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Skills of Educational Managers in Private Higher Education Institutions in Addis Ababa City Administration

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Abstract

This study investigates the managerial competencies of educational managers in private higher education institutions within Addis Ababa City Administration, Ethiopia. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to both educational managers and teaching staff, focusing on core management skill areas including conceptual, interpersonal, technical, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership abilities. Descriptive statistical tools—frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations—were employed to analyze the responses. The findings indicate that while interpersonal communication and relationship management are generally well-developed, critical skill gaps exist in areas such as delegation, staff motivation, forecasting, and analytical decision-making. These deficiencies highlight the need for structured professional development initiatives tailored to enhance managerial effectiveness and leadership capacity. The study emphasizes the strategic importance of equipping educational managers with a balanced and comprehensive skill set to foster institutional performance, improve governance practices, and support the professional growth of subordinates. This research contributes to the broader discourse on educational leadership by offering empirical insights into the current competency landscape of private higher

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education managers in Ethiopia and underscores the urgency of capacity-building interventions aligned with contemporary managerial demands.

Keywords: Educational Management; Managerial Skills; Leadership; Higher Education; Problem-Solving; Decision-Making; Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

Management is a critical function applied across various sectors—profit and non-profit, private and government, as well as social and business organizations—to achieve organizational goals. According to Montana and Charnov (2008), managerial activities encompass planning, organizing, staffing, coordinating, motivating, leading, and controlling. These functions are carried out effectively through delegation, ensuring results are achieved by working with and through people.

To fulfill their roles, managers require specific skills. Early research by Katz (1955), cited in Robbins and Coulter (2006), identified three fundamental managerial skills:

1. Conceptual Skills–The ability to view the organization holistically and understand the relationships among its various units. These skills are particularly crucial for top-level management.
2. Human/Interpersonal Skills–The capacity to work effectively with individuals and groups. Since management inherently involves collaboration, these skills are vital at all levels. Managers with strong interpersonal skills excel in communication, motivation, and leadership.
3. Technical Skills–Specialized knowledge and expertise in a specific field, such as accounting, engineering, or computer operations. These skills are most critical at lower management levels, where supervisors directly oversee employees involved in producing goods and services.

Other scholars have expanded on this framework. Reh (2009) proposed a management pyramid that includes additional skills: planning/goal-setting, organizing, directing, controlling, motivation, training and coaching, involvement/teamwork, time management, self-management, and leadership.

Similarly, Pugh (1980) emphasized that effective educational managers must be able to forecast the future, plan, communicate, organize, delegate, and establish and maintain control. Wilson (2003) further categorized managerial skills into three broader areas:

1. Technical Skills–Applying education, training, and experience to organize tasks, jobs, or projects effectively.
2. Teambuilding Skills–Listening carefully and communicating clearly to develop and coordinate effective groups or teams.
3. Drive–Setting goals, maintaining standards, and evaluating performance to achieve outcomes related to costs, output, product quality, and customer service.

Given these perspectives, it is evident that educational managers must possess a diverse set of managerial skills to perform their functions effectively. This study aims to assess the current state of these skills among managers in private higher education institutions within the Addis Ababa City Government.

Previous research has examined the state of management skills among managers. For example, Wilson (2003), cited in Kreimer and Cassidy (2011), found that approximately one-third of managers at all levels fail to achieve an appropriate balance of managerial skills. This study seeks to build on such findings by specifically investigating the management skills of educational managers in private higher education institutions. Understanding these skills is essential for improving leadership effectiveness and, consequently, the quality of education provided by these institutions. By identifying gaps and strengths in managerial skills, this research will contribute to the development of targeted training programs and policies aimed at enhancing the performance of educational managers in Addis Ababa's private higher education sector.

The primary aim of this study is to explore and describe the current state of possession of management skills among educational managers in private higher education institutions in Addis Ababa City.

Literature Review

Concepts and Definitions of Management

Many authors have attempted to define management. In attempting to define it, Singla (2010) states that different experts have defined management on the basis of its

features. Some experts have defined management as an "art of getting things done," while others give more importance to its "function-oriented form." In the same manner, some experts think management is related to "decision making," while others are of the opinion that "productivity and efficiency" are its basis. Naagarazan and Ahamed (2008) also state that management is described as an activity, a process, and a group of people vested with the authority to make decisions.

According to Bagad (2009), many definitions are given for management. Accordingly, E.F.L. Brech defined management as a social process entailing responsibility for the effective and economic planning and regulation of the operations of an enterprise in fulfillment of a given purpose or task, such responsibility involving. Harold Koontz defined management as an art of getting things done through and with people in formally organized groups. For Henry Fayol to manage is to forecast, to plan, to organize, to co-ordinate and to control". Peter Drucker defined "management is a multipurpose organization that manages a business and manages manager, and manages worker and work". F.W. Taylor defined management as “Management is knowing exactly what you want men do, and then seeing that they do it in the best and cheapest way”.

