**A Study of School Principals’ Practices to Hold Teachers Accountable for Curriculum Implementation Ethiopian Primary Schools**

**Feyera Beyessa1 and Ambissa Kenea2**

1 Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; E-mail: feyebeye@gmail.com, +251912035472

2 Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia; E-mail: [Kenea2004@yahoo.com](mailto:Kenea2004@yahoo.com), +251967453314

Abstract

The study aims to explore school principals’ practices on management accountability relationship for curriculum implementation in public primary schools of east Wollega Zone, Ethiopia. To achieve these objectives, an exploratory case study type and multiple case study research design were employed. A purposive sampling technique was used. The data were collected using semi-structured interviews and document reviews. The primary sources of data were six school principals. The data were qualitatively analyzed. The study’s findings affirm that school principals’ practices through management accountability relationships were compromised for classroom curriculum implementation yet, strongly operational to hold teachers accountable for subordinate tasks. The findings of the study reveal that lowering teachers’ efficiency results, in removal from promotion and salary increments were exercised for performing subordinate tasks as strong accountability measures. If the physical presence of teachers were realized in the schools, teachers’ weakness in the implementation of curriculum did not invite rigorous penalties rather than transferring to the lower grade levels. Whereas penalties like a series of fines of up to three months' salary, downgrading, and dismissal from the job were only exercised for teachers’ code of ethics rather than weakness in the classroom. The study recommends that the government should design a new educational accountability policy that drives school principals to exercise accountability for better implementation of curriculum.

Keywords: accountability; consequences; curriculum implementation; management; practices

**1. Introduction**

In the post-1991 period, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia issued educational reforms based on policy documents entitled Education and Training Policy in 1994 that called for accountability with greater community engagement as the final and most localized level of the decentralized primary education system (MoE, 1994). Moreover, the school guideline of 2002 has brought detailed educational structures, management, and accountability relationships into the Ethiopian primary education system. These documents addressed decentralization and empowered school principals to closely follow up, control, and hold teachers accountable for curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002). Indeed, the devolution of authority has been promoted by school principals for better implementation of the curriculum by evaluating teachers' performances (MoE, 2002).

Consequently, reform initiatives in the post-2002 Ethiopian primary education system in general and the changes in school principals’ roles, in particular, necessitated the transfer of power and sharing of responsibilities in the schools’ management (MoE, 2002). These reforms provide increased accountability for meaningful implementation of the curriculum (MoE, 2002, 2007, 2015) by creating numerous shifts in accountability in general and management or bureaucratic accountability relationships between school principals and teachers in particular. Furthermore, Levitt et al. (2008) note that accountability has become a cornerstone of public sector reform in many countries and is defined as the acceptance of responsibility and being answerable for one’s actions.

Specifically, the management accountability relationship is defined as the hierarchal relationship that connects school principals and teachers that comprises internal processes for school principals to evaluate teachers’ performance to hold them accountable for classroom curriculum practices (Di Gropello, 2004; MoE, 2002; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). Explicitly, it is the relationship in which teachers’ behavior is tightly controlled by the school principals to implement the curriculum as intended. In practice, the accountability relationship can be linked to rewarding good behavior and punishing unacceptable behavior (Beckmann, 2000). It expresses the continuing concern for checks, oversight, surveillance, and institutional constraints on the exercise of power for the implementation of the curriculum (Beckmann, 2000; Maile, 2002).

In the context of this study, curriculum implementation (CI) looks at the issue from the perspective of instruction, which equates with the actual teaching and learning that happened in the class. CI is the process of translating the designed curriculum documents into classroom practices as intended (Fullan, 1999). Teachers' roles continue to be critical to the success or failure of a curriculum (Loflin, 2015). Thus, the teacher’s roles in the implementation of the curriculum are expected to be to teach the content, arrange instruction, manage the classroom, and evaluate students’ progress (Hoover, 2005; MoE, 2002). Through its curriculum, the school must educate the young people of society and cultivate in the learners certain knowledge, skills, potentials, and attitudes that will enable them to confer the expected benefits to society (Ndawi & Peasuh, 2005). In this case, the principal is either directly or indirectly in charge of the implementation of the curriculum documents at the school. Therefore, principals have great responsibilities to manage schools and to hold teachers accountable for classroom practices through close management accountability relationships (MoE, 2002).

