

A Study of the Managerial Skills of School Principals to Assess their Impact and Relative Importance in Driving School's Performance

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Abstract: The need for effective management is all pervasive. Be it any industry or any form of organizational body, effective management of people, assets and resources is of paramount importance. Investments in terms of time and monetary resources are of little use if the same is not managed and administered effectively.

While most of us have the potential to contribute to the improvement of educational scenario in some way or the other, ones at senior managerial roles of educational institutions have the prime responsibility of running a successful system so as to ensure proper and smooth functioning of the organization, which will help develop the nation in terms of bright individuals passing out of schools and institutions.

This study is aimed at understanding whether there is a significant relationship between a principal's managerial effectiveness and school's performance. If yes, then what are the key drivers of success for principal's performance and in-turn, the school's performance?

The study is a systematic quantitative analysis of data collected from 527 respondents (comprised of school teachers, heads of departments and vice-principals) from Government and Private schools in Ghaziabad and Mathura districts of Uttar Pradesh. Regression analysis and tests of significance have been used as the corner stones for this study.

The study reveals insightful understanding of what works for heads of schools in order to successfully manage their institutions.

I. Introduction

For decades, principals have been recognized as important contributors to the effectiveness of schools. In an era of shared decision-making and management in schools, leadership matters. Principals constitute the core of the leadership team in schools.

We know from existing effective schools research that "effective principals influence a variety of school outcomes, including student achievement, through their recruitment and motivation of quality teachers, their ability to identify and articulate school vision and goals, their effective allocation of resources, and their development of organizational structures to support instruction and learning" (Horng, Kalogrides, and Loeb 2009,1).

The quality of a principal affects a range of school outcomes including teachers' satisfaction and their decisions about where to work, parents' perceptions about the schools their children attend, and, ultimately, the academic performance of the school.

School principal's job is complex and multifaceted, and the effectiveness of principals depends on their level of experience, their sense of efficacy on particular kinds of tasks, and their allocation of time across daily responsibilities.

Also principals' subjective evaluations of teachers may offer valuable information on teacher performance beyond what can be captured by student test scores alone.

There is little doubt that school leaders matter for school success. A large number of studies spanning the last three decades link high quality leadership with positive school outcomes, including student achievement.

This study would focus on the extent of the impact of school principal's managerial skills on school's performance, and identify the importance of different skills needed for principals to perform their job effectively. Furthermore, the study would also provide systematic evidence of the linkages between school leader efficacy and school outcomes, including student achievement gains and teacher satisfaction.

II. Statement of the problem

The study focuses on establishing the relationship between school principal's managerial effectiveness and school's performance based on key performance indicators.

Specifically, the study aims to answer the following key questions –

- a) How principal's efficacy predicts key school outcomes, including student achievement gains, teacher satisfaction, and parents' assessments of school performance?
- b) Which are the key managerial skills that truly drive principal's overall performance?

III. Research Objectives

In order to answer the key questions mentioned above, the study aims to understand the impact of managerial skills of principals and heads of schools in terms of their effectiveness in relation to the school's achievements.

Specifically the research would cover the following areas:

- a) Relationship and impact of principal's managerial efficacy on school's success
- b) The key managerial skills required to be a successful principal of schools
- c) The relative importance of these skills with respect to their effectiveness
- d) Identification of the ideal mix of managerial skills in order to be successful as a principal

IV. Research Hypothesis

The study would test out the following key null and alternative hypothesis:

Null Hypothesis: Successful performance of a school depends on the managerial skills and effectiveness of the principal of the school

Alternative Hypothesis: Successful performance of a school is independent of the managerial skills and effectiveness of the principal of the school

V. Scope of the Research

Variables of the study:

To establish the relation between a school's overall performance and principal's efficacy, principal's overall performance has been used as independent variable and overall school performance has been used as the dependent variable in a linear regression model.

Further, sub-parameters of principal's performance ratings were regressed with principal's overall performance (as dependent) to achieve their relative importance.

VI. Population

The population for this study consisted of teachers of government and private schools (having classes till standard XII) in Ghaziabad and Mathura districts in the state of Uttar Pradesh.

Sample:

A total of 527 respondents having a mix of teachers, heads of departments and vice-principals were interviewed using a quantitative structured survey questionnaire in order to record responses for statistical analysis to assess importance of various managerial skills.

VII. Findings of the study

At the start of the analysis, linear regression was run between school's overall performance (dependent variable) and principal's performance (independent variable). The analysis gave the following results:

Analysis Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.802(a)	.643	.642	.833

Predictors: (Constant, Overall performance of the principal of the school)

Regression Analysis Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.367	.151		9.075	.000
	Overall performance of the principal of the school	.797	.026	.802	30.721	.000

Dependent Variable: School's Overall Performance

With an R^2 of 0.64, the above analysis clearly shows a strong model fitment between school's performance and principal's efficacy. Sig value of 0.000 shows strong significance of the model. Further, a t-test for significance also reveals significant difference between school's performances depending on principal's efficacy (Sig – 2 tailed of 0.000).