Management in education is conceived as the process of making an organization purposeful and effective; it involves selecting, appraising, and developing and linking them to their jobs in a way that enables an organization to achieve desired results (Genck and Kingenberg 1991). In this research, management is understood as the process of planning, organizing, staffing, directing, and controlling to achieve organizational objectives.

The other point of discussion with regard to management is the levels of management. In the past, the two broad levels of management used to be denoted by administrative management and operating management. The upper level of management was usually called “administrative management,” and the lower level was known as “operating management.” The use of these terms implies a division of management functions into two separate groups, viz., thinking and doing functions.

In the current practice, there are three levels of management—the top, middle, and lower management in a typical organization forming a pyramid-shaped hierarchy. In this regard (Anbuvelan 2007) states, the current practice is to denote the upper level of management by the term “top management.” The lower level or echelon of management goes by the name of “middle management.” The adoption of the term middle management

undoubtedly suggests that there is a further level below it. Actually, the lowest level is composed of foremen and supervisors.

According to Bose (2006), top management is the head of an organization. It consists of the Chief Executive or the Managing Director. In the operation of an organization, top management is the final source of authority. It establishes policies, plans, and objectives. Middle-level management generally consists of heads of functional departments. It is concerned with the task of implementing the policies and plans laid down by the top management. It is also a link between the top management and the lower management. Lower management or supervisory management is the lowest level in the hierarchy of management. It consists of supervisors, foremen, account officers, sales officers, and so on. They are directly concerned with the control of the performance of the operatives/employees. They assign specific jobs to the workers, evaluate their performance, and report to the middle-level managers.

In the case of Private HEIs (Higher Education Institutions) in Ethiopia, the top management consists of the presidents and vice presidents, middle management consists of the deans and department heads, and lower-level management consists of foremen and supervisors.

Management Skills

Several scholars tried to define the word "skill." For instance, Schermerhorn (2011) defined skill as the ability to translate knowledge into action that results in desired performance. Bateman and Snell (2003) state that skills are specific abilities that result from knowledge, information, practice, and aptitudes. Business Dictionary.com, in turn, defines management skills as the ability to make business decisions and lead subordinates within a company. The following points can be derived from the above definitions: skills are abilities, they come from knowledge and practice, and are necessary to perform effectively in an organization. Kumar and Sharma (2000) define skill as "an ability or proficiency in performing a particular task," and state that management skills are learned and developed.

According to Karmaker and Datta (2012), successful acquisition and utilization of basic management skills depend on a sound educational base and professional expertise of the managers. They also depend on the continued work experience of the managers by way of performing a variety of job assignments. One classic study of managers identified three important types of managerial skills: technical, interpersonal, and conceptual (Griffin 2000). Other scholars in the field of management also provide diagnostic skills as an important

factor in managerial success. According to Morhead and Griffin (2001), most successful managers also bring diagnostic skills to the organization. Chandan (2003) also states that, in addition to the three basic management skills, managers need to possess political skills.

The American Management Association, cited in Robbins and Coulter (2006), has also identified important skills for managers that encompass conceptual, communication, effectiveness, and interpersonal aspects. According to Michael (2002:3), management skill includes decision-making skill, skill for providing direction, organizational skill, etc. Griffin and Van Fleet (2008:9) also provide the seven core management skills that include: time management, interpersonal, conceptual, diagnostic, communication, decision-making, and technical skills.

In addition to the management skills, there is also a concern to develop specific skills, or specialized skills that contribute to high performance in a management job. Montana and Charnov (2008) defined management skills as skills that contribute to high performance in a management job. According to Benowitz (2001), the specialized skills of a manager include leadership, which is the ability to influence others to perform tasks; self-objectivity, which is the ability to evaluate yourself realistically; analytic thinking, the ability to interpret and explain patterns in information; behavioral flexibility, the ability to modify personal behavior to react objectively rather than subjectively to accomplish organizational goals; oral communication, the ability to express ideas clearly in words; written communication, the ability to express ideas clearly in writing; personal impact, the ability to create a good impression and instill confidence; resistance to stress, the ability to perform under stressful conditions; and tolerance for uncertainty, the ability to perform in ambiguous situations.

In line with this, Gamage and Pang (2003) also state that successful leaders and managers have analytical, human, conceptual, and specialized skills. They are able to think and understand. Warner and Palfreyman (2000) note that, in the current economic and political climate, when Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are run as business organizations, it is important for their senior managers to be able to "read" the environment, identify opportunities, and assess threats.

Thus, it can be said that the management skills include the basic/essential management skills—conceptual, human/interpersonal, and technical skills, training and coaching skills, time management skills, leadership skills, communication skills, forecasting, decision-making skills, problem-solving skills, political skills, delegation, political skill,

motivating skill, rewarding skill, analytical skill, design skill, and diagnostic and design. A detailed discussion of these skills is made below.

Conceptual, human/interpersonal, and technical skills are the basic management skills needed by every manager. According to Smit and et al. (2007), conceptual skills refer to the mental ability to view the operation of the organization and its parts holistically. Interpersonal skills refer to the ability to work with people. Therefore, a manager should be able to communicate, understand people's behavior, resolve conflict, and motivate both groups and individuals. Technical skills refer to the ability to use the knowledge or techniques of a specific discipline to attain goals.