**1.1 Problem Statement**

The role of principals and their leadership styles importantly mediates how accountability relationships are perceived and received among teachers for promoting better performances to implement the curriculum in the classroom (Davis et al., 2000; Diamond, 2007). However, various literatures highlight that school principals are no longer making the desired, noticeable impact in achieving the set objectives of the curriculum. Likewise, curriculum implementation is highly influenced by the incoherent accountability relationships and weak commitment of both school principals and teachers (Dantow et al., 2002; Datnow, 2005; Desimone, 2002). Low-performing education accountability practices by school principals are failing to meet the school curricula standards and poor learning outcomes that imply to global learning crisis (Hale et al., 2021; Le Nestour, 2021; WDR, 2018).

Similarly, a recent large-scale study in Ethiopia found that primary schools were still facing crises in learning or low performances in the implementation of curriculum (Hoddinott et al., 2019). These issues were compounded by the lack of accountability for performance within the system and the lack of earnest participation and engagement of different stakeholders (principals) in monitoring and holding teachers accountable for the implementation of the curriculum (Gershberg et al., 2023).

Even if there are various contributing factors to the students’ poor learning outcomes, a weak flow of management accountability relationship is the sufficient condition or determinant one (Komba, 2017; Pritchett, 2015) that is led by the poor implementation of the curriculum. In connection to this, the practical failure of the students in the East Wollega zone administration who, at the end of 8th grade, sat for the regional examination given by the Oromia Devolvement Association (ODA) for attending their further education in boarding or comprehensive secondary schools is shown in Table 1.

**Table1.** Number of students who completed grade 8, sat for the regional exam and were promoted to boarding secondary schools in East Wollega Zone

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Academic Years | No. of students who sat for the exam | No. of the students who prompted |
| 2022 | 291 | 10 |
| 2021 | 211 | 8 |
| 2020 | 98 | 4 |
| 2019 | 121 | 7 |
| 2018 | 11 | 3 |
| 2017 | 630 | 15 |
| 2016 | 167 | 6 |
| Total | 1529 | 53 |

**Source**: East Wollega Zone ODA filed documents

As can be seen from Table 1, out of a total of 1529 students who sat for the national exam for consecutive seven years, only 53(3.47%) were promoted to boarding secondary schools. Each year, students’ scores are low and don’t show significant improvement. This indicates that the existence of accountability in schools is in doubt. It is important to determine for what issues management accountability was exercised in the school and the types of consequence that the school principals’ practice to hold teachers accountable was considered as the central issue of this study. There may be a gap in principals’ practices to hold teachers accountable for the weak implementation of the curriculum. This real-world circumstance led the researchers to be initiated with the school principals' practice of taking ownership of the duties assigned to them to hold the teacher accountable. Thus, the main purpose of this study was to explore for what teachers’ duties the types of penalties and any factors that affect school principals to exercise the accountability of teachers must be empirically verified.

* 1. **Research Questions**

Based on the above statement of the problems, the following research questions were formulated:

1. For what purpose do school principals exercise their management accountability relationship to hold teachers accountable?
2. What are the consequences used by the school principals in holding teachers accountable for curriculum implementation?

**2. Literature Review**

Adams and Kirst (1999) indicate six categories to approaches of accountability: bureaucratic, legal, professional, political, moral, and market. In the same aspect, the World Development Report (WDR) and Lant Pritchett also propose the four accountability relationships of the education system (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). These are politics or voice, compact, management, and power. Voice accountability relationship connects curriculum users with the policymakers. Power and market accountability also interchangeably have the same approaches in connecting curriculum users with implementers. Although many forms of accountability exist simultaneously in the education system, the management accountability approach is the central thesis of this study because includes systematic efforts and actions to create teachers to be effective in curriculum implementation (MoE, 2002; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004).

This approach has a direct link with the practical role and responsibilities of school principals and teachers for the school to implement the curriculum as intended. Consistently, various scholars clarify that school management accountability relationships connect school principals with the teachers to play a great role in the enactment of the school curriculum (Ehren & Baxter, 2020; Gershberg et al., 2012; Komba, 2017; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004). It is about creating new ways to meet teachers’ responsibilities more effectively. Teachers are the frontline curriculum implementers in the classroom and they are responsible for that. This accountability relationship explains for what main purpose SMBs are connecting with the teachers (Ehren & Baxter, 2020; Gershberg et al., 2012; Komba, 2017; Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2004).

