rumbley, Helms, Peterson, & Altbach, 2014). It is even more challenging in a country like Ethiopia where

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HEIs are not well-funded and do not have a well-developed infrastructure and well-paid and highly qualified staff. Higher education leaders are also expected to lead wisely which encompasses a balance between their philosophies, vision, knowledge, and exceed daily challenges and political tussles (Portugal, 2006). Coping with such challenges and addressing demands of stakeholders require self-motivated, experienced and knowledgeable higher education leaders (Adamu, 2019). This in turn requires universities to build the capacity of academic leaders to address the increasing challenge they face (Dinh, Caliskan & Zhu, 2020) and achieve their mission and vision.

Higher education leadership is not gender specific and a responsibility given to only men. However, abundant literature and practices show that women are seriously underrepresented in leadership roles in higher education across the world and this continues in the twenty-first century (Airini et al, 2011; Burkinshaw, Cahill & Ford, 2018; Chance, 2021; McTavish & Miller, 2009; Shepherd, 2017), and this goes even to the extent of raising a question "can women lead?" (BlackChen, 2015). Although the underrepresentation of women is at all levels of leadership, but their underrepresentation is much higher at senior level of leadership (Shepherd, 2017; Burkinshaw, Cahill & Ford, 2018). If it continues with the current pace, it is a long way to achieve gender parity in higher education leadership (DeLaquil, 2021). Achieving gender parity in leadership is a crucial task but aims and efforts should go beyond merely ensuring gender parity because "gender parity in leadership is not only a matter of fairness, but also a crucial requirement in the context of the changing higher education landscape" (Cheung, 2021, p.5).

Scholars also noted and emphasized the importance of greater representation of women in leadership (Longman, 2018; Madsen & Longman, 2020). The need for more women leaders in higher education should not be driven by mere inclusion and gender representation which is more of a social justice. Increasing the proportion of women in leadership positions contributes to different educational and financial benefits of HEIs (Cheung, 2021). The higher education sector needs to be aware of the immense contribution of women's advancement in higher education leadership for the sector, its stakeholders and the society at large (Airini et al, 2011).

In the Ethiopian higher education context, until 2018 the Ministry of Education (MoE) was responsible for all levels of education in Ethiopia. However, in 2018 the government established the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MoSHE) which had a responsibility to lead the development of three major areas - science, higher education, and technical and vocational education and training. Following the establishment of a new government in October 2021, MoSHE was merged with MoE.

In Ethiopia, there are about 46 public universities and 270 private universities and colleges answerable to MoE. In public universities the selection and appointment of senior (top-level) leaders involves key stakeholders (e.g., staff, university senate, and board) while in private universities and colleges, it is often the owner who appoints senior leaders. This study focuses on public universities which have a clear directive on the selection and appointment of leaders and managers in HEIs (MoSHE, 2018). In public universities, senior leadership positions include the university board, president and vice-president positions. The board of public universities is the supreme governing body of the institution, and it is established by and accountable to MoE. MoE

also selects and appoints the board chairperson and three additional members directly and the remaining three in consultation with the university (FDRE, 2019).

The president of a public university is the chief executive officer of the institution. MoE appoints presidents based on the nomination and appointment process indicated in the directive. The term of office for a president is six years with a possibility of renewal for one more term. The vice-president of a public university is also selected based on the same directive, and the term of office is four years with a possibility of renewal for one more term (MoSHE, 2018).

Although the higher education proclamation and the directive indicate that the appointment of board members takes into consideration merit and gender balance, practice shows that the appointment is more political than merit (e.g., most of the board chairs of public universities are ministers, state ministers or other high-level officials). Since it is an appointment by the minister of MoE, individuals cannot apply and compete for this leadership position. Therefore, this study focuses on president and vice-president positions which are selected based on merits and involves the participation of the university community in the process of search and selection.

Comparatively speaking, women leadership in higher education in most developed and some developing countries has been a widely researched topic. However, women leadership in Ethiopian higher education is a topic which is under researched. This is despite the fact that there are several issues that need to be examined. Hence, this study aims to explore the perceptions, views and experiences of senior women leaders regarding the development, contribution, quality and preference of women leadership in higher education in Ethiopia.

Methods

The study used a phenomenological research design to better understand women's leadership development in higher education from the views and experiences of women leaders. In Ethiopia, there are four generations of public universities based on their year of establishment. In 2020, universities were also differentiated based on their mission and focus as Research University, Comprehensive University and University of Applied Sciences (MoSHE, 2020).

Twelve participants were selected from 10 public universities using purposive and chain referral sampling. The participants were drawn from each of the four generations (three from generation one, five from generation two, three from generation three, one from generation four) and the three types of universities (three research universities, seven universities of applied sciences and two comprehensive universities). During the data generation period there were only two women university presidents with less than six-month leadership experience. Therefore, data was generated from 12 women who are either currently or in the past occupied vice-president positions. Four of the vice-presidents were holding office while the other three finished their term, and the other five did not finish their term because of personal and institutional reasons. In terms of position, seven of them were vice-president for research and community service, two vice-presidents for academic affairs, one vice-president for business development, one vice-president for administrative affairs, and one vice-president for community service and university industry linkage.

The data from the vice-presidents were generated through in-depth face-to-face and telephone interviews. Data were also collected through document review. Official documents such as the proclamation on the definition of powers and duties of the executive organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the higher education proclamation, higher education policy and strategy, the directive on the selection and appointment of leaders and managers in HEIs in Ethiopia, the Higher education and training statistical abstract series (HETSAS-I), the science, and higher education and training sector's ten-year development plan were consulted. Data generated from these documents were often used to substantiate the data obtained through interview.

Reflexive thematic analysis is a very helpful approach to better understand people's experiences, views, opinions and perceptions. Accordingly, this study used reflexive thematic analysis to explore the perceptions, views and experiences of women senior leaders regarding the women leadership in higher education in Ethiopia.

To ensure confidentially, participants were addressed using abbreviations followed by numbers (e.g., VP2B). The abbreviation (i.e., VP) indicates interviewees' leadership position; the number indicates the interviewee; and the letter at the end indicates the respective university.

Results and Discussion

The Rise of Women to Senior Leadership

Leadership in Ethiopian higher education was not given enough emphasis in terms of selection, appointment and reporting. Since the establishment of the first higher education institution in 1950, the selection and appointment of senior leaders had been the responsibility of the government. Even though the immediate past higher education proclamation (Proclamation No. 650/2009) states that public universities have the autonomy to nominate senior leaders, this was not practiced at all. Instead, senior leadership appointment was mainly based on ethnicity, locality and political affiliation (Adamu, 2019). Until 2017, leadership in higher education was not also one of the educational issues reported in the education statistics annual abstracts which were published by the Ministry of Education.

Document review indicated that for about six decades it was rare to see women in senior leadership positions. This was a reality despite the fact that the education sector had a female minister who was one of the longest serving ministers in Ethiopia (1992-2006). In most of those years, the focus of the Ministry was widening female access to higher education, and improving the number of women academic staff. In those years, the number of female academic staff was very small and most of them had lower and middle level educational qualifications. As a result, almost all senior leadership positions were occupied by men. This trend created the "think leader, think male" mindset (Catalyst, 2007) among the higher education community and beyond and laid the foundation for many challenges for women leadership.

The most recent data show that women comprise 20.4% of academic staff. However, they account for only 3% of professors, 5% of associate professors, and 10% of assistant professors. They also account for only 11% of senior leadership positions. As of 2021, only two (4%) of the

presidents in the 46 public universities are women. These figures clearly show the significant underrepresentation of women in senior leadership. However, it is important to note that the data also shows increasing participation of women in higher education leadership compared to a decade ago, when the participation of women in senior leadership was almost nil.

Table 1

Leadership Positions in Ethiopian Public Universities (2017/18-2019/20)

Leadership position	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Board	14.7	85.3	23.9	76.1	30.7	69.3	23.1	76.9
Top level	10.5	89.5	12.4	87.6	11.4	88.6	11.4	88.6
Mid-level	8.3	91.7	10.0	90.0	15.1	84.9	11.1	88.9
Total	11.2	88.8	15.4	84.6	19.1	80.9	15.2	84.8

Note: Data compiled from the HETSAS-I (MoSHE, 2021).

There are different direct and indirect factors contributing to the increasing number of women in senior leadership roles in higher education in Ethiopia. These include an increased number of female students and academic staff, the appointment of women as cabinet members, self-motivation, and encouragement from senior leaders.

Increased Number of Female Students and Academic Staff

The expansion of higher education in Ethiopia in the last two decades has led to increasing numbers of female students. As can be seen from Table 2, in the last three years, there has been an increased number of female students at all levels of study. Compared to male students, the enrollment of female students at bachelor level is better than their enrollment at masters and PhD levels, and their enrollment at PhD level is better than their enrollment at the master's level of study. Despite the number of female students, there is still a significant difference between male and female students at all levels of study.

Table 2

Regular and Non-regular Students Enrolled in Public Universities (2017/18-2019/20)

Levels of study	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Bachelor	34.1	65.9	36.1	63.9	36.4	63.6	35.5	64.5
Masters	17.0	83.0	16.5	83.5	18.9	81.1	17.5	82.5
PhD	18.6	81.4	18.8	81.2	21.9	78.1	19.8	80.2
Total	23.2	76.8	23.8	76.2	25.7	74.3	24.3	75.7

Note: Data compiled from HETSAS-I (MoSHE, 2021)

Participants indicated that one of the good strategies to have more women leaders in higher education is through expanding the pool of highly competent female academic staff which requires rising the overall access of women to higher education as students and improving the number of female academic staff with high educational qualification and work experience.

Table 3

Academic Staff of Ethiopian Public Universities by Qualification (2017/18-2019/20)

Educational qualification	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Bachelor	20.2	79.8	21.6	78.4	26.6	73.4	22.8	77.2
Masters	11.5	88.5	13.9	86.1	19.0	81.0	14.8	85.2
PhD	7.7	92.3	6.8	93.2	15.5	84.5	10.0	90.0
Total	13.1	86.9	14.1	85.9	20.4	79.6	15.9	84.1

Note: Data compiled from the HETSAS-I (MoSHE, 2021).

The above data indicates a slight increase in the number of female academic staff in the last three academic years. However, the number of female academic staff is still by far lower than the number of male academic staff. In recent years, males outnumber females about 3:1 as bachelor holders, 6:1 as master's holder; and 9:1 as PhD holders. This clearly shows that as the level of educational qualification increases the share of women decreases. In spite of this limitation, participants strongly noted that an increased number of highly qualified female academic staff (i.e., female academic staff with PhD) have contributed to the rise in the number of women senior leaders. Supporting this, one of the research participants reported the following:

> If universities want to increase the number of women leaders, it is a must to have a pool of highly qualified female academic staff to choose from. As you may have noted, in recent years, the number of female students and female academic staff has risen compared to let's say that we had some ten years ago. This contributes to having more female academic staff which is an opportunity to have more women for senior leadership roles. (VP2A)

The above excerpt emphasized the importance of an increased number of female students and academic staff which could be considered as one of the preconditions for having more women in leadership roles. It also implies that an increased number of female academic staff is the basis for having more qualified female academic staff who are potentially interested to take up leadership roles. Qualification and academic rank are the major criteria and requirements for senior leadership positions as clearly stated in the directive on the selection and appointment of leaders. Out of a total of 100 points, qualification and academic rank has 30 and 25 points for the president and vice-president positions respectively.

The Appointment of Women as Cabinet Members

In 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed took office and appointed a new cabinet which is composed of 50% women. As a result, Ethiopia ranked 97th in the Global Gender Gap Index 2021, and it ranked at the 28th position in terms of political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2018). Participants of the present study argued that the much-lauded cabinet appointments in one way or another have influenced regional governments and ministers to bring more women to different leadership positions in different sectors, and the higher education sector was no different. One of the female ministers appointed by the Prime Minister was the minister of MoSHE. Soon after she took office, she appointed several women ministers and state ministers as chairperson and member of the Board of public universities. Participants indicated that this has indirectly contributed to the selection and appointment of women vice-presidents, because the vice-presidents are appointed by a university Board. Participants also noted that the political vibe, the quality and personality of people at the ministry and university board coupled with availability of qualified female academic staff in higher education contributed to a relative rise in the number of women leaders.

The Appointment of a Woman Minister for Higher Education

The fact that the founding minister of MoSHE is a woman not only positively affects the number of women senior leaders but also their leadership effectiveness. Participants noted that she was inspirational and motivates them to be active and visible. They also thought that she tried to empower them through providing training opportunities and creating a network of women leaders. In support of this, study participants said the following:

> I don't know what research says, but from my short and recent observation, having a woman minister contributes to empowering women and bringing them to senior leadership. There is no doubt about that. If there are females at the top, gender will be one of their main agenda. We witnessed this when we had a woman minister. At that time our [women senior leaders] number increased, and we had an opportunity to create a network of female leaders. After she left, everything stalled and the number of women board members and senior leaders in many universities is decreasing. I am not saying that the minister should always be a woman, which is impossible. I am just telling you what happened when we had a woman minister. A good male minister could probably do the same. (VP8B)

> I can say that more than ever before the participation of women as vice president and board members has gained momentum when we had a female minister. After she [the minister] left her position, the number of females at Board level significantly decreased. Many women Vice-presidents have also left their positions either because of the end of their term or open and systematic pressure. If I take myself as an example, I didn't want to leave the position but I was forced to leave. (VP9B)

Evidence also showed that following the appointment of a new male minister of MoSHE, in the 2020/21 academic year, there was a new university board member appointment in almost all public universities which resulted in a significant decrease in female university board members. As the participants indicated, this is partly related to the departure of the female minister. Their argument regarding the decreased number of women vice presidents is also visible. The highest number of women senior leaders in 45 public universities was 26 in the 2018/2019 academic year (MoSHE, 2021). At the end of the 2020/2021 academic year there were about 19 women senior leaders in 42 public universities.