According to Gibson (2005), conceptual skills involve the managers' thinking and planning abilities. They also include the manager's ability to think strategically. For a manager, conceptual competence includes analyzing problems, devising solutions and action plans, and anticipating the consequences of decisions. Human skills, also known as interpersonal, "soft," or people skills, are skills that allow you to work effectively with others. These skills include a manager's ability to communicate, coach, lead, resolve conflicts, achieve consensus, and motivate workers. Technical skills are work-related skills that demonstrate the manager's ability to use the technology, tools, techniques, and procedures specific to a particular field.

Kumar and Sharma (2000) state that analytical skill involves using scientific approaches or techniques to solve management problems. It is the ability to identify key factors and understand how they relate and the roles they play in a situation. It is an ability to diagnose and evaluate, to understand the problem and to develop a plan of action. Without it, there is little hope for long-term success.

According to Luis (2010), effective time-management skills are essential to performing a management role as they enable us to ensure that management tasks are carried out successfully. For example, the task of developing a business strategy is more likely to fulfill its ultimate goal if we practice good time management. Furthermore, the decision-making process can be jeopardized if time management is non-existent or ineffective, with all the risks that this entails for the company as well as the completion of an established strategic plan.

According to Schermerton and et al. (2010), leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.

DuBrin (2001) also defined leadership as the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who need to achieve organizational goals.

According to Chandan (2003), good communication is the foundation of sound management. Proper communication eliminates delays, misunderstandings, confusion, distortions, and conflicts and improves coordination and control. All the four communication skills, namely, writing, reading, listening, and non-verbal gestures are important ingredients of successful leadership. Today's managers are responsible for communicating to their employees the technical knowledge, instructions, rules, and information required to get the jobs done. Recognizing that communication is a two-way process, managers should be responsive to feedback and upward communication (Kreitner and Cassidy 2011).

Decision-making is almost universally defined as choosing between alternatives (Luthans 2002). According to Pownall (2012), decisions occur at different levels in an organization and those decisions can also be of different types. For example, strategic decisions are generally concerned with the most appropriate use of organizational resources for a given preferred competitive goal. Tactical decisions are the actions that follow the strategic decisions. We might say that while a strategic decision determines what the organizational purpose is or could be, the tactical decisions follow in determining what needs to be done to achieve this goal. Operational decisions finally are short-term and responsive actions.

Decisions can also be classified into two categories based on the nature of the problem. These two categories are: Programmed decisions and non-programmed decisions. In discussing the value of decision-making, Everard, Morris, and Wilson (2004) state that whether we are setting goals, planning how to achieve them, coping with the issues which arise in organizing and carrying out day-to-day activities, making things happen as we wish them to, depends on our ability to take and implement decisions.

Decisions in educational institutions can be broadly classified into three categories based upon the subject involved. They include: Technical, managerial, and institutional decisions. Dash and Dash (2008) discuss these decision types in the following manner:

Technical decisions are those decisions concerning the process by which inputs are changed into outputs by the educational institutions. For example, students did very badly in science in the last examination. In order to improve their performance in science, the school management may change the teacher and another

teacher may be given the responsibility of teaching science to the students of Class X. Here the decisions: Managerial decisions are those decisions related to the issue of coordination with the core activities of the educational institution. It is also concerned with the relationship between the school and its immediate environment and policy formulation. Examples include expansion of school buildings, opening of additional sections, etc.

A problem is a deviation or gap between desired and actual performance, for instance, quality, customer service, outputs, and absenteeism (Hannaway and Hunt 2003). According to Smit and Cronje (2005), problem-solving can be seen as the process of taking corrective action that will solve the problem and will realign the organization with its goals. Elbing (1980) cited in Dixon (2003) describes problem-solving as a five-step process in which the manager perceives a problem, perhaps without a clear, rational reason for doing so, and the manager responds by attempting to find out the causes of the problem. In addition, the management must attempt to define the nature of the problem, the manager must select a solution, which will involve making decisions and the implementation of the chosen cause of action, whether or not it actually leads to a solution of the problem.

Carlopio and et al. (2012) also provide a model of problem-solving that includes defining the problem, generating alternative solutions, evaluating and selecting an alternative, and implementing and following up on the solution. According to DuBrin (2009), political skill is the ability to obtain power and prevent others from taking it away. Managers use political skill to acquire the power necessary to reach their objectives. Other political skills include establishing the right connections and impressing the right people. Further, managers high in political skills possess an astute understanding of people along with a fundamental belief that they can control the outcomes of their interactions with people. Similarly, Robbins (2014) states that, political skills are the skills managers need and use to build a power base and establish the right connections. Political skills represent the ability to change one's situation by influencing others at work, with the overall objective of attaining valued goals from the situation. Organizations are political arenas in which people compete for resources. Managers who have and know how to use political skills tend to be better at getting resources for their group.