Teachers cannot be held accountable for the implementation of the curriculum for which they were not responsible, and teachers cannot be held responsible for something for which they were not autonomous to decide to do or to do otherwise (Bailey, 1980). That is autonomy refers to the ability to act independently, especially in decision-making, without being heavily influenced by external powers, factors, or interests, and the management accountability relationship necessarily involves autonomy (WDR, 2004). On the other hand, when a school leader’s decision-making process is compromised, school success is severely undermined (Smith, 2017). Importantly, a bureaucratic approach to decision-making may indicate a lack of autonomy.

Carnoy et al. (2003) indicate that the management accountability relationship is an internal accountability relationship that operates at the level of personal responsibility that teachers have for students in their classrooms. This relationship is arguably the most influential and advanced, emphasizing the importance of public school curriculum implementation by connecting strong connections between school principals and teachers for improved curriculum implementation (Pritchett, 2015; WDR, 2003). Management accountability relationships are actions that drive teachers to implement curriculum (WDR, 2004). Principals should spend more time observing classrooms, engaging teachers in discussions about instruction and curriculum, actually participating in teacher team meetings, discussing issues with students, and even engaging with students who are discussing curricular issues (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017).

In Ethiopia, school principals have been empowered to carry out the majority of educational activities, including the implementation of the curriculum, through a management accountability relationship with teachers (MoE, 2002). Indeed, school principals must strike a balance between honoring education policy or guideline expectations and integrating what they value into their schools. The practices used by school principals to hold teachers accountable must take into account the context of a certain nation, region, district, and school to assess whether or not the curriculum is being implemented successfully. The curriculum will be practiced in the classroom without wasting any time if the teachers' classroom duties are properly monitored and the essential actions are taken. On the other hand, if there is no punishment for teachers who do not perform their responsibilities, failure in curriculum implementation exists. In this regard, if teachers poorly discharge their duties and responsibilities, school principals are expected to hold teachers accountable to improve the implementation of the curriculum by using simple disciplinary penalties (oral warning, written warning, and fines up to one month's salary) to rigorous disciplinary penalties (fines up to three months' salary, downgrading, and dismissal) mechanisms to satisfy the needs of curriculum users (Proclamation, 2002).

When it comes to supporting the success of school curriculum implementation, school principals may be the most essential element of educational institutions. If the school principals’ monitoring and efforts are not accompanied by rewards and sanctions, it will be difficult to implement the curriculum as planned. Moreover, the sharing of management accountability relationships with teachers appears to be crucial in promoting change in the implementation of curriculum and teacher commitment to improving professional practices.

**3. Materials and Methods**

**3.1 Research Design and Approach**

To provide an in-depth insight into the management accountability relationship between school principals and teachers in a given natural context, multiple (holistic) case study designs are particularly adopted (Yin, 2003). To understand this relationship comprehensively, the subjective aspect of accountability relationships (Hall et al., 2007) helped me use an exploratory case study as a constructive approach to qualitative research.

**3.2 Samples and Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was employed (Creswell, 2002) to select the research sites and the participants from whom pertinent information to understand the central phenomenon could be obtained. So, the East Wollega Administrative Zone was selected purposefully because it is one of the Oromia Regional State zones that consistently underperform in promoting students to ODA boarding secondary schools. Six primary schools were purposefully chosen as research sites from three districts in the zone based on their stability status. Based on their positions, six school principals were also selected from their respective schools as respondents for this study. We were initiated to explore school principals’ practices on management accountability for curriculum implementation based on their experiences and personal reflections.

**3.3 Data Collection Instruments**

A hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy that also enhances data credibility (Patton, 1990; Yin, 2003). The research uses triangulation in the data collection to increase the reliability as well as the internal validity of the research (Merriam, 1998). Hence, we used interviews and document reviews as data collection tools.

**3.3.1 Semi-structured Interviews**

Interview questions serve as the central data collection tool for this study. Individual interviews provide me access to detailed, individualized information. Because of this, I developed and employed a semi-structured face-to-face interview approach with students for this study as a key information source for my research topics. It was assumed that these interviewees would provide authentic information related to the study subject. All interviewees were available and volunteered for a tape recorder, which led us to productive methods of data collection. The interviews ranged from 50 to 65 minutes. All interviews were conducted in *Afan Oromo* (Oromo Language). This is because it is the medium of instruction in primary schools and the mother tongue of the respondents. Then, all recorded interviews were transcribed into the English language to allow for analysis.