One of the contributions of the appointment of a founding women minister for MoSHE is the attempt to address gender related issues in the selection and appointment of senior leaders in Ethiopian public universities. This was clearly indicated in the revised directive. The first example in relation to this is the inclusion of gender quota. The directive clearly states that "every higher education institution shall have at least two females in its senior management" (MoSHE, 2018, p. 5). The second example is an applicant for senior leadership positions should have the highest educational qualification (i.e., doctoral degree or equivalent). It is only in exceptional conditions that an applicant with a master's degree coupled with substantial experience could be considered. In spite of these provisions, as an effort to ascent women academics to senior leadership positions, the revised directive provides opportunities for women with master's degrees to apply and compete.

As indicated in the above discussion, participants believe that the appointment of a woman leader as a minister has a positive relationship with an increased number of women senior leaders in public universities. They also noted that the quality and attitude of the person in charge of the ministry is the main factor and more important than the gender of the minister.

Self-motivation and Determination

With the exception of one vice president, all participants of the present study have previously served in the lower or mid-level leadership positions. Most of them are also the first women vice presidents in their respective universities. They have reached this level in a context where there is no female senior leader to take as a role model. And that resonates well with Cheung's (2021) observation that most pioneer women leaders in higher education "have made their way to the top in their own right in mostly gender-blind contexts" (p.7).

In a higher education context where women's senior leadership is less likely to be accepted by the university community and the broader society, thinking about and deciding to take up leadership roles requires women's higher self-motivation. Although there are different context-specific factors that motivate women to take up leadership positions (Maheshwari & Nayak, 2020; McTavish & Miller, 2009), self-motivation is one of the essential and common factors for women to take up leadership roles (Hum, 2000; Maheshwari, 2021). Participants of the study said that one of the reasons for the increase in the number of women senior leaders is the increasing self-motivation and determination of women. Though stated different, the following remarks from study participants reflect rising motivation on the part of women leaders:

As a teacher and mid-level leader, I have seen several problems that need to be addressed by senior leaders. At that time, I said if I had been a vice president, I would have solved these problems in this way and I would have done this and that. When I applied for the position, I now hold, my main motive was solving the problems that I have identified and improving the university's performance at least in relation to research. (VP1F)

There were several gaps that I saw. I want to address those gaps by becoming a vice president. If you ask me my main motives for taking senior leadership roles, first, it is my ambition to send a statement that "we can!" I want to prove to the community that women can be not only leaders but also good leaders. Secondly, I want to be a good role model and inspire other female academics to take leadership roles. (VP6C)

The above excerpts imply that in the Ethiopian higher education context, there are three major factors that motivated women to take senior leadership roles. These include women's ambition to address the problem they see and face, and the determination to prove their leadership capacity.

Although the directive states that every university shall have at least two women at senior leadership positions, this was not mentioned as a factor contributing to the increasing number of women in senior leadership roles because this quota approach has not been effectively executed.

Perceived Women's Contribution

The contribution of the incumbent women senior leaders to achieving the envisioned vision and mission of their respective university is one of the major issues discussed in relation to women's leadership in Ethiopia. Participants of the present study also indicated that the outcome of their leadership roles is a double-edged sword. If they are effective, they will not only contribute towards achieving the vision and mission of their university but also become role models and inspire female academic staff in many ways. This is a unique contribution of women as leaders (Adu-Yeboah, Oduro & Takyiakwaa, 2021; Li & Kam, 2021). As discussed above most of them are the first women vice presidents in their respective universities and a study showed that women leaders who were the first to take senior leadership in their universities often act as role models and champions for the next generation of female leaders (Cheung, 2021).

Participants also asserted that the negative impact of women leaders' failure or unsuccessful story on female academic staff is more than the negative impact of the failure or unsuccessful story of men leaders on male academic staff. This is related to the trend of more female academic staff looking for role models than male academic staff and which in turn is associated with the small number of women leaders in higher education.

The result of the present study also indicated that although women senior leaders are small in number, most of them strongly believe that they are effective in their leadership roles. This assertion is well substantiated with the following quotes from study participants.

> Though we are small in number, our contribution is very good and I think we have shown enough what we are capable of doing in leadership. (VP1A)

> Females are very productive and dedicated to their leadership. The contribution could vary from person to person, university to university and position to position, but generally speaking our contribution is remarkable. (VP6C)

> I think we have contributed better than our male counterparts. I can say that we were productive and efficient. (VP3I)

> It may not be all, but most of us were very successful and contributed a lot and have shown that we can do what is required of us at the top-level. (VP5D)

> The contribution of female leaders in Ethiopia is considerable. I think most of us are successful despite all the challenges we are facing. (VP7E)

In addition to the general factors that contribute to leadership effectiveness such as good leadership knowledge and skills, the present study indicated that women's contribution could also vary depending on how they are appointed. As clearly indicated in the study context, until recently leadership appointment was mainly based on locality and to some extent political affiliation. Even in such a context, women were not preferred to take up senior leadership roles. This is because in addition to the general problem of seeing and accepting women in senior leadership, most female academic staff was also less politically affiliated compared to their male counterparts. At that time, the contributions of leaders were not often associated with the way they are appointed. However, when women are appointed to senior leadership positions without open competition, their contribution and effectiveness are scrutinized and always tied to the way they are appointed. Sometimes this is even regardless of the merit and capacity of the appointed women leaders. In relation to this, one of the study participants had the following to say:

> It is always good to appoint leaders through open competition. But there have been cases where leaders were directly appointed by the ministry or the board as an acting or on a permanent basis for a given term. In this case, they may appoint a person with good leadership quality and experience who could have potentially won had it even been in open competition. This person could be a man or a woman. The problem is if it is a woman the community immediately associates her appointment with being a woman instead of trying to look at and understand her capacity. This really and heavily affects women's contributions as leaders. (VP5D)

Another participant agrees,

> For a woman who is appointed on a non-competitive basis, it is very difficult to be an effective leader no matter how knowledgeable she may be. Because in the first place, the community believes that she can't be a good leader; therefore, they are not ready to support and collaborate with her. Some people may become obstacles in different ways and make her unhappy with her leadership. As I understood from discussions that I had with women in similar positions at other universities, despite

the challenges associated with femininity, competing for office has its own greater impact on our performance and success as a leader. (VP9B)

The above excerpts imply that for different reasons including effectiveness, it would be better if women leaders are elected than appointed. Previous study indicated that although elected leaders are slightly more influential than the appointed leader (Hollander, Fallon, & Edwards, 1977), being elected or appointed has no significant difference on leadership effectiveness (Partridge & Sass, 2011) as long as it is based on merit. Yet, the current study brings another dimension to this discussion which is the importance of context. In the Ethiopian context, because of past experiences, the higher education community does not have a positive attitude even towards merit based direct appointment. Participants argued that this approach has negative impacts on leaders' contribution and effectiveness, and this is more evident on women than men leaders.

Perceived Leadership Qualities as a Basis for Holding Senior Positions

Participants of the present study indicated that most male senior leaders consider women's leadership primarily as a strategy to achieve gender inclusion. Although measures to redress the gender imbalance in higher education leadership is important, participants strongly argued that it should not be the driving force for increasing the number of women leaders. They also argued that they possess many leadership qualities that contribute to effective implementations of visions and missions of universities, and thus the intentions and measures to appoint women leaders should focus on the contributions that they can offer HEIs (Airini et al, 2011). In support of this, the study participants had the following to say:

> I wish there is a study on this but I believe that in our country, women are better than men in terms of taking leadership responsibilities. This could be associated with taking major responsibility in their own family as a mother. Men have more friends, social networks than women and they don't want to lose this, and sometimes this affects what they do and decide as a leader. (VP1A)

> We are good at negotiation, dealing with problems and creating a better and smooth working environment; we are not as aggressive as men; we try to address different issues in the best possible way though this may take more time than expected, and some people may consider this approach as lack of confidence in decision making. (VP10G)

Participants also described other characteristics/traits they possess and are necessary for an effective leadership, among others, integrity, ability to work under pressure and adapt to change, high determination and professional commitment, high sociability, less biased and corrupt, more caring, better at multitasking and resource management, considering being a role model as a responsibility, and paying attention to details. Some of these qualities are echoed in survey results of the Pew Research Center survey in which women are ranked better than or equal to men in seven of eight primary leadership qualities - honesty, intelligence, hardworking, ambitious,

compassionate, outgoing and creative (Pew Research Center, 2008). A study by Zenger and Folkman (2019) also indicated that women have better leadership skills than men.

The other quality and contribution that women can offer universities is the inclusion of gender dimension to leadership which is not often the interest and main focus of most men leaders. While describing their leadership experiences, participants often bring the gender perspective of leadership which is very important to ensure inclusion and understand different issues from different perspectives. In general terms, women leaders in higher education in Ethiopia possess some of the most important traits (determination, sociability, integrity) of an effective leader as described by Northouse (2009).

Leadership Position Preference

In most public universities there are at least five senior level leadership positions - president, academic vice president (AVP), research and community service vice president (RCSVP), administrative and student affairs vice president, and business and development vice president. All vice president positions are equal and answerable to the president. However, the present study showed that the university community thinks that the AVP position is higher than the other vice president positions. This could be associated with first, the AVP is prioritized to be delegated in the absence of the president. The higher education proclamation also clearly states that "in the case of absence from duty, the president shall delegate, as a standard practice, the AVP on his behalf and, in the case of simultaneous absence of the said vice president, any of the other vice presidents" (FDRE, 2019). Second, teaching learning, which is the main responsibility of the AVP office, is considered as the priority mission of universities compared to other missions – research and community services. Third, compared to other vice president positions the AVP has more university level responsibilities including academic promotion, academic staff employment and disciplinary actions and closely working with the registrar office in the preparation of an academic calendar. Fourth, from experience, mostly people who were AVPs are often interested in becoming a president.

Although it is not written anywhere and talked about in public, the RCSVP position is often considered as the easiest vice president position. Participants' observations also echo these unwritten perceptions. Explaining their reasons for that, they remark:

> I think this position is easier than other positions. The main reason for this is that this position does not have much to do with student related issues. In our [country] context, a position which is considered as difficult is a position that has much to do with student affairs. The other reason is since there is not much external and internal research fund [the research budget is less than 5% of the total annual budget] and activities to manage, the [research and community service] vice president does not have frequent interaction with academic staff. These are some of the reasons that make this position relatively easier than other positions. (VP4H)

> In principle, this [RCSVP's] work is not as simple as it may seem. In practice, as many people think, this position is said to be easier than the vice presidents in charge of academic

affairs, administrative affairs and business and development. This is despite the fact that this position is responsible for two of the three core missions of universities. Here, I would like to emphasize that it is the context that makes this position look easier. (VP8B)

The above assertion is irrespective of the generation and types of universities in the country. In Ethiopia, universities often appoint women as RCSVP. Women academic staff also prefer and run for this position, and most of the participants of this study also hold this position. There may be various reasons why women prefer this leadership position, but according to the present study the following are the main reasons. First, some years ago, there were no RCSVP positions in universities. Research activities were under AVP and almost all president and AVP positions were held by men. Women started to come to senior leadership positions when the RCSVP position was included in the public universities' structure, and most of them were appointed as vice president of this position. Second, the board, the president, the community and even female academic staff tend to believe that this is less challenging and good for women who have not been in senior leadership positions for decades. Reflective of that trend two participants have this to say:

> We [women] often choose a research and community service vice president position. This is not because we are not able to take up other leadership roles. I believe we can, but it is always good to start with what you think is easier and less challenging. I think the board, the people and we [women] also think so. Yet, this does not mean that the research and community service vice president role is too easy; it is not. (VP5D)

> We prefer the one with less challenge and I think compared to other positions research and community service [VP position] is less challenging. It is not only us but also the ministry and the university community also believe that this [RCSVP] is good for females. If you look at the trend there are many females who have served in this position and still many females compete for this position. (VP9B)

The above excerpts clearly indicate that as most women are the first senior leaders in their respective universities, both the university community and women believe that it is better to take on a leadership position which is assumed to be less challenging.

Third, most women, who were appointed as the first senior leaders in their respective universities, were RCSVPs. Most of those who applied for this position were also successful. This has influenced many female academic staff to be interested in this position because they have someone who already proved that they can be successful and are more likely to be elected to this position. This goes to the extent of associating women leaders with this position. In a relation to that a participant reflects on her own experience as follows,

> When someone introduces me as a vice president without mentioning my specific position, instead of asking me which vice president position I hold, many people take for granted that I am a research and community service vice president. This

clearly shows how much this position is being associated with women leaders. (VP6C)

The above discussion indicates that women prefer easier senior leadership positions and universities also tend to believe that for different reasons this is a position where they are comfortable with and happy to take. It is interesting to see if this trend and practice will continue at research universities where research is their main mission and focus.