Delegation is the process through which managers assign a portion of their total workload to others. In this process, authority is also passed on to an employee, who then has the authority to deploy the necessary resources in order to complete the delegated work (Smit and et al. 2007). According to Huffmire (2006), delegation includes clarifying the individual's

responsibilities, indicating the priorities of those responsibilities, defining specific goals and objectives for the individual, clarifying the specific authority for each responsibility of each individual employee, and developing controls for each individual.

In delegating, Jones (2005) cited in Coleman and Glover (2010) argues that the role and responsibilities being delegated should be outlined, the nature of the work being assigned should be clearly explained; the delegated should be left to fulfill their role without interference; there should be some rewards to act as motivation; there does need to be some form of oversight; and then achievement should be evaluated within the performance management of the school or college.

Diagnostic skills allow managers to better understand cause-and-effect relationships and recognize the optimal solutions to problems (Morrhead and Griffin 2001). According to Weirich and Koontz (2007), design skill is the ability to solve problems in ways that will benefit the enterprise. To be effective particularly at upper organizational levels, managers must people. Similarly, Robbins (2014) states that, political skills are the skills managers need and use to build a power base and establish the right connections. Political skills represent the ability to change one's situation by influencing others at work, with the overall objective of attaining valued goals from the situation. Organizations are political arenas in which people compete for resources. Managers who have and know how to use political skills tend to be better at getting resources for their group.

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Importance of Management Skills

Management skills are important to discharge managerial duties and activities and succeed as well. In discussing the importance of management skills Tripath and Reddy (2008) state that, in order to be able to successfully discharge his roles, a manager should possess three management skills. In this regard, Certo (2003) also states that a manager with the necessary management skills will probably perform well and be relatively successful. One without the necessary skills will probably perform poorly and be relatively unsuccessful. Bateman and Snell (2003) in addition state that performing management functions and achieving competitive advantage are cornerstones of a manager's job. However, understanding this does not ensure success.

Managers need a variety of skills to do these things well. Rao and Narayana (2000) also argue that to be effective, a manager must develop and practice each of the management skills in the organization. He need not concentrate his efforts on one or only a few of the above skills. Striking a happy balance between these skills is all that is required. Moreover, Morhead and Griffin (2001) state that management skills are necessary to carry out basic management functions and fill fundamental roles. Another importance of managerial skills, according to Rudani (2013), is that they can be considered as the criteria or bases for managerial development programs as well as recruitment, selection, and career development.

Not every manager needs all the managerial skills equally. Stoner, Freeman, and Gilbert (1995) suggest that all three of these skills are essential to a manager; their relative importance depends mainly on the manager's rank in the organization. To this end, Katz (1974) cited in Gupta (2009) states that at the lower levels, technical skills are more important. Conceptual skills become more important as one moves up to top management. In line with

this, Terry and Franklin (2005) state that top managerial jobs usually require more human and conceptual knowledge and skill than technical know-how. At lower organizational levels, more technical and human needs are involved, with less emphasis on conceptual work. The authors also provided the diagram below to show the relationship between the levels of management and the requirements of management skills.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach, Design and Sources of Data

The research approach for this study was a quantitative approach and the research design was descriptive survey. Both primary and secondary sources of data were used in this study. The primary sources of data for this research were educational managers that are comprised of presidents, vice presidents, deans, and heads of department and teaching staff in Private HEIs in Addis Ababa City Administration. The secondary sources of data used in this research were journals and books written on management skills.

Sampling and Sampling Techniques

Simple random sampling was used to select the samples from the private higher education institutions, and all the available educational managers and teaching staff in the selected institutions were taken as respondents. To this effect, out of the forty-six private higher education institutions operating in Addis Ababa City, ten of them were selected. Accordingly, Alpha University College, Ayer Tena Health Sciences College, Ethopis College, Gage Business and Information Technology College, Microlink Information Technology College, Mishqen College, National College, New Abyssinia College, Orbit Information Technology College, Unity University, and Royal University College were selected. To this effect, forty-one deans and department heads, five top-level management members, and sixty-two teaching staff were involved in the study.

Instruments of Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data gathering instruments were questionnaires. Two types of questionnaires were prepared for this purpose—one for the educational managers and the other for the teaching staff. Data analysis is the process involving working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, and deciding what would be told to others (Bogdan and Biklen 1998). To

analyze the data gathered, presentation of the data was made in tabular form and statistical treatment of data such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were made. The following scale was used: <1.49 very low level, 1.5-2.4 low level, 2.5-3.49 moderate level, 3.5-4.49 high level, and >4.5 very high level. The use of SPSS was made in this effect.

Pilot Testing

With regard to pilot testing, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) prior to using your questionnaire to collect data, it should be pilot tested. The purpose of the pilot test is to refine the questionnaire so that respondents will have no problems in answering the questions and there will be no problems in recording the data. In addition, it will enable you to examine some dimensions of the questions' validity and the likely reliability of the data that will be collected. To this effect, initially, experts were made to comment on the representation and suitability of the questions, this helped to establish content validity and enabled to make necessary amendments prior to pilot testing. The result of pilot testing was used to revise and adjust the questionnaire before distributing them to the actual respondents. Therefore, after the pilot testing, the necessary modifications on 5 items and a complete removal and replacement of 2 unclear items were made. In addition to this, the reliability of the instruments were measured by using Cronbach Alpha test. As indicated by Drost (2004), if the result of Cronbach's coefficient alpha is 0.7 and above, it is considered to be satisfactory. The result of the test was 0.742.