**3.3.2 Non-participant Observation**

In the primary schools explored in the study, non-participant observation offered a more detailed description of group dynamics and contextualized insights into the issue of interest. Indeed, observational evidence is frequently helpful in providing extra information about the topic that is being investigated. We monitored the interviewees’ reactions, including tone of voice, non-verbal behavior, and any other changes observed throughout the interview, and we jotted down notes wherever possible throughout the process. We observed school settings that are related to my research themes. We compared the results of this thematic analysis to the themes uncovered from the interview analysis to verify the findings or add to them.

**3.3.3 Documents**

In addition to interviews and non-participant observations, documentary reviews are a valuable source of data. Official and unofficial documents from sampled schools and education offices were used as data-gathering instruments. Unofficial documents were minutes, teachers’ efficiency rubrics, and reports. Official documents were education policy and school management guideline that indicate the duties and responsibilities of education for stakeholders, with particular reference to the implementation of the school curriculum. Although primary data are very critical in answering the principal research questions in this study, secondary sources were also utilized as they broadened my understanding of theories, key concepts, and empirical results. It is also of paramount importance to compare and contrast Ethiopian education policies and guidelines with the current views and practices of the global educational accountability system.

**3.4 Method of data analysis**

Upon completing the data presentation, we proceeded with the data analysis thematically. This is because Braun and Clarke (2006) argued that thematic analysis should be a foundational method for qualitative analysis, as it provides core skills for conducting many other forms of qualitative analysis. After we received the transcript, we coded each of them based on keywords from the interview questions and the conceptual frameworks of the study. Respondents were coded for data analysis as School Principals One (SP1),…, and SP6.

**4. Results**

Since schools are administered under the same zone education office, school principals are guided and monitored through similar formal and informal commands and enforcements. Schools are in a similar situation and school principals use almost similar accountability relationships with the teachers. Teachers have primary responsibility for implementing high-quality curriculum, but they are expected to do far more than instruction that was discussed one after the other.

**4.1 Practices of School Principles**

This section tries to address what issues school principals exercise to hold teachers accountable for the implementation of the curriculum are the central issue. According to the Ethiopian primary school guideline (MoE, 2002), teachers should be held accountable for their duties and responsibilities to implement the curriculum effectively in the classroom. The purpose of the management accountability relationship is to improve adequate curriculum implementation. However, all principals highlighted the critical issues about subordinate tasks to CI (such as students’ test scores, promotions, dropouts, and enrollment) that were seen as primarily significant for school principals to exercise their management accountability relationship to hold teachers accountable. These tasks increasingly form part of teacher evaluations. In the management accountability relationship, there was also an approach to that mythical association between teachers’ efficiency results and students’ results as strong accountability vis-à-vis successful curriculum implementation. Thus, teachers are blindly accepted as being held accountable for improving students’ test scores to get good efficiency results. Altogether; school principals eagerly reported that:

As directed by the WEOs, principals assume that if students' test scores improve, they will generalize that the curriculum is being implemented effectively in the classroom (SP2). If students' results do not show improvement by 5 to 10% from the previous year, then teachers will be punished. (SP5)

Evidently, from a document review of teachers’ evaluation formats given by WEOs, one of the expected roles of the teachers is to improve students’ results by 10% from their previous or last year's average score. This means, that by receiving commandments from WEOs, school principals were exercising their management accountability relationship to force teachers to enhance students’ results by giving less emphasis to the teachers’ curriculum practices in the classroom.