A further deep dive to reveal what really is perceived as school's performance, a regression analysis was run between school's overall performance and performance scores on other key parameters – Overall results and academic performance of students passing out of class 10th, – Overall results and academic performance of students passing out of class 12th, Teachers' satisfaction and motivation level and school's involvement in co-curricular and extra curricular events.

With an R^2 of 0.506, the model revealed that there is strong linkage between overall ratings and the ratings for the above mentioned sub-parameters.

Analysis Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.712(a)	.506	.502	.982

Predictors: (Constant), Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, Overall results and academic performance of students passing out of class 10th , Overall results and academic performance of students passing out of class 12th, Teachers' satisfaction and motivation overall

The relative importance of Beta values uncovers that academic performance of students passing out of class 12th (0.294, see table below) and 10th (0.242) are the most important parameters driving overall ratings for school (with teachers a survey respondents). This is followed by ratings on teachers' satisfaction and motivation (0.166) and school's involvement in extra-curricular/co-curricular events (0.155).

Regression Analysis Coefficients:

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.023	.215		4.755	.000
	Overall results and academic performance of students passing out of class 10th	.258	.043	.242	5.943	.000
	Overall results and academic performance of students passing out of class 12th	.346	.053	.294	6.513	.000
	Teachers' satisfaction and motivation overall	.156	.047	.166	3.338	.001
	Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities	.144	.043	.155	3.346	.001

Dependent Variable: School's Overall Performance

VIII. Key Drivers of Overall Ratings for Principal's Performance

The next step in this analysis was to find out which all performance parameters are key drivers of overall ratings for Principal's performance. To come up with this insight, regression analysis was run with principal's overall performance and sub-parameters like Administrative Skills, Communication Skills, Cognitive Skills and Supervisory Skills.

Analysis Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.736(a)	.541	.538	.952

Predictors: (Constant), Supervisory skills, Administrative Skills, Cognitive skills, Communication skills

Regression Analysis Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.497	.184		8.144	.000
	Administrative Skills	.084	.041	.084	2.061	.040
	Communication skills	.224	.047	.257	4.798	.000
	Cognitive skills	.189	.044	.211	4.294	.000
	Supervisory skills	.277	.042	.289	6.555	.000

Dependent Variable: Overall performance of the principal of the school

The analysis clearly shows that Supervisory Skills (Beta 0.289) and Communication Skills (0.257) are the two most important skill-set required for managerial effectiveness of principals. Cognitive skills (with Beta of 0.211) is also a very important factor.

Within Supervisory skills, *appropriate delegation of work and responsibilities and carrying out appropriate performance appraisal of staff members* are the two most important aspects (as shown in the table below).

Regression Analysis Coefficients (Regression R² = 0.534)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.573	.189		8.316	.000
	Ability and extent of training, coaching and mentoring	.154	.047	.165	3.294	.001
	Appropriate delegation of work and responsibilities	.306	.050	.299	6.084	.000
	Carrying out appropriate performance appraisal of staff members	.261	.054	.287	4.830	.000
	Imparting discipline in the school	.064	.037	.068	1.735	.083

Dependent Variable: Supervisory skills

A similar ranking of communication skills sub-factors in order of their importance disclosed that the most important aspect of communication is *the ability to give clear instruction and information* followed by *listening skills and getting involvement of staff members in decision making* and *the ability to give honest constructive feedback to staff members*.

Within the cognitive skills umbrella, the three most important sub-parameters that came up in the analysis were: *Identification and acknowledgement of issues and problems*, *Ability to make correct decisions and assess associated risks* and *Identification and implementation of appropriate solution to problems*.

IX. Conclusions and Implications of the study

The study clearly reveals a strong relationship between performance of a school and the managerial effectiveness of its principal, where the latter is the driver of the former. Perception about a school's performance is primarily driven by the academic results of class 12th and 10th.

Principal's managerial effectiveness is primarily driven by Supervisory Skills, followed by Communication Skills and Cognitive Skills.

Some of the key –sub-parameters within these areas are *appropriate delegation of work and responsibilities*, *carrying out appropriate performance appraisal of staff members*, *the ability to give clear instruction and information* and by *listening skills and getting involvement of staff members in decision making*.

The study acts as a reference guide for principals of schools so as to help them prioritize their focus areas to become good managers, and in turn good principals, to be able to drive the success of schools.

X. References

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