Ethical Considerations

In order to abide by the ethical principles of research undertaking, first, the researchers obtained informed consent. The researchers also considered confidentiality because respondents are sharing information. Moreover, honesty and truthfulness in reporting the data were also considered.

RESULTS

This result section presents the findings of the study on the management skills of educational managers in private higher education institutions in Addis Ababa City, based on data collected from both educational managers and teaching staff through structured questionnaires. The analysis focuses on key managerial competencies such as conceptual,

interpersonal, technical, decision-making, problem-solving, and leadership skills, using descriptive statistics including frequency counts, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviations. The results highlight areas of strength and deficiency in the possession and application of these skills, providing insights into the current state of educational management and identifying critical areas that require developmental intervention.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Respondents

S. No.	Items	Category	Respondents			
			Educational Managers		Teaching Staff	
			Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Sex	Male	37	90,20	51	82.30
		Female	4	9.80	11	17.70
		Total	**41**	**100.00**	**62**	**100.00**
2	Age	20-30	13	31.70	20	32.26
		31-40	16	39.02	16	25.81
		41-50	3	7.32	4	6.45
		51 and above	9	21.95	6	9.68
		Total	**41**	**100.00**	**62**	**100.00**
3	Work Experience	1-5	6	14.60	13	21.00
		6-10	19	46.30	13	21.00
		11-15	5	12.20	11	17.70
		16-20	2	4.90	2	3.20
		21-25	1	2.40	7	11.30
		Above 25	8	19.50	16	25.80
		Total	**41**	**100.00**	**62**	**100.00**
4	Level of Education	Bachelor's Degree	14	34.10	35	56.50
		Master's Degree	26	65.40	26	41.90
		PhD	1	2.40	1	1.60
		Total	**41**	**100.00**	**62**	**100.00**
5	Position	President	5	12.20	-	-
		Deans	10	24.39	-	-
		Heads of Department	26	63.41	-	-
		Total	**41**	**100.00**	-	-

6	Number of Years on Administration Position	1-5	38	92.70	-	-
		6-10	3	7.30	-	-
		11-15	-	-	-	-
		Above 15	-	-	-	-
		Total	**41**	**100.00**	-	-

Source: Survey Data

In table 1, it is found that the majority of educational managers and the teaching staff respondents are male. As illustrated in table 1, the majority of the educational managers and the teaching staff fall in the age groups of 20-30 and 30-40. This showed that the majority of educational managers and teaching staff in the selected private higher education institutions were young and middle aged. The data in the table also indicated that the majority of the educational managers in the selected private higher education intuitions are well experienced and this might help them to carry out well the roles expected of them.

Table 1, also depicted the education levels of the respondents. Accordingly, the majority of the educational managers and teaching staffs had qualifications of Bachelors and Master's degree. From this it can be concluded that there is shortage of PhD level qualification in the selected private higher education institutions. In addition, the table showed that the majority of the educational managers have managerial experience of 1-5 years.

Table 2. Educational Managers' Perceptions of Management Skills

Items	Responses					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low		
Ability to understand the whole organization.	19 (46.34%)	10 (24.39%)	12 (29.29%)	-	-	4.1707	0.86120
Working with people in the organization.	29 (70.73%)	11 (26.83%)	1 (2.44%)	-	-	4.6829	0.52149
Ability to use the knowledge and techniques of a field.	16 (39.02%)	17 (41.46%)	8 (19.51%)	-	-	4.1951	0.74808
Forecasting future events.	5 (12.2%)	17 (41.46%)	6 (14.63%)	8 (19.51%)	5 (12.2%)	2.7805	1.25523
Motivating subordinates.	17 (41.46%)	16 (39.02%)	7 (17.07%)	1 (2.44%)	1 (2.44%)	4.1823	0.81300