Schools are forced by curriculum and instruction experts of WEOs to be ranked by their promotion rate and the school-wide average students’ scores. Document analysis shows that, as one of the evaluation criteria, teachers are evaluated by the number of promoted students. This score is also used for Woreda school rankings, so school principals are very interested in making their schools compute. Thus, principals exercise their devotion to students’ promotion as an additional management accountability relationship to evaluate and hold teachers accountable. This matters because school principals’ great management accountability relationship functions are to be blessed in front of the WEOs’ experts and to satisfy the needs of education offices. Principals said that:

The big issue is promoting all students (100%) to the next class. These issues are inextricably linked to teacher evaluation and efficiency results. Principals do have an informal command from the WEOs to do so (SP3). Principals have solid commandments/orders from WEOs’ C and I experts to hold teachers accountable for promoting students because all students are expected to be promoted to the next class to enhance the rate of promotion at the WEOs, the Zone Education Office, the Regional Education Bureau, and the country’s Ministry of Education too to get international funding. That is why principals are forced to exercise their right to hold teachers accountable. (SP4 and SP6)

From the document review of teachers’ evaluation format, students’ dropout and enrollment rates are also another serious issue that led school principals to pay attention to holding teachers accountable. In this case, teachers should focus on and act to reduce students’ dropout rates and increase students’ enrollment rates for their efficiency results. Because these matters are amazing and chronic, school principals monitor teachers to find those dropped-out students to improve the school's ranking. Some participants witnessed that:

The majority of students do not like to attend school regularly. They have little hope for their future careers (SP1 and SP2). Students may drop out if they get a survival income (SP3). Principals urge forcing teachers to travel from village to village on foot to search for dropped students. This is because WEOs’ C and I experts usually evaluate and force principals to increase enrollment and reduce the number of dropout students. (SP5)

The existing management accountability relationship was also strongly exercised to hold teachers accountable for informal and bureaucratic messages and reports. This relationship has placed less emphasis on holding teachers accountable for elements that contribute to the failure of curriculum implementation, such as classroom curriculum practices and instructional time waste. One principal was deeply concerned about the ideological incompatibility of bureaucratic intervention and educational management guidelines.

There are top-down bureaucratic messages from WEOs about the number of dropouts and enrollment students that are eventually passed down to schools; they usually contradict the written guidelines for school management documents. These messages come through the telephone in their hidden form and in oral speech in meetings that allow school principals to hold teachers accountable. I have little autonomy to resist the WEO’s command. (SP4)

Since school principals are working under similar experts, they discuss their school experiences:

Students generally dislike going to school regularly, and they see this as a democratic issue. They are not held accountable for their attendance or classroom activities (SP3). Students do have side jobs that supplement their daily income. Students are usually absent from the class to support their families in a variety of agricultural harvests (SP6). Students usually assume that learning is for the jobless… they drop out of their education. School principals consume their time and energy trying to bring those dropped students back. (SP2)

**4.2 Consequences to Ensure Management Accountability Relationships**

One of the ways of ensuring the accountability of curriculum implementers in Ethiopia is by implementing simple and rigorous disciplinary penalties. The accountability measures are either simple or rigorous, which is applicable if curriculum implementers do not discharge their duties and responsibilities (Proclamation, 2002). Nevertheless in practice,

If teachers agree to perform the directions given by WEOs like subordinate roles, no punishment (SP6). If teachers do not perform their content and pedagogical practices they then give advice and oral warnings are one approach (SP3). If teachers cannot teach, they will be transferred to the lower grade levels as punishment (SP1 and SP2). So far, no teacher has been severely punished for the problems related to teaching-learning unless it is a disciplinary problem.

Similarly, regarding the case of school discipline against teachers, the leaders said that:

Repeated advice was put forward as the solution to improve their performance (SP5 and SP6). If teachers show deficiencies in their work they will be threatened, counseled, given short-term training, and not fired or dismissed from the job (SP2 and SP4). Despite the lack of implementation of the implementation of the curriculum, the practice of teacher firing has never been implemented so far. (SP2)

The orders from WEOs are informal, as I reviewed the school management guideline documents,

When looking at the documentation of the penalties mentioned by the teachers above, the same guideline does not prescribe these penalties. However, teachers find it difficult to implement teacher points in their evaluation rubrics.

**5. Discussion of the Findings**

For school principals to successfully carry out their respective duties and responsibilities, they must constantly identify ways of improving the implementation of the curriculum in both the short and long term through management accountability relationships(MoE, 2002; Ramsteck et al., 2015). According to MoE (2002), the main role of the teachers is to implement the curriculum as intended and school principals can hold teachers accountable for better implementation of the curriculum. Contemporary management accountability culture is increasingly defined by data related to subordinate tasks. School principals' views and management accountability practices are often impacted since they are demonstrated to be mediators between the school and WEOs. School principal’s monitoring of teachers has been used but often infrequently and is most effective when observations focus on easily identified subordinate tasks.