Conclusion

In recent years, women have made significant progress in gaining senior leadership positions. The rise in women's access to higher education as a student and academic staff, women academic's self-motivation and determination, the appointment of women cabinet, and the appointment of a female as minister of science and higher education are some of the major direct and indirect factors that contributed to the rise of women at senior leadership positions. The development of women in higher education senior leadership positions from almost nil participation to 11.4% is palpable, but the result showed that women are still significantly underrepresented at senior leadership. It can be argued that in Ethiopian higher education, senior leadership remains to be a men's club where women are rarely invited. The study also revealed that women believe they have good leadership qualities and they also believe they have contributed to achieving the vision and missions of their respective universities, and the development of women leadership, particularly in terms of being a role model for female academic staff. This implies that the intention of increasing women's leadership participation should go beyond achieving inclusion, because they have much to contribute at the highest level. Taking a leadership position where one could feel comfortable and become more successful is a good thing, but associating a leadership position with gender is not a good practice and trend. Higher education needs more women leaders at any type and level of leadership because they are good leaders.

Female academics' interest in leadership is one of the good practices of the higher education sector that significantly contributes to women leadership development. The government and universities need to advance women leadership development by providing training, mentoring and other opportunities specifically aimed at advancing women to senior leadership positions. Studies also emphasized the need for women leadership development programs more than ever before (Madsen, Longman, & Daniels, 2012; Gandhi & Sen, 2021). The government also needs to ensure the sustainability of women leadership development programs which are often project based and have limited lifespan.

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Leaders' Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Leadership Effectiveness in Ethiopia First-Generation Universities

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to examine university leaders' emotional intelligence as a predictor of their leadership effectiveness. To this end, a quantitative method with correlation design was employed. Five out of the total nine first-generation universities that are found in the five regions of the country were taken through stratified random sampling. Management committee members, academic commission and department council members were participants in the study as they are immediate subordinates of university presidents, deans, and department heads respectively. As a result, a total of 770 five-point Likert scale-type questionnaires were distributed, out of which 84.2% were successfully completed and returned. To analyze the data, cross-tabulation, frequency counts, Mean, standard deviation, Pearson's correlation, linear and multiple regressions were employed. The findings revealed that university leaders' emotional intelligence doesn't only show a strong positive relationship) with their leadership effectiveness, but it also significantly predicts their leadership effectiveness. Besides, the partial correlation results inform the existence of weak but negative correlation between leaders' leadership experience and emotional intelligence and between experience and leadership effectiveness. Moreover, from the results of multiple regression analysis, it is found that, except for social awareness, all the emotional intelligence dimensions were significant predictors of university leaders' effectiveness. Finally, it can be concluded that leaders' perceived emotional intelligent can be considered as one significant factor for the ineffective leadership practice. Thus, it is recommended that standardized emotional intelligence test need to be used when recruiting university leaders while series and tailor-made emotional intelligence trainings should be provided for those who are in the position.

Introduction

Emotional intelligence as a construct is first introduced by Salovey and Mayer (1990) who defined the term as the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions. It is also conceptualized by Goleman (1998a) as the capacity for recognizing one's own feelings and those of others for managing emotions well in relationships. Bar-On and his associates define emotional intelligence as an array of emotional and social abilities, competencies, and skills that enable individuals to cope with daily demands (Bar-On, Tranel, Denburg & Bechara, 2003). It is the extent to which a person is attuned to his or her own feelings and to the feelings of others. Emotional intelligence is generally used with reference to the ability to perceive, understand, and manage the emotions of both the self and others to accomplish personal and collective goals (Brown & Moshavi, 2005). From these definitions, it is possible to understand that emotional intelligence is one's ability to realize his/her emotional status and the emotions of others in a

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particular situation and his/her ability to manage his/her own emotions to create a suitable environment for achieving the desired objectives.

Unlike emotional intelligence, the term leadership has been in existence since the late 1700s (Stogdill, 1974). As leadership is used in multiple contexts, literature indicates that there is no universally agreed definition for the term. For instance, Yukl defines leadership as "the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives" (2010, p. 7). For Northouse (2012, p.3), it is "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal". However, leadership is commonly defined as the process of influencing subordinates towards achieving organizational goals. The term often indicates the leaders' ability to persuade, motivate, and initiate followers so that they can exert their maximum effort to realize the shared vision. Thus, it should be clear that leadership is comprised of the leader (his/her ability to influence), the followers and the common goal as inseparable aspects. Leadership also implies the process of transforming the organization or some part of it in a new direction to solve the problems it faces and to improve the quality of its outcome (Davis, 2003). Mignonac and Herrbach (2004) state that in the eyes of the subordinates, leadership is everything that leaders do in the work place which directly or indirectly affects the organization's objectives and their well-being. Along that line, educational leadership can be conceptualized as the process of influencing stakeholders to successfully achieve educational objectives.

A true leader isn't about having a certain job, title, or position, rather it is about achieving results and building a team that produces. Thus, in any normal situation, organization's failure or success is related to the leadership that exists there. Even if there are no universal criteria for measuring effective leadership, scholars and researchers in the field agree that effective leadership is a key to organizational performance and success (e.g., Bass & Avolio, 1995; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Empirically, Durga and Prabhu (2011) found that organizational success is predominantly dependent on the leader's personal traits, skills and approach of leadership.

According to Yukl (2010), leader's characteristics are one of the major determinants of leadership effectiveness. For Yukl, common characteristics of effective leaders include motives, personality, values, confidence, optimism, integrity and influence tactics. Besides, as of Armstrong (2009), trustworthiness, vision, flexibility, self-awareness, being goal oriented, and self-confidence are identifiable characteristics of effective leaders. Other authors (e.g., Appleton, 1999; Holden, 2003) give emphasis to the emotional elements as characteristics of effective leaders regardless of the organization they lead. These elements include self-confidence, strong determination, emotional stability, and trustworthiness. Thus, leaders who demonstrate such behaviors in their work are likely to easily influence their subordinates which in turn help them to achieve organizational goals. For instance, being emotionally stable and mature can help leaders deal appropriately with any situation in an organizational setting.

Moreover, Yukl (2010) underlies that emotional intelligence, social intelligence, and meta-cognition are recently identified important competencies of effective leaders. Among these competencies, emotional intelligence has been considered by many researchers as a crucial aspect of leadership effectiveness. Being aware of, and then managing one's own emotions has paramount

importance both in a person's social and organizational life (Bar-On et al., 2003). Particularly emotional intelligence plays a significant role for leaders' effectiveness due to the multiple responsibilities they have. According to Goleman (1998a), most effective leaders are alike in that they all have a high degree of emotional intelligence. He further claimed that "emotional intelligence is the sine-qua none of leadership" (p. 93). For him, "a person can have the best training in the world, an incisive analytic mind, and an endless supply of smart ideas, but without emotional intelligence, he still won't make a great leader" (Ibid).

Even though emotional intelligence is a relatively recent concept in the area of leadership, many studies indicate that it contributes a lot to leaders' effectiveness and organizational success. Furthermore, studies found emotional intelligence as an important predictor of effective leadership (Caruso, Mayer & Salovey, 2002). More specifically, researchers like Ayiro and Sang (2012) and Hebert (2011) revealed a strong positive correlation between leaders' emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness in educational settings. Equally, one can assume that those higher education leaders who demonstrate emotional intelligence conceivably are effective in their leadership activities. Having such a quality would help university leaders in Ethiopia to effectively address their organizational missions: teaching-learning, research and dissemination, and community services (FDRE Proclamation, 2009) which in turn enable them to achieve the major goals of their institutions.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the increased emphasis the Ethiopian government has been giving to universities in order to enhance their contribution to transform the country (MoE, 2016/17), studies done in relation to universities' performance (e.g., Behailu, 2011; Mulu, 2012) and their leadership (e.g., Asres & Dejene, 2017; Befekadu, 2012) revealed that most of the institutions and their leaders are less effective. These studies identified various problems that obstruct the successful achievement of organizational goals. A study by Behailu (2011) on three first-generation universities (Addis Ababa, Hawassa, and Mekele) found that the Business Processing Reengineering (BPR) structures indicated a common departure from collective to strong executive leadership ideals that are not often recommended in educational institutions due to staff professionalization. Furthermore, MoE's (2016/17) comprehensive inspection report disclosed that most of the Ethiopian public universities have limitations in integrating their work with the country's strategic goals (e.g., ESDP V, & GTP II); in efficient utilization of resources; in effective management of the different campuses (they usually emphasized only on one, probably the main campus); and in balancing local politics with the university's mission.

Thus, the studies and the MoE's report clearly indicate the discrepancy between the rhetoric and the reality in public universities of the country. In spite of the reality existed on the ground, university leaders were expected to be a model for others in effectively handling the different challenges they face, in being strategic and in employing appropriate decision-making approaches than preferring a power distance and making themselves busy in daily routines.

Even though transformational leadership style has a strong positive effect on leadership effectiveness, university leadership was found very near to laissez-faire and far from being

transformational (Befekadu, 2012). According to this study, though there is a high institutional readiness for change, academic staff was dissatisfied with the existing leadership effectiveness. Added to this, the absence of professionally capable, motivated, and committed leadership were among the major challenges in the Ethiopian universities to assure quality education (Mulu, 2012).

Despite the expectations of the society, the studies exposed that university leaders are not in a position to effectively discharge their responsibilities to address their institution's mission and to transform the country. However, it is expected that university leaders can be archetypal in using contemporary leadership styles such as, transformational, distributed and collegial leadership (Bolden, Petrov & Gosling, 2009). They were also expected to be exemplary in their motivation, commitment and capability to effectively discharge their responsibilities and to make their institution internationally competent.

Therefore, even though it is difficult to exclusively attribute all university problems to leaders' emotional intelligence and their leadership effectiveness, studies (e.g., Druskat, Fabio & Gerald, 2006; Goleman, 1998b) indicate that leaders who consistently employ emotional intelligence in the workplace better manage and solve the various problems existed in their organizational setting. The contribution of emotional intelligence to leadership effectiveness in an educational setting can be explained through various aspects. For instance, some studies revealed that a high level of emotional intelligence leads to high job satisfaction and sense of commitment (Long & Kowang, 2015), contributes to quality decision making (Watkin, 2000), and guides to preferred conflict resolution strategy (Jordan, Ashkanasy & Ha' rtel, 2002). Similarly, it is reported that leaders' emotional intelligence reduces turnover and enhances productivity in the organization (Tesluk, Vance & Mathieu, 1999); it increases motivation (George, 2000) and creativity of workers (Singh, 2006); it facilitates interpersonal relationship and overall performance of leaders (Bar-On et al., 2003).

More specifically, studies conducted in higher education institutions indicated that leaders with a high level of emotional intelligence have better self-leadership, flexibility, people skills, use participatory decision-making, (Kamran, 2011) and build positive relationships with stakeholders (Gering, 2012). Emotional intelligence also enables higher education academic leaders to manage complex situations, to respond effectively to various organizational stakeholders both inside and outside their respective institutions (Coco, 2011). Besides, leaders' emotional intelligence positively and significantly correlates with organizational effectiveness, interpersonal sensitivity, and teamwork (Coco, 2011; Hebert, 2011).

Therefore, all these witness that, as Yukl stated, "emotional intelligence can help leaders solve complex problems, make better decisions, plan how to use their time effectively, adapt their behavior to the situation, and manage crises" (2010, p.213). It could be then argued that university leaders (presidents, deans and department heads) who consistently demonstrate emotional intelligence in the workplace are likely to achieve their organizational goals better than those leaders who have not.

However, in spite of the significant role that emotional intelligence plays in leadership effectiveness, the area has not yet been adequately researched in the Ethiopian context. Furthermore, even though organizations in developed nations have recently begun to assess

leaders' and managers' emotional intelligence during employment, selection and promotion (Caruso, et al., 2002; Kasapi & Mihiotis, 2014), there are limited studies on leaders' emotional intelligence in the context of Ethiopia in general and Ethiopian public universities in particular. As a result, the present study targets to examine university leaders' (presidents', deans' and department heads') perceived emotional intelligence as a predictor of their leadership effectiveness. Since leaders' experience is repeatedly reported for having a significant relationship which again affects both emotional intelligence and effectiveness (Bar-On et al., 2003; Goleman, 1998a; Konya, Magic and Pavlovic, 2016; Kumar, 2016; Shukla, Mishra & Dubey, 2014), its correlation was given special attention in this study among others.

Thus, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) What is the relationship between the consistency that leaders in first generation universities show emotional intelligence and the frequency they demonstrate leadership effectiveness? (2) To what extent does the leaders' work experience is correlated with their emotional intelligence? (3) To what extent does the leaders' work experience is related with their leadership effectiveness? (4) To what extent do the four emotional intelligence dimensions predict university leaders' leadership effectiveness?

**Conceptual Framework of the Study**

Studies that have rooted in quantitative paradigm are expected to have certain relations with theories or models. With regard to leadership effectiveness, so many models and theories have been developed by different scholars since the Great Man theory was first employed. Among the contemporary leadership approaches, transformational leadership is often recommended for service oriented public organizations (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Somewhat related to transformational leadership, but more inclusive than transformational leadership, is the three-dimensional leadership behavior model. As to Yukl (2010), even if the components are not repeated word for word, the three-dimensional leadership model comprises all the components of transformational leadership and some additional components. Besides, the three-dimensional leadership effectiveness model can also be appropriate to situations in which high competition among organizations and rapid socio-economic and technological changes are common events (Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). Thus, for the purpose of the present study, the three-dimensional (task-oriented, relations-oriented and change-oriented) leadership effectiveness model was adapted and then used for developing the conceptual framework. This is because I found it more appropriate to assess university leaders' effectiveness.