Leading subordinates.	23 (56.1%)	13 (31.71%)	5 (12.2%)	-	-	4.4390	0.70883
Listening skill.	12 (29.27%)	9 (21.95%)	6 (14.63%)	9 (21.95)	5 (12.2%)	3.3415	1.42495
The ability to express ideas clearly in writing.	23 (56.1%)	9 (21.95%)	9 (21.95%)	-	-	4.3415	0.82492
The ability to express ideas clearly in words.	18 (43.9%)	16 (39.02%)	3 (7.32%)	2 (4.87%)	2 (4.87%)	4.1220	1.07692
Delegating skill.	-	1 (2.43%)	12 (29.27%)	13 (31.7%)	14 (34.14%)	2.0244	0.879992
Decision making skill.	2 (4.87%)	19 (46.34%)	15 (36.58%)	5 (12.2%)	-	3.4390	0.77617
Problem identification.	17 (41.46%)	13 (31.7%)	10 (24.39%)	-	-	4.0976	0.94353
Ability to design a workable solution to a problem.	16 (39.02%)	14 (34.14%)	5 (12.2%)	6 (14.63%)	-	3.9756	1.06037
Ability to use scientific techniques to solve problems.	7 (17.07%)	14 (34.15%)	10 (24.39%)	6 (14.63%)	4 (9.76%)	3.3245	1.21675
Ability to obtain power and keep it.	11 (26.83%)	12 (29.27%)	15 (36.59%)	1 (2.44%)	2 (4.87%)	2.2729	1.05461
Identifying the skills that subordinates lack.	4 (9.76%)	2 (4.87%)	10 (24.39%)	11 (26.83%)	14 (34.15%)	2.2836	1.26972
Instructing the subordinates on the skills they lack.	-	6 (14.63%)	8 (19.51%)	6 (14.63%)	21 (51.22%)	1.9756	1.15082
Sharing experience with subordinates.	15 (36.59%)	6 (14.63%)	1 (2.44%)	9 (21.95%)	10 (24.39%)	2.8293	1.68675
Rewarding the subordinates.	-	2 (4.87%)	4 (9.76%)	29 (70.73%)	6 (14.63%)	2.0488	0.66900

Source: Survey Data

Table 2 depicts that the data collected from the survey highlights both the strengths and areas needing improvement in key managerial skills among respondents. Overall, interpersonal and communication skills are perceived as strong, with "working with people in the organization" receiving the highest mean score of 4.68, and 70.73% of respondents rating it as "Very High". Similarly, "leading subordinates" (mean=4.44) and "the ability to express ideas clearly in writing" (mean=4.34) were also rated highly, indicating that

individuals feel confident in their capacity to manage relationships and convey information effectively in written form.

In addition to these interpersonal strengths, respondents demonstrated a relatively good understanding of the overall structure and function of the organization, with an average score of 4.17 for the item "ability to understand the whole organization". Problem-solving abilities, particularly in identifying problems, were also seen as moderately strong, with a mean score of 4.09. This suggests that individuals are generally capable of recognizing issues when they arise.

However, several critical leadership and developmental skills showed noticeable gaps. For instance, "delegating skill" had the lowest average score at 2.02, with 34.14% of respondents rating it as "Very Low", signaling a significant deficiency in effectively assigning tasks and empowering others. Similarly, "instructing subordinates on the skills they lack" scored poorly (mean=1.98), with over half of the responses falling into the "Low" or "Very Low" categories, pointing to a lack of coaching and developmental support provided to team members.

Another area of concern is "rewarding subordinates", which had a mean score of 2.05, with 70.73% of respondents rating it as "Low"—indicating that recognition and motivational practices may be underdeveloped within the organizational context. In addition, "sharing experience with subordinates" (mean=2.83) and "listening skills" (mean=3.34) were also rated below average, suggesting that knowledge transfer and active listening may not be prioritized or effectively practiced.

When it comes to strategic and analytical thinking, results were mixed. The ability to forecast future events received a mean score of 2.78, with a wide standard deviation of 1.26, showing inconsistent perceptions across respondents. This indicates uncertainty or lack of confidence in anticipating future trends or outcomes. Similarly, decision-making skills (mean=3.44) were rated only moderately well, with just 4.87% considering them as "Very High", suggesting room for growth in making timely and effective decisions.

Other problem-solving related skills such as "designing workable solutions" (mean= 3.98) and "using scientific techniques to solve problems" (mean=3.32) also revealed varying levels of proficiency, with some inconsistency in how these skills are applied across the board.

In summary, while respondents demonstrate strong capabilities in communication, leading others, and understanding organizational dynamics, there are clear weaknesses in

areas such as delegation, instruction, motivation, rewarding performance, and strategic forecasting. These findings point toward the need for targeted development initiatives focused on coaching, empowerment, feedback mechanisms, and strategic decision-making to build a more comprehensive and effective leadership profile across the organization.