The finding of this study shows informal messages from WEOs powerfully penetrate school principals’ autonomy to practice management accountability relationships seriously to hold teachers accountable for subordinate activities rather than teachers' roles in the classroom. Similarly, the study conducted by Tucker and Codding (Tucker & Codding, 2003) shows that principals in low-income inner-city schools in the United States reported mostly dealing with emergencies instead of curriculum and instructional issues. The complexity and variety of tasks can create conflicting demands on teachers’ time and commitment, complicating efforts to hold them accountable for the quality of instruction.

The findings of the study further indicate that subordinate roles of the teachers have direct associations with teachers’ efficiency results that seriously threaten teachers who incorrectly perform the top-down commandment to satisfy the needs of the WEOs officials. Yet there is no logical association between teachers’ evaluation result and their performance, indeed teachers are majorly evaluated for their curricula practices. This association is mythical to threaten teachers and it usually contradicts the written guidelines for school management (MoE, 2002). No school accountability policy directs school principals and teachers to boost subordinate roles and reports.

School principals have been given the power and responsibility to encourage teachers to enhance their efficiency, address ethical problems on the part of teachers, facilitate a favorable situation for the teaching-learning process, and appropriately manage the overall educational activities in the schools (MoE, 2002). Conversely, the findings of the study also reveal that if a teacher does not increase students’ exam results, does not increase students’ promotion rates, does not improve students’ enrollment rates, or does not minimize the students’ dropout rate, then strong accountability measures or consequences will be practical against the teacher. These measures were lowering teachers’ efficiency resulting in the rejection of promotion from one level to the next and salary increments. This is because teachers were intentionally treated with a mixture of bureaucratic power and efficiency results.

On the other hand, a study conducted in Tanzania showed that a weak management accountability relationship of school principals resulted in 47% of teachers not teaching 14% who do not attend schools, and 33% who attend schools but do not attend class (Bank, 2016). Similarly, the study’s results indicate that the penalty of firing curriculum implementers has never been applied at the school if teachers show any weakness in their duties. This is because there are no contractual agreements between schools (principals) and teachers and both are government employers. However, if a student complains about the lack of curriculum implementation, there is no severe punishment except for calling teachers and advising, warning, and frightening and transferring them to the lower grade levels. This accountability approach makes curriculum implementation, as a matter of priority, not implemented properly and causes them to implement the issue of another management order.

One of the ways of ensuring the accountability of teachers in Ethiopia is to regulate through teacher evaluation, which plays an important role in determining teachers’ benefits (promotion and salary increase). When teachers feel accountable they attempt to unconsciously perform these activities for not to miss these benefits. On the other hand, there are penalties such as a series of fines of up to three months' salary, downgrading, and dismissal from the job. These are applicable for high-stake management accountability relationships functioning in the internal practices of schools. These applications are for if teachers are addicted to alcohol and smoking; sexual misconduct; when teachers are absent without reasonable evidence.

**5. Conclusions**

School principals are responsible for running schools and ensuring education procedures, rules, and curriculums are followed at the school level. Nevertheless, this study concludes that school principals have missed the opportunity to use management accountability sanctions for subordinate roles and reports to hold teachers accountable, rather than for curriculum implementation, by making an unnecessary link between these reports and teachers' efficiency results. A sense of skepticism and superficial evaluation of teachers by school principals had weakened the management accountability relationship. By compromising the roles of management accountability relationships and identifying teachers’ presence in the school compound, school principals had little practice in holding teachers accountable through rigorous and formal punishments rather than giving professional advice and oral suggestions.

It was discovered that school principals did not practice an accountability relationship as stated in the proclamation and the school management guideline for the failure of the implementation of the curriculum because their roles were manipulated by external WEOs’ pressure they had weak autonomy and conciliation practices. This study discloses that penalties in the proclamation such as serious of fines up to three months’ salary, downgrading, and dismissal from the job were exercised only for unique teachers’ code of ethics (e.g., smoking, unreasonable absenteeism, and addiction to alcoholic and others) than classroom curriculum implementation failures. The findings of this study were limited to the school principals’ practices at primary schools. Further study may be needed on teachers', parents', and students’ views to come up with comparative results among different groups of students to acquire a more in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

**Acknowledgments**

We would also like to express our appreciation to the sample respondents for their enthusiastic participation in the data-gathering process.