Likewise, though there are different models of emotional intelligence that are resulted from the different conceptualization of the term among the proponents, the mixed emotional intelligence model, particularly the Emotional Social Competence Inventory (ESCI) is used. This model has been chosen not only because it is recommended by many researchers (e.g., Babu, 2016; Bajaji, 2013) but also because it is not a complicated measurement of emotional intelligence. Furthermore, unlike others, the ESCI enables to gather data from multiple raters (360-degree feedback) such as supervisors, peers, subordinates, and so on (Korn Ferry, 2017). Therefore, the conceptual framework used in this study is adopted from this model, because it is more applicable and better match with the three-dimensional effective leadership behaviors.

Figure 1 shows that self-awareness and social-awareness dimensions are very much related to realizing one's own emotional status and the emotions of others around him/her in any particular situation respectively. On the other hand, self-management and relationship management dimensions go beyond realizing the emotional status. These dimensions are very much related to one's capacity to manage or control his/her own emotions and then create a suitable situation to build smooth relationships with others. All these emotions are often reflected either directly or indirectly when leaders are communicating, working, discussing and so on with others. Even though emotional intelligence can be classified into four dimensions, the dimensions are not basically separated concepts. In the actual situation, one dimension may function as a base for the other. For example, to effectively manage one's own emotion the leader needs to realize his/her emotional status first. In the same manner, before trying to respond to others, he/she needs to be aware of others emotional status.

Figure1

Conceptual Framework of the Study
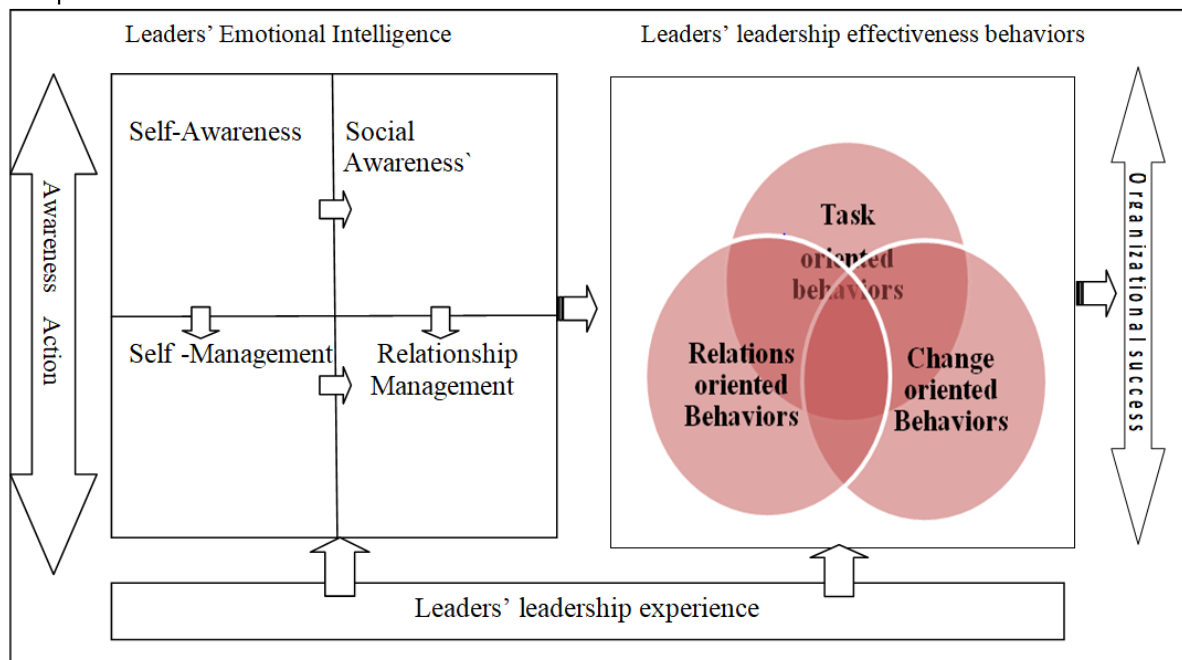
Sources. The emotional intelligence model is adapted from Korn Ferry, 2017 ESCI and the effective leadership behaviors model is adapted from Yukl, 2010, three factor model of effective leadership

Figure 1 also indicated that the framework encompasses three major leadership effectiveness behaviors. Here, it should be noted that unlike managerial grid theory and other earlier models of leadership, the three-dimensional leadership effectiveness model is used to classify specific leadership behaviors rather than to categorize leaders and managers themselves in terms of their general concern for tasks and relationships. Similarly, unlike categorical models,

the three-dimensional model (as a multidimensional model) is more important when various leader behaviors can contribute or affect more than one objective (Yukl, 2010). Therefore, though the leadership behaviors can be classified as task-oriented, relations-oriented and change-oriented according to their primary functions, in some aspects a particular leadership behavior can contribute to achieve objectives from other categories (Yukl, 2010). This is indicated by the three circles in the framework. In general, the framework indicates that if university leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence in the work place, they would be effective in their leadership activities which in turn contribute for organizational success as indicated by the arrows. In this causal relationship, leaders' leadership experience likely affects one or both of the constructs unless it is controlled.

The present study is expected to contribute a lot to informing the status of university leaders' emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness, which in turn will have a significant effect on the institutions' performance. This again helps the Ministry of Education and the government at large to bridge the gaps through special and relevant training so as to enhance the investment returns. The study is also hoped to inform the concerned officials at the different hierarchies of the ministry and in the universities about the relevance of emotional intelligence in leadership effectiveness. This may initiate university leaders themselves both to take and then to cascade emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness training in the future.

Methods

Research Design

A quantitative research approach with a correlation research design was followed in this study. This approach was chosen with the basic assumption that it can provide a better understanding of the research questions raised (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2012). More specifically, this study was informed by previous related studies (e.g., Ayiro & *Sang,* 2012; Babu, 2016) which used a survey questionnaire to assess leaders' emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness in the education sector.

Population, Samples and Sampling Techniques

Out of the nine first-generation universities (those inaugurated/established and proclaimed with the level of the university before 2005) which are found in five regions of the country, five first-generation universities (Mekele, Bahir Dar, Addis Ababa, Haramaya and Dilla) were selected using stratified random sampling (one from each). There are 11 colleges commonly existed in these sample universities. Thus, six colleges were randomly selected from each university. This includes the college of education and behavioral sciences, social sciences, language studies, business and economics, natural and computational sciences, and the college of agriculture and environmental sciences. Once the sample colleges were selected, representative sample departments were randomly taken from these colleges in each of the universities. Accordingly, a total of 137 leaders (5 presidents, 30 deans, and 102 department heads) were considered as the unit

of analysis. However, the leaders' emotional intelligence and their leadership effectiveness were assessed from the perception of their immediate subordinates (management committee, Academic commission, and Department council members) respectively.

The researcher prefers to assess the leaders' emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness from their immediate subordinates' perspective mainly because such approach yields less subjective results compared with self-rated tests (Bajaj, 2013). Moreover, subordinates' perspectives are indicated as better predictors of the leaders' effectiveness than others (Zakariasen & Victoroff, 2012). Hence, the leaders' immediate subordinates (management committee members, AC members and DC members respectively) were taken as primary data sources for the survey questionnaire.

To determine the minimum sample size, particularly for AC and DC members, a 95% level of confidence was used (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, 210 AC members (out of the total 320) and 510 DC members (out of the total 1224) were selected using proportional stratified random sampling. In this case, colleges and departments were used as strata so as to take appropriate representatives based on the total number members found in each of them. On the other hand, a comprehensive sampling technique was used for selecting 50 management committee members (10 from each university) as immediate subordinates of the university presidents. In sum, multi-stage, simple random, proportionate stratified random and comprehensive samplings were employed in the study.

Instruments

The Likert scale type items range from 1 representing never to 5 representing consistently or equivalent scales were employed to gather data. The standardized Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) instrument (with 40 items, ten for each dimension) proposed by proponents of the mixed model (Korn Ferry, 2017) was customized and then employed to assess leaders' emotional intelligence while self-developed questionnaire (with 30 items, ten for each dimension) was used to assess their leadership effectiveness. To enhance the acceptability, an attempt was made to confirm whether the instruments fulfilled the various validities expected. As a result, the face validity, the content validity, the convergent validity, the discriminate validity as well as the construct validity of the instrument were adequately checked using various mechanisms. For instance, content validity ratio (Messick, 1994; Lawshe, 1975), factor loadings (Burke & Larry, 2014; Randall & Richard, 2004) and average variance extracted (*Sabine & Brian, 2004),* cross-loadings (Randall & Richard, 2004) and maximum shared variance (Messick, 1994) were used to check the content, convergent and discriminant validities respectively.

Likewise, the instrument's reliability was checked through a pilot study conducted (with 120 respondents) in two of the first-generation universities (Hawassa and Arba Minch). The results of the Cronbach's alpha indicate that the emotional intelligence dimensions namely self-awareness (0.820), self-management (0.834), social-awareness (0.828), and relationship management items (0.846) have a good level of reliability. Similarly, the leadership effectiveness dimensions namely task-oriented (0.784), relationship-oriented (0.822) and change-oriented items (0.832) were found reliable too.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data which were collected through survey questionnaires were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of SPSS and AMOS version 23. Percentage and cross-tabulations were used in analyzing data related to respondents' background characteristics. Mean (M) and standard deviation (SD) were primarily used to assess the extent university leaders consistently demonstrate emotional intelligence. Similarly, Mean and standard deviation were also employed to examine how often leaders show effectiveness in the workplace (Burke & Larry, 2014). To interpret the mean score, the level of agreement used were [1.00-1.49] = never, [1.50-2.49] = rarely, [2.50-3.49] = sometimes, [3.50-4.49] = often and [4.50-5.00] = consistently in the case of leaders' emotional intelligence. Similarly, in the case of their leadership effectiveness the level of agreement [1.00-1.49] = rarely, [1.50-2.49] = once in a while, [2.50-3.49] = sometimes, [3.50-4.49] = usually and [4.50-5.00] = almost always were used. Such classifications were employed because in the number line the interval scale does not stand only for itself (there are lower and upper real limits for it) (Gravetter & Larry, 2007).

Besides, Pearson correlation was used to examine the various relationships (Cohen et al, 2007). On the basis of the direction and the strengths of the correlation coefficient from Pearson's r results, both linear and multiple regression analyses were also made (Burke & Larry, 2014; *Sabine & Brian,* 2004). Besides, to control the influence of leaders' experience from the correlation between the two main variables, both zero-order correlation, and partial correlation were conducted. Side by side, appropriate effect size indicators were used to test the strength of the statistical significance identified.

Ethical Considerations

The issue of consent, confidentiality, and anonymity were sufficiently addressed in the study. Consent from all respondents was obtained when they were requested to participate in the study. All selected participants were informed about the purpose of the research during questionnaire distribution.

Results and Discussion

To sufficiently address the basic questions, a total of 770 Likert scale-type questionnaires were distributed to 50 management committee members, 210 academic commission (AC) members, and 510 department council (DC) members as immediate subordinates of university presidents, college deans, and department heads respectively, and out of which 648 (84.2%) questionnaires (36 management committee, 165 AC, and 447 DC members) were successfully completed and returned.

Characteristics of Respondents (Subordinates)

In addition to the characteristics of leaders and the situation, the respondents with whom the leader is working (i.e., characteristics of subordinates) either facilitate or obstruct the leader's

effectiveness (Yukl, 2010). Moreover, these days higher education leadership is expected to be highly collegial and follow distributed leadership (Bolden et al., 2009). Therefore, it is important to present and then see the influence subordinates' characteristics have on the target leaders.

Data from respondents' characteristics indicate that female respondents account for only 16 percent across the three levels (department, college, and overall university level) which inform that department council, academic commission, and management committee members are primarily males. This in turn indicates that group decisions made on various aspects of the leadership process in these levels of the university lack the contribution of females who are considered as more concerned with consensus building, inclusiveness, and interpersonal relations than their male counterparts (Yukl, 2010). Furthermore, in service sectors, female employees were found more emotionally intelligent than their male counterparts (Kumar, 2016). On the other hand, 34 percent (220) and around 45 percent (288) of the respondents were found between 20 to 30 and 31 to 40 years old respectively. Overall, data about the age of respondents show that university presidents' immediate subordinates are relatively older as compared to immediate subordinates of deans and department heads. However, studies indicate inconclusive evidence on the contribution of age to workers' performance. It is reported that unless it is equipped with work experience, subordinates' age alone neither has a significant contribution to their work performance (Shukla, Mishra & Dubey, 2014) nor has an impact on their emotional intelligence (Kumar, 2016). On the contrary, Bar-On and associates (2003) and Goleman (1998a), reported that when people grow older over the years their competencies also increase.

It is also found that about 53 percent of the respondents have served less than three years in their current position, and just about 26 percent of them have served 4 to 6 years in their current position. It is also disclosed that presidents and deans have relatively better experienced subordinates compared with department heads; this may be because being a DC member does not require being engaged in a position while being a management committee and AC member requires a position that ties to terms of responsibility. From this, it is possible to understand that presidents and deans had relatively experienced subordinates in handling problems and in consulting during decisions making because experience plays a significant role to effectively perform different duties and responsibilities (Shukla et al., 2014). Moreover, in a certain position, experience enables employees to better understand and adopt the values of the organization as well as to harmonize those values with their own values and goals (Konya et al., 2016).