Table 3. Teaching Staffs' Perception of Management Skills

Items	Responses					Mean	Standard Deviation
	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very Low		
Ability to understand the whole organization.	7 (11.3%)	45 (72.58%)	5 (8.06%)	2 (3.23%)	3 (4.83%)	3.8226	0.85936
Working with people in the organization.	13 (20.97%)	35 (56.45%)	9 (14.51%)	5 (8.07%)	-	3.9032	0.82402
Ability to use the knowledge and techniques of a field.	9 (14.52%)	37 (59.68%)	12 (19.35%)	4 (6.45%)	-	3.8137	0.75800
Forecasting future events.	3 (4.84%)	4 (6.45%)	10 (16.13%)	34 (54.84%)	11 (17.74%)	2.2581	0.99979
Motivating subordinates.	-	18 (29.03%)	42 (67.74%)	2 (3.23%)	-	3.2581	0.51008
Leading subordinates.	9 (14.52%)	35 (56.45%)	5 (8.06%)	7 (11.29%)	6 (9.68%)	3.5323	1.19723
Listening skill.	5 (8.06%)	32 (51.61%)	16 (25.81%)	6 (9.68%)	3 (4.84%)	3.4839	0.95371
The ability to express ideas clearly in writing.	10 (16.13%)	39 (62.90%)	6 (9.68%)	3 (4.84%)	4 (6.45%)	3.7142	0.99868
The ability to express ideas clearly in words.	3 (4.84%)	43 (69.35%)	14 (22.8%)	2 (3.23%)	-	3.7581	0.59190
Delegating skill.	-	4 (6.45%)	12 (19.4%)	41 (66.13%)	5 (8.06%)	2.2419	0.69390
Decision making skill.	6 (9.68%)	8 (12.9%)	36 (58.06%)	7 (11.29%)	5 (8.06%)	3.0484	0.93226
Problem identification.	2 (3.23%)	4 (6.45%)	37 (59.68%)	7 (11.29%)	12 (19.35%)	2.6290	0.92056
Ability to design a workable solution to a problem.	4 (6.45%)	2 (3.23%)	13 (20.96%)	33 (53.23%)	10 (16.13%)	2.3065	1.00145
Ability to use scientific techniques to solve problems.	1 (1.61%)	3 (4.84%)	34 (54.84%)	9 (14.52%)	15 (24.19%)	2.4516	0.96966

Ability to obtain power and keeping it.	1 (1.61%)	10 (16.13%)	5 (8.06%)	38 (61.29%)	8 (12.9%)	2.3226	0.95427
Identifying the skills that subordinates lack.	2 (3.25%)	2 (3.25%)	5 (8.06%)	9 (14.52%)	44 (71.97%)	1.5323	1.00356
Instructing the subordinates on the skills they lack.	1 (1.61%)	2 (3.25%)	7 (11.29%)	40 (64.52%)	13 (20.97%)	1.9677	0.67673
Sharing experience with subordinates.	-	5 (8.06%)	8 (12.9%)	37 (59.68%)	12 (19.35%)	2.0968	1.80388
Rewarding the subordinates.	1 (1.61%)	10 (16.13%)	24 (38.71%)	5 (8.06%)	22 (35.48%)	2.1774	0.64080

Source: Survey Data

As shown in table 3, the survey data reflects the perceptions of teaching staff about the various managerial and leadership skills, revealing both strengths and areas needing significant improvement. One of the strongest perceived abilities is "working with people in the organization", with a mean score of 3.90, where 56.45% rated it as High and an additional 20.97% as Very High, indicating that interpersonal collaboration is generally seen as a core strength. Similarly, "using knowledge and techniques of a field (mean=3.81) and "understanding the whole organization" (mean=3.82) were also rated relatively highly, suggesting that individuals feel confident in their technical expertise and organizational awareness.

However, when it comes to "strategic and future-oriented skills", there are notable weaknesses. For instance, "forecasting future events" had the lowest average score (2.26) among all items, with 54.84% rating it as Low and 17.74% as Very Low, showing a lack of confidence or capability in anticipating and preparing for future challenges. This indicates a critical gap in strategic thinking across the sample.

In terms of "leadership behaviors", while "leading subordinates" received a moderate mean score of 3.53, there was considerable variability in responses (standard deviation=1.20), reflecting mixed opinions on how effectively this skill is practiced. Additionally, "motivating subordinates" (mean=3.26) was primarily rated as Average by 67.74% of respondents, with no one selecting Very High, highlighting that motivational practices may not be consistently effective or visible within the organization.

Communication skills were somewhat stronger: "expressing ideas clearly in writing" (mean=3.71) and in words (mean=3.76) were mostly rated as High or Very High, although

they still left room for improvement. Listening skills (mean=3.48) were moderately rated but showed a more balanced distribution across response categories, suggesting some inconsistency in how actively listening is practiced.

Among the most concerning findings are the low scores for developmental and empowering leadership skills. "Delegating skill" had a mean score of just 2.24, with 66.13% rating it as Low, pointing to a major deficiency in assigning responsibility and trusting others. Similarly, "identifying the skills that subordinates lack" scored the lowest overall (mean=1.53), with 71.97% of respondents rating it as Very Low, which suggests a serious issue in recognizing training and development needs within teams.

Other developmental skills such as "instructing subordinates on the skills they lack" (mean=1.97), "sharing experience with subordinates" (mean=2.10), and "rewarding subordinates" (mean=2.18) were also rated poorly. These results imply that coaching, mentoring, and recognition practices are underdeveloped, potentially affecting employee growth, morale, and engagement.

Problem-solving abilities showed varied performance. While "problem identification" (mean=2.63) was rated slightly better than average, over one-fifth (19.35%) rated it as Very Low, suggesting that identifying issues may not always be timely or accurate. The ability to design workable solutions" (mean=2.31) and use scientific methods to solve problems" (mean=2.45) were also rated poorly, indicating a general weakness in structured problem-solving approaches.

Power dynamics and authority management were also rated negatively. "Ability to obtain power and keep it" (mean=2.32) was largely rated as Low (61.29%), suggesting limited perception of influence or control in organizational settings.

Finally, "decision-making" (mean=3.05) was rated only moderately well, with over half (58.06%) choosing the "Average" category, indicating that decisions may often be made without sufficient clarity or confidence.

Overall, the data reveals that "interpersonal collaboration, communication, and basic understanding of the organization" are perceived as relative strengths. However, "critical leadership functions such as delegation, motivation, instruction, recognition, problem-solving, and forecasting" are significantly underdeveloped. There is a clear need for focused leadership development programs that emphasize "coaching, empowerment, strategic

thinking, and decision-making" to enhance overall managerial effectiveness and support subordinate growth within the organization.

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DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the management skills of educational managers in private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Addis Ababa City. The data reveals a mixed perception regarding the possession and application of key

managerial competencies, with some areas showing strength while others indicating significant deficiencies. These findings are consistent with the broader literature on educational management, which emphasizes the importance of a balanced skill set that includes interpersonal, technical, decision-making, and leadership abilities.

One of the notable strengths identified in this study is the ability of educational managers to work effectively with people within the organization. A majority of respondents rated this skill as either "High" or "Very High," reflecting strong interpersonal collaboration. This aligns with Coleman and Glover (2010), who emphasize that effective educational leadership requires strong relational skills to foster teamwork and organizational cohesion. Similarly, the ability to express ideas clearly—both in writing and speech—was also perceived positively, suggesting that communication skills among educational managers are relatively well-developed. Effective communication is widely regarded as a cornerstone of successful management (Koontz & Weihrich, 2010), and these results indicate that this competency is being reasonably well practiced in the studied institutions.

However, despite these positive findings, several critical weaknesses were identified, particularly in strategic and developmental leadership functions. Forecasting future events received one of the lowest mean scores, with over half of the respondents rating it as "Low" or "Very Low." This indicates a lack of confidence or capacity in anticipating and preparing for future challenges—an essential component of effective leadership in dynamic environments. According to Robbins and Coulter (2006), strategic foresight enables leaders to navigate uncertainty and plan for long-term success, yet the current findings suggest this area remains underdeveloped.

Delegation, motivation, and instructional leadership also emerged as major concerns. Delegating skill scored below average, with a high percentage of respondents perceiving it as inadequate. Coleman and Glover (2010) argue that delegation involves not only assigning tasks but also empowering subordinates through clear expectations, rewards, and performance evaluation. The low scores suggest that many educational managers may not be effectively utilizing this critical leadership function, potentially limiting team productivity and professional growth. Similarly, motivating subordinates was primarily rated as "Average," with no responses in the "Very High" category, pointing to a gap in recognizing and fostering staff motivation—a factor that significantly influences job satisfaction and performance (Lussier, 2009).

Instructional leadership, particularly the ability to identify and address skill gaps among subordinates, was also found to be weak. Over 70% of respondents rated the ability to identify subordinates' skill deficiencies as "Very Low," and more than half rated instructing them accordingly as "Low." This is concerning because educational managers are expected to play a pivotal role in staff development and capacity building (Bush & Bell, 2002). Without accurate identification of training needs and appropriate interventions, institutional effectiveness can be compromised.

Problem-solving and decision-making abilities showed moderate levels of competence, but there remains room for improvement. While problem identification was moderately perceived, designing workable solutions and applying scientific techniques to solve problems were rated poorly. This suggests that structured problem-solving approaches may not be widely used or understood among educational managers. Kumar and Sharma (2000) highlight that analytical skills involving diagnosis, evaluation, and planning are crucial for sustainable decision-making, underscoring the need for targeted training in these areas.

The study also revealed deficiencies in power dynamics and influence management. The ability to obtain and retain power was largely rated as "Low," indicating that educational managers may struggle with asserting authority or navigating institutional politics. Effective leadership often requires a balance of formal authority and personal influence (Bateman & Snell, 2003), and the current findings suggest that this dimension of leadership may not be adequately developed.

Interestingly, listening skills were moderately rated, with a significant portion of respondents falling into the "Average" category. Active listening is an essential component of emotional intelligence and participatory leadership (Goleman, 1998), and improving this skill could enhance communication and trust between managers and staff.

In terms of demographic characteristics, the sample was predominantly male and consisted of mid-level managers, which reflects the current gender distribution and hierarchical structure in Ethiopian private HEIs. Future studies could explore how gender and position level influence perceptions of managerial skills.

Overall, the results confirm that while certain core competencies such as communication and interpersonal relations are relatively strong, there is a pressing need for professional development in areas such as delegation, motivation, forecasting, and analytical decision-making. These findings resonate with global trends in educational management

research, which increasingly emphasize the need for holistic leadership development programs that go beyond administrative tasks to include coaching, empowerment, and strategic thinking (Coleman & Glover, 2010; Lussier, 2009).

In conclusion, the study highlights both opportunities and challenges in the current state of educational management in Addis Ababa's private higher education sector. To bridge existing gaps, institutions should invest in targeted training programs, mentorship initiatives, and continuous professional development that focus on strengthening leadership, communication, and analytical skills. Such efforts will contribute to improved institutional governance, enhanced teaching-learning processes, and greater overall effectiveness in managing educational organizations.

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