With regard to respondents' academic rank, around 65 percent (422) and 28 percent (183) of the respondents were lecturers and assistant professors respectively. Comparatively, the percentages of lecturers decrease as one moves from department councils to university level management while the reverse is true for associate professors. It is expected that a person with a better academic rank accommodate more experience and knowledge to have a better look at the scientific world than the one with less academic rank. Furthermore, employees' level of education has a strong correlation with their work performance and with organizational commitment (Pala, Eker & Eker, 2008). In general, from respondents' characteristics, it was clear that leaders did not have well-experienced subordinates who better consult and support how to handle normative

problems. In addition, they lack the opportunity of getting females' perspectives on various decisions.

The Relationship between Leaders' Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

Table 1

Partial Correlation between Leaders' Emotional Intelligence, Leadership Effectiveness, and their Work Experience in the Current Position

Variables	1	2	3	M	SD
1. Emotional intelligence	_			3.06	0.56
2. Leadership effectiveness	.662**	_		2.98	0.60
3. Work experience	-.134**	-.084*	_	2.47	1.03
Controlled					
Work Emotional intelligence	1.000	.659**			
experience Leadership effectiveness	.659**	1.000			

Note. ** shows correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
    *. Shows correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 displays the correlation results between the consistency that leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence and the frequency they exhibit leadership effectiveness both by controlling and not controlling the leaders' leadership experience. In Table 1, first, the zero-order correlation results between the three variables are displayed. Then, the correlation result between the leaders' emotional intelligence and their leadership effectiveness was presented after partial out leaders' work experience. As can be seen from Table 1, the correlation leaders' work experience has with both their emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness was found weak (r = -.134 and r = -.084 respectively). In other words, as the r^2 is considered, leaders' work experience accounts for only 1.8% of the variation in leaders' emotional intelligence and it accounts for only 0.7% of the variation in leaders' leadership effectiveness. In addition, Table 1 manifests that leaders' work experience, though it is very week, negatively correlated with both leaders' emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness and this is quite contradictory with what Kumar (2016) and Shukla and associates (2014) reported. It is also not consistent with what Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2002) contended that over the course of a career emotional intelligence tends to be strengthened.

On the other hand, if one can see the correlation results (Pearson's r) between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness before and after partial out leaders' work experience, the difference is negligible (only 0.003). Therefore, in the present study, it is found that leaders' work experiences in their current position do not have a considerable influence on the correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness. Somewhat consistent with the result from the present study, Cook (2006) reported that gender, age, and years of experience do not have a significant effect on emotional intelligence ($F (3, 109) = 1.00$, $p = .392$). In short, the present study informed that there was a weak negative partial correlation between leaders' emotional

intelligence (M = 3.06, SD = 0.56) and their leadership effectiveness (M= 2.98, SD = 0.60) controlling for leaders' work experience in the current position, r (645) = 0.13, p = 0.001. Nevertheless, results of the zero-order correlation yielded that there was a strong positive correlation between leaders' emotional intelligence and their leadership effectiveness and leaders' work experience, r (645) = 0.66, p < 0.01, indicating that controlling for leaders' work experience in their current position had little effect on the strength of the relationship between the two variables while empirical literature shows inconclusive results.

Another very important result indicated in Table 1 is the consistency that leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence in their workplace, and the frequency they exhibit leadership effectiveness when performing the various duties and responsibilities given to them. Leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence only occasionally (M = 3.06, SD = 0.56) which in turn indicate that they have limitations in consistently/regularly demonstrating emotional intelligence when they were performing various leadership activities such as, negotiating, communicating and dealing with various stakeholders in their organizational setting. Likewise, university leaders exhibit leadership effectiveness only sometimes (M= 2.98, SD = 0.60) which also informs that first-generation university leaders' were not often effective in leading their institutions.

In sum, the study indicates that university leaders are inconsistent in demonstrating emotional intelligence which in turn influences their leadership effectiveness and the reverse is also true. A number of studies found out consistent results with the present study that emotional intelligence positively correlates with leadership effectiveness (Caruso et al., 2002). *Again, leadership is positively related to a number of emotional intelligence attributes such as, self-confidence, conviction, self-control, ability to handle conflict, and tolerance for stress (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). L*eaders with high emotional intelligence are able to recognize, appraise, predict and manage emotions in a way that enables them to work with and motivate team members (George, 2000).

Since it is difficult to control the different extraneous variables, a slight to moderate relationship (.35 to .50) is quite acceptable in the educational setting (Burke & Larry, 2014). Furthermore, it is recommended that correlations that range from 0 .66 to 0.85 can function for a good prediction that can result from one variable to the other (Creswell, 2012). Therefore, based on the results obtained above, linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the predictability of leaders' emotional intelligence to their leadership effectiveness in the present study.

Table 2

Linear Regression Results of Leaders' Emotional Intelligence on their Leadership Effectiveness

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE.	Change Statistics				
					R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.662[a]	.438	.437	.44817	.438	502.747	1	646	.000**

Note. a indicates predictors: (constant), leaders' emotional intelligence

b. indicates dependent variable: leaders' leadership effectiveness

** indicates p<0.01

As manifested in Table 2, the model summary indicates that the value for the predictor variable is .662 and this is quite the same value with the correlation between emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness indicated in Table 1 above. Likewise, there exists a negligible difference between the R square and the adjusted R square and this is due to the large sample size the study used (Gravetter & Larry, 2007).

Table 3

Coefficients of Linear Regression Results

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
Model		B	Std. Error	B	T	Sig.	95.0% CI of β
1	(Constant)	.824	.098		8.430	.000**	[.632, 1.016]
	Leaders' EI	.705	.031	.662	22.422	.000**	[.643, 0.767]

Note. .a shows the dependent variable: leaders' leadership effectiveness
   EI = Emotional intelligence, CI = confidence interval β
       ** indicates $p<0.01$

On the other hand, as displayed in Table 3, the unstandardized coefficient (B) indicated that for every one unit increase in the leaders' emotional intelligence, the leadership effectiveness increases by .705. Moreover, Table 3 indicates that the model is significant at 95% confidence interval. This means, it is possible to be 95% confident that the model is significant with the ranges indicated in the lower and upper bound.

Furthermore, the linear regression line indicated in Figure 2 below clearly illustrates what level of regularly the leaders show leadership effectiveness in the workplace with increased consistency in demonstrating emotional intelligence. As can be seen in Figure 2, the regression line indicates that y=0.82+0.7*x. In other words, the frequency that university leaders demonstrate leadership effectiveness will change on a standard 0.7 (approximately) times with the change in the consistency (increase) they demonstrate emotional intelligence in their workplace by one point.

Figure 2

Scatter Plot on Leaders' Emotional Intelligence Predicting their Leadership Effectiveness Overall
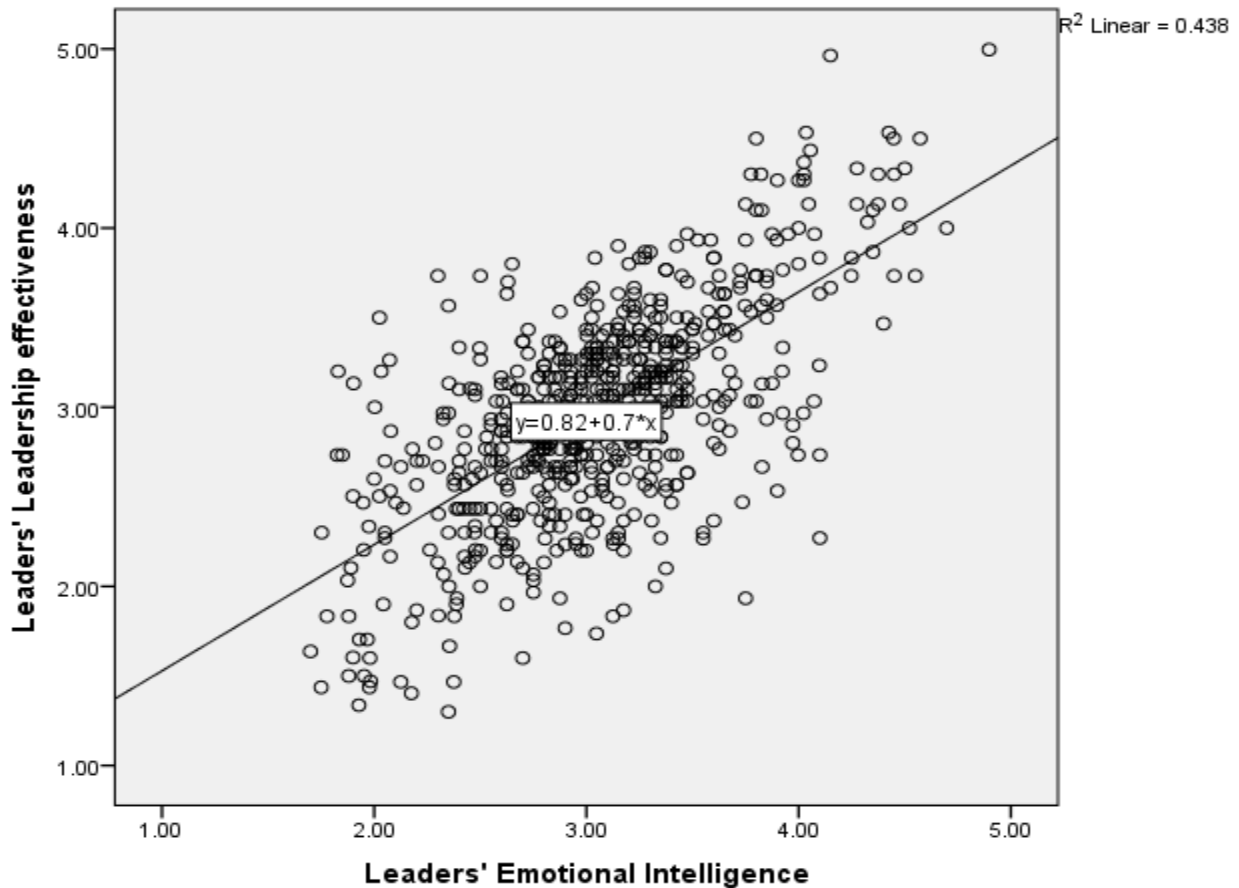
In addition, Figure 2 shows that approximately 44% (when R square is considered) of the variance of the frequency of university leaders demonstrating leadership effectiveness is accounted for by the consistency they exhibit emotional intelligence in the workplace. This is because when there is one predictor variable in a regression analysis (linear) the beta is equal to the correlation coefficient (r) (Gravetter & Larry, 2007).

Generally, a significant regression equation was found (F (1, 646) =502.747, p<0.01) with R^2 of .438 and the results from the Pearson correlation coefficient and the linear regression analysis inform that the consistency that university leaders demonstrate emotional intelligence does not only positively correlated to the frequency they show leadership effectiveness in their workplace, but also it predicts their frequent utilization of leadership effectiveness. Approximately 44% of the variability in the frequency university leaders show leadership effectiveness is accounted for by the consistency they exhibit emotional intelligence in the workplace. Having this cumulative result in mind, the next section presents multiple correlation results which help to identify the relative predictability of each of the dimensions of emotional intelligence to leaders' effectiveness.

Multiple Correlations between Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

As discussed in detail, emotional intelligence is a construct resulted from four major domains or pillars (Goleman, 1998a). Goleman also reported that these domains are not mutually exclusive. As displayed in Tables 2 and 3, the main construct emotional intelligence is found as a predictor of leaders' effectiveness. Thus, it is better to examine the relative predictive value of each dimension in addition to the linear regression made above with the main construct only. Conducting multiple regression helps to identify which of the emotional intelligence dimension better predicts the construct leadership effectiveness compared.

Table 4

Multiple Regression between Dimensions of Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Effectiveness

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	95.0% CI
	B	SE	B			
1 (Constant)	.761	.100		7.603	.000**	[.565, .958]
Self-awareness	.177	.036	.182	4.875	.000**	[.106, .249]
Self-management	.119	.037	.136	3.199	.001**	[.046, .192]
Social awareness	.061	.036	.075	1.682	.093	[-.010, .131]
Relationship management	.367	.035	.421	10.472	.000**	[.298, .436]

Note. Predictors: Relationship management, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness
Criterion variable: Leaders' Leadership effectiveness
R= .682; R^2 = .465; R Square Change = .465; Adjusted R Square = .462, F = 139.771
** indicates p<0.01 with n=648, df = 4, 643

According to Table 4, multiple regression analysis results indicate the emergency of a significant model (F (4, 643) = 139.771, p < 0.01). The Adjusted R square was also found at R^2= .462. Moreover, the standardized Beta coefficients (β) presented in Table 4 inform that each of the emotional intelligence dimensions contributes to the model with a statistically significant value (p<0.01) except for social awareness. One can observe that, relative to each other, relationship management exerted the greatest influence (.367) on the frequency that leaders demonstrate leadership effectiveness while social awareness (.061), exerted a small and statistically insignificant influence on the frequency that leaders demonstrate leadership effectiveness, and the remaining two variables, self-management and self-awareness, contributed less than relationship management significantly in their right order.

In short, the linear combination of the four (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management) emotional intelligence dimensions was significantly related to the frequency of leadership leaders show effectiveness in their workplace (F (4,643) = 139.771, p < 0.01). The multiple correlation coefficient was .682, and it indicates that approximately 46% of the variance of the leaders' effectiveness can be accounted for by the linear

combination of the competencies of the four emotional intelligence dimensions. This shows that the present finding is consistent with previous studies (e.g., Ayiro & Sang, 2012; Hebert, 2011) which were conducted in educational settings.

Conclusions and Implications

Individuals internal derive and behavioral attributes can be often disclosed during their day-to-day interaction with other people. It is assumed that university leaders' emotional intelligence competencies can be directly and indirectly manifested to other people who have close interaction with them in their organizational setting. Thus, the present study assessed university leaders' (presidents', deans' and department heads') emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness from their immediate subordinates' points of view. Accordingly, overall results from the study indicate that university leaders do not have good level of emotional intelligence (M=3.06, SD=0.56) that can be easily reflected (to their immediate subordinates) in their work-related interactions. Similarly, it is found that university leaders were not effective (M=2.98, SD=0.60) in performing their leadership duties and responsibilities.

The study found out that the degree of consistency university leaders show emotional intelligence has a strong and a positive relationship with the frequency they demonstrate leadership effectiveness in the workplace. Moreover, the leaders' perceived emotional intelligence significantly predict their leadership effectiveness.

Thus, it can also be concluded that emotional intelligence is one of the significant contributing factors for university leaders' ineffective leadership practice. This in turn implies that, like in developed nations, the government and concerned officials (the Ministry and Boards) should design merit-based selection criteria that include standardized emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness tests and then strictly follow it. Besides, series, up to the standard (appropriate) and tailor-made emotional intelligence training should be provided for university leaders who are in the position at present so as to bridge the gaps.

Areas of Further Research

As a limitation, this study targeted only first-generation university leaders' emotional intelligence and their leadership effectiveness with particular reference to presidents, deans, and department heads. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted in the future at all public universities in the country which encompasses the rest of the leaders in the university hierarchy.

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Stressors and Coping Strategies among Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study investigated the stressors that parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (PCASD) experienced and the coping strategies they employed to manage it. Following phenomenological design, focused group discussion (FGD) was employed to collect data. Sixteen parents were drawn using purposive sampling participated. Thematic analysis of the data revealed that challenges related to personal development and building friendship, finding schools for children with autism spectrum disorders (CASD), CASD being non-verbal, and the extent of care and safety the CASD need as major stressors for parents. Mothers of CASD experienced more stress compared to their fathers. PCASD used emotion-focused coping strategies. Implications are highlighted against policy formulations and implementation initiatives.

Introduction

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability resulting predominantly from differences in the brain. The complete etiology of ASD is not known yet. According to Emad, Fatimah, and Yazan (2019), autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is one of the most confusing disorders for which no cure has been found. ASD is a disorder that is usually observed in children at an early age, affecting various developmental processes and outcomes. Children with ASD typically show an imbalance in their social interaction, repeat certain behavioral patterns, and have challenges in verbal and nonverbal communication with others. Over the past few decades, its prevalence showed an ascending trend that triggered researchers across the globe to investigate into ASD comprehensively, that is, its etiology, symptomatology, comorbidity, diagnosis, prognosis and interventions.

Each child with ASD is unique. Parents, siblings, teachers, neighbors or anyone else who has contacted a child with ASD encounters challenges. One of the difficulties could be stress, as many of the children with ASD do not communicate verbally and socialize less due to the nature of the disability.

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Any situation considered to be stress provoking is called a stressor. A study conducted by Style and Cavanaugh (cited in Muhammad, 2011) revealed that expectations, self-fulfillment, student-teacher relation, self-understanding, conflicting values, professional constraints, personal (in)competence, ego needs could be the sources of stress. Ali (2014) indicated that the presence of a child with disability in a family is one of the stressors regardless of the severity of the disability.

A lot has been written about the stressors in the lives of parents of children with disabilities, and many of them have focused on understanding the types, causes and the effects of stressors. Studies that aimed to understand the implications of stress for family intervention and even understanding maze ways for different stressors and coping strategies in different cultural settings are lacking. The different cultural components including pattern of beliefs, values and commitments can shape individuals' behaviors For example, Matson et al. (2017) say that cultural differences impact parental attitudes and behaviors, affecting several parent-child domains, including parental stress and styles.

Parents who face stressors in life due to rearing a child with ASD usually try to use some kind of coping strategy. For Ben-zur (2009), coping is the process of managing taxing circumstances, expending effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize, reduce, or tolerate stress or conflicts. Appropriate management of coping strategy can help parents to counter balance stressors, and parents can be more effective if they get support from others. Supports from family members, neighbors and other significant members of society play a very important role for children with ASD (CASD). Despite wrong understanding about the causes, course, and consequences of disabilities, family members are one of the sources of support to parents of children with autism spectrum disorder (PCASD) who experience stress. Of course, the misconception and negative attitude, almost in every corner of the country (Ethiopia) towards people with disabilities has led many parents to hide their children with disabilities including children with ASD at home. Along this line, Weldeab (2006) stated that misconceptions and unfavorable attitudes towards disabilities and persons with disabilities result in continued stigmatization even in the few schools where students with disabilities are included. Research notes different stress coping strategies used by parents. For example, Weiten and Lloyd (2008) suggested appraisal-focused coping strategies through changing mindset, or a revision of thoughts already experienced such as denial. Another one is problem-focused coping strategies where the focus is through modifying the behavior of the person such as learning how to tackle stress and understand its sources. Emotion-focused coping strategies could be used through alteration of one's emotions to tolerate or eliminate the stress such as distraction, meditation, and relaxation techniques.

Ethiopia is a multicultural and multilingual country (Abiy, 2017). It is also the second populated country in Africa next to Nigeria. According to WHO's (2011) world report of disability, 17.6% of the population of Ethiopia has disability. However, to the knowledge of the researchers of the current study, most of disability related studies conducted in Ethiopia have focused on visible disabilities, specifically on people with sensory and orthopedic impairments. Studies on people with neuro-development disorders are less common. To the knowledge of the researchers, only a few studies on the stress of PCASD and the coping strategies that they adopt

have been conducted and published within the context of Ethiopia. The current study, hence, aimed at investigating the major stressors, and coping strategies that PCASD use in Ethiopia.

There are varieties of stressors surrounding PCASD, and the nature of the stressors vary across contexts. Unlike developed counties where services are available for CASD and their parents, PCASD in Ethiopia face several challenges. A gap in terms of knowledge and understanding about ASD, finding school for their child with ASD, neighbors' discrimination and prejudice originated from misconceptions about disability and others escalate the stress level of parents. African Child Policy Forum (2011) described that the knowledge level of the society towards disability seem to be minimal in Ethiopia. Only a few children with disabilities receive education; many adults with disabilities are unemployed and possess obsolete historical beliefs about the cause and nature of disability.

In Ethiopia, family comprises the largest group of caregivers due to a combination of factors such as lack of residential services and the prevailing societal beliefs that influence families to keep their children with disability hidden and protected at home. Misconceptions and unfavorable attitudes towards disabilities and persons with disabilities result in continued stigmatization (Tirussew, 2005).

This implies that PCASD, are exposed to stressors due to having a child with disability. So far, few studies have investigated into the experiences of parents taking care of their CASD in developing countries. And there is a scarcity of studies that could fit into the context of the African countries. World Health Organization (2011) has also reported that interventions targeting ASD in developing countries face many challenges, most notably the poor treatment of the cases due to the presence of many comorbidities and the lack of adequate number of centers and trained staff to deal with disorders. Moreover, there are limited practical support programs to PCASD and their family in Africa. According to the World Health Organization's (2011) report of disability, one of the main obstacles that hinder the establishment of efficient support programs for PCASD in African countries is the lack of research studies that can inform about the impacts of raising these children by their parents.

Ethiopia is one of the low-income developing countries in Africa that has huge gap in the support provision for CASD and their families. Even though there are a large number of CASD, they are left unsupported formally by the government. Further, researches on the lives of the PCASD in general and the stressors operating upon them and the way they handle their stress in particular are almost negligible here, leaving a huge research gap in this research context According to Mahlet (2016), in Ethiopia, parents who have a CASD face a lot of stressors due to their low socioeconomic status, poor household conditions, and uncertainties about their child's future condition in employment and social activities. Abera, Robbins, and Tesfaye (2015) also indicated that PCASD in Ethiopia are left unsupported. Leaving the issue unstudied in Ethiopia may lead this Country to under-serve or ill serve CASD and PCASD which can be in gross violation of the human rights enshrined in the constitution of Ethiopia and in other relevant provisions in various legal obligations of the Country.

Having that all in mind, this study attempted to answer the following research questions: (1) what are the common stressors experienced by parents of children with autism spectrum disorder? (2) What coping strategies do PCASD employ to deal with their stress related to having a CASD?

Methods

This study employed phenomenological research design to inquire into the stressors experienced and the coping strategies that PCASD used to deal with their stress. The design was considered the most suitable one because it helps to understand human experiences common to group of people (Creswell, 2013).

The study was conducted in three schools (Kokebetsebah, Yekatit 23 Primary School, and Champions Academy) and three centers for CASD (Nehemia autism center, Joy autism center and Bright autism center). All the schools and centers were located in Addis Ababa and Hawassa cities of Ethiopia.

Participants of the study were selected following purposive sampling procedure from the three centers mentioned above. Two of the three schools were public funded, and the third school and the three centers for CASD were privately owned. Sixteen purposively selected PCASD (8 from Addis Ababa and 8 from Hawassa) participated in the FGDs conducted in the two cities. The parents' engagement in the schools and centers for CASD and their commitments to support CASD were the criteria used for the inclusion of them in the pool of respondents. Either parent (a mother or a father) of a particular CASD was included in the FGD and as many more as possible were invited.

Utmost care was taken to collect credible, authentic, and transferable, data because the trustworthiness and dependability of the study rely on the quality of data. Questions in the FGD were framed in a way to help parents to talk about the different stressors that they experienced and the coping strategies they employed to deal with their stress pertaining to their CASD. For the sake of triangulation, questions of the same concept were asked in different ways. Stressors emerging from family members, marriage partner, neighbors, service providing organizations and community at large were areas of discussion during FGD.

The FGD guide was tested with two purposively selected PCASD, and it was commented by two special needs educators. Two FGDs were held for 75 minutes on average in each city. Amharic (official language in Ethiopia) was used for the discussion. Before interpreting the data, audio recordings of the FGD from each research setting was translated to English language and transcribed into word texts immediately after the discussions. The transcripts were categorized into emerging themes and codes. Data categorization was done under each theme and sub-theme of stressors of PCASD, and the coping strategies they employed to manage their stress. Finally, the data under each theme and sub-theme were interpreted and analyzed using thematic analysis and ideas from the related literature.

None of the PCASD were forced to take part in the FGDs. Informed consent was signed. For the sake of anonymity identifying information of the participants were not collected. Moreover, the data gathered from the participants was kept strictly confidential. Participants were also given the option of withdrawing from the study at any stage without any conditions.

Results

The different stressors PCASD faced and the coping strategies they have employed were identified and presented in this section. Four fathers and 12 mothers have participated in the FGDs. Each parent was coded with an acronym and number as PCASDA1 (parent of a child with ASD from Addis Ababa) and PCASDH1 (parent of a child with ASD from Hawassa). The results pertaining to stressors and coping strategies, are presented below. For stressors, four themes, namely personal development and friendship of CASD, care and safety of CASD, causes of the disability, and life of PCASD (social, economic, job, health) were identified as major stress dimensions/themes with sub-themes emerging under each dimension. For coping strategies, two themes, namely emotion-focused and problem-focused coping strategies were identified and each theme had sub-themes as well.

Stressors

Personal Development and Friendship of CASD

Participants reported their worry about their children's difficulty in comprehensive personal development and building friendship with other children. This according to the parents has aggravated their stress. The following stressors (sub-themes) were repeatedly mentioned by PCASD.

Non-verbalism

Most children's difficulty to use verbal language appropriate for their age made PCASD to worry a lot. One of the parents said, "My child is 11, she nods her head very frequently and I get very much stressed thinking that her unusual behavior persists when she gets older" (PCASDH2).

In addition to that, more than half of the parents mentioned about abuse in different ways. Many CASD cannot report if they are physically or verbally abused since many of them are non-verbal and in case they try to tell parents in some way, parents hardly understand them. One of the mothers (PCASDH8) reported that, she caught her house assistant (maid) physically abusing her CASD and the house assistant finally confessed that she had been doing that for three years. Another mother (PCASDA1) reported that verbal abuse is very common that she does not send her child out to play with kids in the neighborhood.

Building Friendship

More than half of the mothers participated in the discussion reported that they play both parenthood and friendship role with their CASD because very limited people at home and

neighborhoods approach them and even so most approach the children as support providers not as friends. Fathers also in agreed with this observation of mothers. Moreover, some of the parents indicated that CASD do not tell their feelings (what they like and do not like) except screaming which contributed negatively in the process of friendship building for the CASD. One of the parents was quoted saying:

> I have a boy who is 19, cannot express what he likes or dislikes. For example, for some time, I do not know that he has a sexual feeling (drive) until something had happened. That is, we were once walking together and he looked at a girl in the village, stretched out his hands, screaming unusually and I noticed that the girl had made him horny. I could not help him because I have been experiencing for long that the society including girls like the one my child stretched his hands think CASD have mental illness. The very day he showed his sexual desire, I saw semen in his underwear. (PCASDA7)

The parents reported that their stress gets elevated when they think about the failure of their CASD to develop friendship and/or to maintain it (if already there) and their inability to express feelings to parents, siblings or someone else.

Dependency

Almost all the parents reported that their CASD are dependent on them or someone else in the family, and cannot manage themselves though they grew older. This means, there is no point in time that they can stop nursing their CASD. Therefore, parents think that they must avail themselves full time for their CASD unless s/he is sent to care centers. For example, one of the mothers said:

> I don't let my child stay away from me. She is 12 and [you know], once I let her free while we were in a city train from Gotera to a bus station we stopped by. She was next to a man sitting at the corner of the train and started laughing at him. He did not know that she had ASD and just slapped her on the face. That was the day I cried most and decided not to let her be alone anymore. (PCASDA4)

Considering this and similar incidents and pattern of life, PCASD expressed that their level of stress gets worsened.

Care and Safety of CASD

Taking care of a CASD and constantly worrying about them was reported by many of the parents as a stress elevating factor and they have also reported that their children do not tell them if they are abused. From this theme, the following sub themes got emerged:

Fear of CASD Acquiring Additional Disability

Parents reported that they were afraid of trying to make CASD independent and letting them try life alone because this may result in additional disability for the child. Almost all parents

said that taking care of CASD after school and in weekends give them hard time because they need full time care so as to prevent them from acquiring additional disability. Therefore, constant fear for their children not to acquire additional disability elevates their level of stress. A mother and founder of one of the centers for CASD in Hawassa reported that:

> I am with my 7 years old child 24/7. Two years back, my CASD was playing with a toy sitting on a couch and I told my husband to look after him for a while because I had a business for an hour. When I got back, my child was taken to a hospital because he climbed up to the top of a cupboard, found a gentian violet we kept for first aid medical treatment, and drank it. This happened because of my husband's carelessness. Fortunately, he survived. He could have additional disability. Constant worrying for my child with ASD elevates my stress. (PCASDH3)

Failure to Remember Residential Addresses

Parents reported that their CASD easily get loss of their surroundings and do not know residential addresses. A mother (PCASDH6) reported:

> It was in the eve of one of the national holidays and I had a plan to go to the local market to buy some food stuffs. I had told my other typically developing children to look after their brother with ASD. When I got back, my child was not home. He got lost. I reported to police, tried to find him anywhere we thought he could go. Until 6:30 PM. there was no clue. I was crying and finally the manager of autism care center where he gets day support called and told me that my child was at the center. Because it was an eve, no one except the security guard was at the center. My child is non-verbal and could not tell residential address or telephone number to the center's security guard. Finally, the security guard found us through the center's manager. This incident astonished me a lot and always worries me about losing him at any point in time. This elevates my stress level very much.

Many other parents such as PCASDH6, PCASDH1, PCASDH8, PCASDH2, PCASDA1, PCASDA7 and PCASDA6 also shared the same concern.

Causes of the Disability

The understanding PCASD have about the cause of ASD varies. For instance, some of them associate the cause with something related to the genetic makeup of the father or the mother. Others associated it with God's displeasure on what the parents did earlier in their lives and they believe that it was a time to pay back. Others associated the cause with poor maternal care during pregnancy and poor medical care during delivery. Whatever be the perceived cause, PCASD experienced elevated level of stress thinking and rethinking about the causes. Based on the different causes reported by PCASD, curse and complications during delivery were the two sub-themes emerged.

Curse as a Cause of ASD

Among the PCASD who participated in FGD, an older father explained that he was cursed for so many misdeeds he committed in life and now he believes that he has a CASD to pay back for his misdeeds. He said:

> I am 75 years old and my wife is 69. I know I am cursed by my late father. God is making me pay back with my only child who is 19 and having ASD. Thinking that I cannot fix all the hard times that I had given to my father, I worry a lot and get stressed. I am very hopeless about my CASD. Sometimes, I beg God to end my life so that I don't see my child suffering from autism. Other times, I think the decision I have made to have a child was my biggest mistake. I always regret about it. That is why I get stressed every minute I see my child struggling in life. (PCASDA8)

Perinatal Care as a Cause of ASD

Inadequate or improper perinatal care was generally considered as a cause for ASD. For example, a mother reported that she was informed by her midwife that she was pregnant with twins and she did not know the exact date of delivery. She said that in one of the days she had a pain on her belly; she started experiencing her baby pushing down and no midwife appeared on time. With the absence of midwife support, the mother kept pushing down hard and finally one of the twins survived and was diagnosed with ASD later. She said:

> The unusual push I experienced during delivery made my child who survived have ASD as I am informed by a physician who diagnosed my child with ASD. I always regret the push that caused ASD to my child. Whenever I think the moment, my stress gets high. (PCASDH7)

Life of PCASD (social, economic, job, health)

More than half of the participants were single mothers. They have reported that one way or another their husbands left them after having a CASD. Many challenges were reported in relation to their living situation. All the study participants stated that life gets tough for having a CASD. Every life aspect and action of their CASD call for their attention. Moreover, mothers claimed that they experienced more stress than fathers. Mothers attributed their elevated stress to the expectation of the society that mothers are given the role to rear children at home and fathers are expected to win daily bread for the household. Based on the general discussion under a theme 'Life of parents', the following sub-themes has been drawn.

Fear of Death

Many of the parents reported their wish to live longer and fear death because they believed that nobody will be there to take care of their child if they die. A father said:

> My wife and I are very old now. My CASD is 17. We cannot afford to take him to good hospitals to get medical treatment. Neighbors do not welcome him to get into their house or play with their kids. They think he has got some kind of contagious disease. Having this in mind, the question 'what would happen if we die?' is one of the biggest worries we encounter every day. I am afraid of dying and if I die, I know my child will die soon because I know nobody cares for my child including the government. As a result of over stress due to the uncertain future of our CASD, his mother is under medical treatment for high blood pressure. Anyway, we are afraid of death. (PCASDH4)

Unemployment and Financial Constraints

Among the parents, all the mothers, except the founder of support center for CASD in Hawassa, reported that they were unemployed and financially weak. A mother (PCASDA4) stated that she gets very much stressed thinking about what to feed and clothe her 14-year-old CASD and other typically developing children. Another mother also said:

> I have a bachelor's degree with good cumulative grade point average, but unemployed because I must take care of my CASD. I have two extra rooms in my house, and I rent them to earn money. Sometimes, I face a serious financial problem. Buying hygiene-related materials for my CASD who cannot control her bladder is not affordable and makes me cry. I cannot get employed because I have nobody to trust and keep my CASD with. Hence, my stress challenges me a lot due to financial constraints. (PCASDH2)

Societal Reaction and Social Life

PCASD reported that the burden they have due to raising their CASD prevents them from involving in different local support and relationship gatherings like "Equb", "Idir" and "Mahber" - social networking schemes in the Ethiopia communities that help people ease their financial burden, funerals ceremonies, and religious practices, respectively. If someone is not involved in any of these gatherings, villagers exclude him/her from different informal groups. However, PCASD do not get involved in these social gatherings because they must take care of their CASD at home and moreover they are afraid of the stigma that may be expressed by the villagers towards their CASD. Therefore, feeling of exclusion is reported as one of the stressors that escalate their level of stress.

Coping Strategies

The PCASD reported two parental stress coping strategies: emotion-focused coping strategies and problem-focused coping strategies.

Emotion Focused Coping Strategies

Most of the coping strategies parents reported under this theme were short lived and helped them only to wipe out their temporary fear and frustration. Based on the discussions, the following sub-themes have been drawn.

Sleeping

Less than half of the parents said that they sleep (sometimes take a nap) when they fail to handle their stress. A mother reported that she preferred to sleep to pass the moment when sometimes things get out of control due to the child's behavior making sure that her child is also sleeping beside her.

Crying

More than half of parents, particularly mothers, mentioned that crying is one of the best stress busting strategies they used. They believed that crying for a while gave them a relief from stress. Other mothers said that they cry at home while they get much stressed and they also cry in churches where they believed God could give them a solution.

Visiting Spiritual Places

About half of the parents expected miracles from God to make their child free from ASD. As a result, many of them reported they frequently went to churches and mosques, begged religious men to pray for them so that their child becomes 'normal'. One of the parents expressed:

> When I get much stressed about my child's case, I start to think why God has given me this? I pose this question for myself: "Is God testing my commitment and faith on him? Is God checking me how faithful I am?" Then I start to be strong and prepare myself for the worst. I start to be faithful to the almighty God. Ultimately, I start to cool down and come back to the usual life routines and I know God will make a miracle in the life of my child with ASD. (PCASDH3)

Attempting Suicide

Only very few of PCASD reported an attempt of suicide. A mother said:
> … My sister's boyfriend, who had a plan to marry her, found out that her sister (me) has a child with ASD, and canceled the marriage plan because he was afraid of making marriage union with a family having someone with ASD. This was the time I decided to commit suicide. I prepared everything and hanged myself in the bedroom. Fortunately, my husband showed up and saved me. (PCASDA2)

Corporal Punishment and Chaining the Child with ASD

Only few parents reported practice of corporal punishment. A father who uses a stick as a means of teaching good manner to his CASD reported that he found corporal punishment effective and said:

> Sometimes, I tie the leg of my CASD with a leg of relatively bigger chair at home using galvanized iron chain so that we can be sure that he will not mess up us with the hating neighbors. (PCASDH5)

A mother also used tying the child as a strategy using a thicker and longer sleeve like cotton cloth. She said:

> I don't own a house. I live in a small rented house. Because of the nature of my child, the landlords don't let me live longer than three months in their house. My child screams, doesn't sleep longer at night so that the light needs to be kept on whole night, my child also frequently bangs and nods head. All these disturb neighbors who share wall with my house. After experiencing so many 'leave my house' warnings from landlords, I thought of tying up my child with long and soft piece of cloth. I kept my bed at the center of the room and put my child with ASD on so that he can't bang on the wall. I tie him around his waist and the other end of cloth will be tied with the bed so that he can't move out of the bed. To lower his screaming, I pile up three pillows in front of him so that while he bangs and screams, the sound gets muted by the pillows. (PCASDH1)

Overlooking the Child's Action and Retreating

Parents reported strategies such as just ignoring the child's actions, telling oneself and hoping that the child will come out of the disorder. Thinking that the child's disorder is less serious than his/her death will help PCASD take what is happening in the child as easy as possible, and staying away from home for a while to cool down. For instance, a father (PCASDH5) reported that he sometimes self-locks himself in a room and listens to religious songs when he gets much stressed.

Problem-focused Coping Strategies

The parents also used coping strategies that targeted solving the problem they faced due to having a child with ASD and managing their stress to optimal level. They have discussed many strategies, and the following sub-themes have been drawn from the major theme of problem focused coping strategies.

Taking More Care of the Child

More than half of the parents reported that they enhanced their care for their children as a coping strategy. A mother (PCASDH7) said she takes the maximum care possible as a coping strategy to manage her stress.

Trying to Understand the Nature of the CASD

PCASD reported that consultations and discussions among spouses, care givers, and professionals working in the centers of CASD helped them a lot to manage their stress. Few parents reported that they try to understand the nature of their CASD to deal with their elevated level of stress. One of the parents said:

> After my child was diagnosed with ASD, I have tried to read books and articles about ASD. Therefore, I understand the nature of my CASD and that helped me to handle my stress to an extent. Even if something very annoying happens, I think that happens as he gets older. (PCASDH3)

Discussion

Stressors of PCASD

The contents, tone, and the emotions that the PCASD expressed to explain their stress and the local situations that they are in in the FGDs clearly signified that they experience higher level of stress. Studies also show that PCASD experience higher levels of stress than parents of typically developing children (PTDC) (Eisenhower, Baker, & Blacher, 2005), or than parents of children with other disorders and medical conditions including Down syndrome, intellectual disability, fragile X syndrome, cystic fibrosis, cerebral palsy and developmental delay (Hayes & Watson, 2013). Approximately 2/3 of mothers of young children with autism experience clinically significant levels of child-related stress (Tomanik, Harris, & Hawkins, 2004). PCASD participated in the current study also reported many other stress elevating factors related to their CASD personal development, care and safety, belief/ understanding about causes of the disability, and life status of the parents themselves.

PCASD expressed various stressors operating upon them. One of the stressors that PCASD reported is in terms of personal development deficits of their CASD. That is, the challenge of their children being unable to verbally communicate with others. Indeed, their worries in this regard align with the findings of various studies. For example, Kasari et al. (2014) reported that more than 70% of children diagnosed with ASD were non-verbal. The importance of verbal communication for personal development is very crucial because as it is common everywhere, parents in Ethiopia also teach cultural norms and values to their children predominantly through verbal communication such as storytelling and retelling, paying respect to elders, etc. But CASD having verbal skill deficits put their parents under stress. The situation is further complicated by the non-availability of professionals in the area of speech therapy for CASD in Ethiopia.

Parents also reported other stress elevating factors that hindered the personal development of their children with ASD: the challenge to build friendship with others, and being lifetime dependent on others. It is a natural reality that building friendship and maintaining it is an easy task for typically developing children. However, it is very hard for CASD. Initiating and keeping conversations, taking part in play activities, understanding body language, taking-and-giving turns for smooth flow of conversation, and solving disagreements are some of the unwritten rules for

maintaining and sustaining friendship. However, CASD can hardly practice these rules. Consequently, their social interaction becomes so weak, and they fail to maintain any friendship. This cause parents to experience higher level of stress. Sedgewick, Hill, and Pellicano (2018) associated higher level of stress of parents not only with their children's disability but also with their gender. For instance, some parents who have daughters with ASD are afraid that their children could be sexually and physically abused. Holroyd and McArthur (1976) also reported that, apart from a feeling of overburdened, the parents' pessimistic view of the future of their CASD and the children's total dependence on the parents or family members raise their level of stress drastically. In addition, in the Ethiopian context, the level of public awareness about the nature of ASD adversely affects the stress level of PCASD because unlike other visible type of disabilities, ASD is less emphasized in national policy documents and mass media.

With regard to a relationship between the level of parental stress and demographic variables such as age of the child and the number of children parents have, a mother explained that her biggest worry is the discrepancy she observes between her child's increasing age and the immature behavior or unusual behavior. Similarly, a father having a 19-year-old child with ASD, explained the same worries. Both parents got worried due to the discrepancy of expected behavior with the age of their children. Therefore, it is possible to say that the age increment of the CASD raises the level of stress of PCASD if the child could not act according to the age-appropriate behavioral norms. These parents do not see promising future for their CASD. Along this line, Milačić (2008) also reported that the age of the CASD has an influence on parental stress levels in that parents of CASD feel a higher degree of stress as their children get older. For instance, a father had no idea that his 19 year old child could have sexual desire until he once got embarrassed by looking at his child's unexplained sex drive to an unknown girl. He reported that his child's behavior caused him much stress.

Despite their typically profound delayed development, CASD sexually mature at normal age, and the combination of their sexual drive and the inability to express it in socially appropriate ways make many parents face awkward situations. Some children publicly masturbate from an early age, but this behavior is especially disturbing when the child is an adolescent (Gray, 1994). Studies also show the difference on the level of stress between parents having CASD at different ages. For instance, Tripathi (2015) reported that, parents whose CASD were in adolescent group reported high level of stress than those in pre-adolescence age group.

Moreover, some of the parents reported that their CASD's typically developing siblings support them to take care of their brother or sister with ASD and that helps them reduce their stress. This is supported by a study by Warfield et al. (1999) who found mothers' lower level of stress when they get support from family members.

With regard to difference on level of parental stress of fathers and mothers of CASD, mothers reported that they take more pain of stress than fathers. Interestingly, this was confirmed by fathers who participated in the present study. A study by Tehee, Honan, and Hevey (2009) also reported that mothers experienced more stress than fathers. Care and safety of their CASD was another factor causing higher level of stress of PCASD. Under this, parents reported their fear for their CASD acquiring additional disability, being abused, and not understanding the

surrounding. These fears of parents seem reasonable, and in relation to this finding Ventola, Lei, Paisley, Lebowitz, and Silverman (2017) reported that parents have experienced higher stress due to their children with ASD's lack of safety consciousness.

Causes of ASD itself were another source of stress for parents. Curse and poor perinatal care of mothers were frequently reported as a cause for ASD among parents and that indirectly causes their stress. A case study by Rahman, Bairagi, Kumar, and Sultana (2017) also reported similar results: taking curse as a cause for ASD among PCASD. This can have wrong implication for support provision to CASD. Because it is a belief system that inhibits parents not to put any effort for change as they think it is something that cannot be changed with efforts. Similarly, poor perinatal care and service for pregnant mothers may have implications to work with maternal care providing organizations including health centers that maximum care during delivery may contribute for lower prevalence of ASD.

Moreover, PCASD discussed stress enhancing social, economic, and job-related stressors as rising in their life. Fear of death, challenges related to a lifelong nursing of a CASD, unemployment and financial constraints, negative social reaction and seclusive social life were some of the many stress elevating factors parents mentioned. However, in Ethiopian context both fathers and mothers vocalized their fear of death thinking that no one will be there for their CASD after their death.

Parents experienced stress as they were worried about the need of committing their whole life taking care of a child with ASD. This is because unlike TDC, CASD requires full time support and care. A similar finding is reported by Lina et al. (2018) where a mother reported that, "*After my child with ASD was born, I don't have any time for myself. From the moment he gets up until bedtime, I have to watch him all day*". The parents of CASD in this study context shoulder more burdens because there is no publicly funded organization to support them in some ways like in terms of free medication, rehabilitation, free meal service, and hygiene equipment. Since the government of Ethiopia has no specific service delivery either to CASD or PCASD, parents are expected to cover their bills.

Stress Coping Strategies

Any conscious effort by an individual to manage or overcome a stressful event is known as coping (Holahan & Moos, 1987). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) categorize coping strategies as problem-focused coping strategy (PFCS) and emotion-focused coping strategy (EFCS).

With regards to PFCSs, parents of CASD demonstrated a knowledge gap regarding the meaning of PFCSs, even though they unknowingly used some of them, such as taking more care for the child for extra support, making an effort to understand the nature of the CASD, and attempting to create situations to discuss with family members, marriage partners, professionals, and practitioners in order to support the child in leading an effective life. There was no disparity between genders of the parents in utilizing PFCSs. Previous research, such as that of Hamilton and Fagot (1988), supports the conclusion that gender has no impact on the use of certain coping

methods. Ghobari, Motamedi, and Zare (2017) likewise found no difference in the use of PFCs between fathers and mothers.

Similar findings suggested that taking more care and discussions with other supporting bodies such as family members and professionals can help a lot to cope with the stress that parents face. For instance, Heiman (2002) found out that parents' resilience strategy brought long lasting positive effect to support CASD though discussion with family members and professionals as well as with the provision of more care. Drawing from this understanding, popularization of PFCS through various psycho-educative methods among PCASD by different agencies and/or organization can go a long way in mitigating the stress of PCASD.

On the other hand, the results of the current study indicated that PCASD used EFCS in stressful situations related to raising their CASD. As it is presented in the results section, PCASD reported the use of different EFCS such as sleeping, crying, visiting spiritual places and praying, contemplating or attempting to commit suicide (though it must not be taken as a strategy at all), corporal punishment and chaining the child with galvanized chains, overlooking the case and retreating for a while (distancing or escaping). A study by Davis and Carter (2008) indicated that, problems related to sleep is common for mothers of CASD who experienced higher level of stress. In the current study, half of the participants reported that, they prefer to sleep when they get stressed. In support of this finding, Upamanyu (1997) explored the stress management techniques used by women in India. He found that sleep, relaxation, exercise, time management, diet and yoga were the common ways adopted to cope with stress by women. There are also significant numbers of findings that reported that parents do not sleep well because their CASD have sleeping problem. For instance, Goodlin-Jones, Tang, Liu, and Anders (2008) reported that a number of CASD have sleeping problems, such as excessively short sleep time, trouble falling asleep, waking up multiple times at night, problems getting out of bed in the morning and drowsiness during the day.

In a qualitative study, Atasoy and Sevim (2018) reported that parents of children with disability cry a lot regardless of their 'easily happy' personal characteristics before the diagnosis of their child with disability. The current study also found out that crying is one of the emotion focused coping strategies PCASD used. The reason to cry in the parents' context of the current study varies from one parent to the other. PCASD also used prayer as EFCS regardless of the differences of the religious sects they belong to. According to Pargament, Smith, Koenig, and Perez (1998), prayer aims to get spiritual support, increasing spiritual connection, asking religious forgiveness, and collaborative religious coping. A decreasing level of stress is the ultimate result parents expect from it. Individuals using prayer as a coping strategy tend to have both improved perceived mental and physical health, as well as improved objectively measured health outcomes (Faigin & Pargament, 2008). Scholars have found out that prayers improved the parents' belief in God, the greater the belief in God, the more the parents were able to focus on the important things in their life (Al-Kandari et al., 2017; Beighton & Wills, 2017; Ekas, Whitman & Shivers, 2009).

Regarding attempting suicide, there is suicide ideation among PCASD. The cause is beyond the issue of having a CASD. However, it is also reported that, despite the availability of

evidence for the relationship between stress-coping strategies and suicidal attempt, how the coping strategies relate to suicidal attempt is still unclear.

PCASD also reported that they use corporal punishment and facial or verbal reminders to manage the behavior of their CASD as one of coping strategies. Communication is one of the challenges CASD experience. They cannot tell their feelings and needs as typically developing children do. Certain activities that CASD are engaged in seriously disappoint parents. As a result, PCASD in the current study also reported that, they used corporal punishment and gestural or verbal reminders as a coping strategy. In similar studies, parents also reported using physical punishment and reminders in response to problem behavior, spanking, and denying rights of having playing items or other privileges as among the types of punishments used to manage problem behaviors (Armstrong, DeLoatche, Preece, & Agazzi, 2015). Other studies also reported alternative strategies to manage problem behavior of CASD such as providing verbal explanations and social stories (Beer, Ward, & Moar, 2013). They gave verbal reprimands in response to problem behavior (e.g., saying "don't", "stop") (Blair, Lee, Cho, & Dunlap, 2011).

In the current study, a new way to manage the behavior of a CASD was reported by one of the mothers. She reported that she ties her CASD with the bed using cotton fabric. That is reported as a very individualistic and the only solution that the mother had in order to cope with the situation, according to the mother. In order to retain a rented single roomed house in spite of all the banging and screaming nature of her child with ASD, she said that she had to tie him up in a bed located at the center of the room and far from the walls. She said that she had used piled up pillows to mute his high-pitched voice in order to significantly reduce, if not completely stop, his screaming noticed by neighbors while he bangs and screams.

As it is reported earlier, some parents said they overlook the challenges their child has and pretend that nothing special has happened. Of course, the very reason behind using EFCS is that the stressors exceeded the ability of the person to control it. That is why some PCASD in the current study preferred to employ overlooking the case of their CASD in order to get a temporary relief. Some PCASD who participated in the study reported self-talking that nothing in life is perfect. Everything happening in life has negative and positive faces. They reported that focusing on the positive and appreciating a very little improvement the child is making helped them deal with their stress. PCASD also preferred to think that reality is contextual; the reality of ASD that PCASD have may not be the same as the reality that PTDC make.

In the current study, PCASD also reported distancing as means of coping strategy. Staying away and withdrawn from a CASD for a while is used as one of the strategies to get relief from the stress. A study by Vidyasagar and Koshy (2010) found out that mothers of CASD have used distancing or avoidance as an emotion-focused coping strategy more often than mothers of 'normal' children.

Generally speaking, PCASD who have participated in the study used more EFCSs compared to PFCSs because the majority of the participants confessed that with all lacks of training on managing CASD and lack of professional supports, it is very likely for parents, particularly single mothers, to take any ways out to get relief regardless of considering the coping strategy is emotion focused or problem focused. Neither fathers nor mothers showed knowledge-based

intention to use specific coping strategy based on their gender. However, more EFCSs were reported as a coping mechanism by mothers.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The current study sheds light on stressors, and coping strategies among PCASD in Ethiopia. Some of the stressors experienced and coping strategies employed are similar to the ones experienced and employed by parents elsewhere and some-other experiences are typical to Ethiopia. Parents' stressors related to their CASD include stressors related to CASD's personal development challenges and failure to build friendship, being non-verbal, finding schools for their CASD, the scarcity of care and service provisions that the children with autism spectrum disorder require, uncertainty about the cause of the disability and fate of their CASD after their death. The higher level of stress negatively affects the life of PCASD as well as their CASD.

With regard to coping strategies, PCASD use predominantly use EFCS compared to PFCSs and mothers tend to use EFCS more than fathers. PCASD are not aware of the type of coping strategies that they use and also their efficacy in helping them handling their stress effectively.

Based on the results obtained and conclusions made, the following implications are drawn. Ethiopia is a signatory of different international policy documents, conventions, proclamations and guidelines such as UNCRPD, SDGs, etc. It has also developed many local policies and directives related to the rights and support of children with disabilities such as Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap, SNE/IE strategy, Inclusive Education 10 year's Master plan for Ethiopia etc. However, the majority of locally developed policies do not consider the challenges parents are facing particularly parents of children with neurological disorders such as ASD. The finding of the current study can contribute to the development of locally relevant policies pertinent to CASD Therefore; policy makers should consider establishing scientifically proven and contextually effective support system for PCASD to reduce the effect of stressors on PCASD.

 The PCASD indicated that they have been struggling with many challenges such as finding inclusive school for their CASD due to the condition that their child has. Therefore, it is recommended that the Federal Ministry of Education Ethiopia in collaboration with other key stakeholders (Federal Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, Ethiopia and Federal Ministry of Health, Ethiopia) to work at all levels of schools to make schools accessible and inclusive for CASD and establish public funded learning and health intervention centers for CASD and their parents.

Parents get more stressed as they get older. They get more stressed not merely because they are getting older but they do not trust the whole support system in the society as responsive as the parents' expectations regarding the care and support for their CASD. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs, and the Ministry of Health need to establish a trustworthy support system for CASD so that the level of stress PCASD experience can be reduced or eliminated.

PCASD reported that earning less is the cause for higher level of stress. The government can introduce certain financial support systems to the PCASD as this can relieve them from the burden of mending their existence while taking care of their CASD. A work from home provision may also be thought of for PCASD because this can help them work at their convenience and pace. Further, detailed researches are to be initiated to consider the Ethiopian context in terms of income and its effect on the level of stress of PCASD.

It is recommended for the Ethiopian government, Ethiopian Special Needs Education Professionals Association (ESNEPA), Non-governmental Organizations (national and international) and DPOs to scale up and shape the purpose of different social groups available in Ethiopian context such as 'Equb', 'Edir' and 'Mahiber' for supporting PCASD. Finally, the Ethiopian government, Ethiopian Special Needs Education Professionals Association, NGOs (national and international) and organizations of persons with disabilities may educate the public and PCASD on the cause, course, and consequences of ASD so that the stigma, prejudice, and discrimination is reduced. Further, this move will support PCASD to resort to more of PFCS to deal with their stress.

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