**Funding**

Since this work is a section of a PhD dissertation, no direct financial support was provided.

**Disclosure statement**

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author (s).

**References**

Adams, J. E., & Kirst, M. W. (1999). New demands and concepts for educational accountability: Striving for results in an era of excellence. *Handbook of research on educational administration*, *2*, 463-487.

Bailey, C. (1980). The Autonomous Teacher’, in H. Sockett (Ed.) Accountability in the English Educational System. In. Hodder and Stoughton.

Bank, W. (2016). *Tanzania Service Delivery Indicators Report:Health and Education*.

Beckmann, J. (2000). Democratic management: An exploration of some key concepts and their implications for the management of a university academic department. *Inaugural address*, *23*.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Carnoy, M., Elmore, R., & Siskin, L. (2003). *The new accountability: High schools and high-stakes testing*. Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2002). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative* (Vol. 7). Prentice Hall Upper Saddle River, NJ.

Dantow, A., Hubbard, L., & Mehan, H. (2002). Extending Educational Reform. *From One School to Many, London and New York: RoutledgeFalmer*. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203993965>

Datnow, A. (2005). Happy marriage or uneasy alliance? The relationship between comprehensive school reform and state accountability systems. *Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk*, *10*(1), 115-138. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327671espr1001_6>

Davis, D. R., Pool, J. E., & Mits-Cash, M. (2000). Issues in implementing a new teacher assessment system in a large urban school district: Results of a qualitative field study. *Journal of personnel evaluation in education*, *14*, 285-306.

Desimone, L. (2002). How can comprehensive school reform models be successfully implemented? *Review of educational research*, *72*(3), 433-479. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543072003433>

Di Gropello, E. (2004). *Education decentralization and accountability relationships in Latin America* (Vol. 3453). World Bank Publications. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1596/1813-9450-3453>

Diamond, J. B. (2007). Where the rubber meets the road: Rethinking the connection between high-stakes testing policy and classroom instruction. *Sociology of Education*, *80*(4), 285-313.

Ehren, M., & Baxter, J. (2020). Trust, accountability and capacity: Three building blocks of education system reform. In *Trust, Accountability and Capacity in Education System Reform* (pp. 1-29). Routledge.

Fullan, M. (1999). Change forces: The sequel. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer. In: Taylor & Francis.

Gershberg, A. I., González, P. A., & Meade, B. (2012). Understanding and improving accountability in education: A conceptual framework and guideposts from three decentralization reform experiences in Latin America. *World Development*, *40*(5), 1024-1041.

Gershberg, A. I., Kefale, A., & Hailu, B. H. (2023). The Political Economy of Educational Reform and Learning in Ethiopia (1941-2021).

Hale, T., Angrist, N., Goldszmidt, R., Kira, B., Petherick, A., Phillips, T., Webster, S., Cameron-Blake, E., Hallas, L., & Majumdar, S. (2021). A global panel database of pandemic policies (Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker). *Nature human behaviour*, *5*(4), 529-538. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-021-01079-8>

Hall, A. T., Bowen, M. G., Ferris, G. R., Royle, M. T., & Fitzgibbons, D. E. (2007). The accountability lens: A new way to view management issues. *Business Horizons*, *50*(5), 405-413. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2007.04.005>

Hoddinott, J., Iyer, P., Sabates, R., & Woldehanna, T. (2019). *Evaluating large-scale education reforms in Ethiopia*. <https://doi.org/10.35489/bsg-rise-wp_2020/034>

Hoover, J. P., J. (2005). Components of curriculum implementation. In. <https://ptgmedia.pearsoncmg.com/images/9780137034833/downloads/Hoover_Ch_1_p3_14.pdf>

Komba, A. A. (2017). Educational Accountability Relationships and Students’ Learning Outcomes in Tanzania’s Public Schools. *SAGE Open*, *7*(3), 215824401772579. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017725795>

Le Nestour, A. (2021). *Demand for schooling in rural Senegal* University of Otago]. <https://ourarchive.otago.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10523/10914/LeNestourAlexisPhD.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Levitt, R., Janta, B., & Wegrich, K. (2008). Accountability of Teachers: Literature Review. Technical Report. *RAND Corporation*. <https://www.rand.org/pubs/technical_reports/TR606.html>

Loflin, J. W. (2015). Relationship between teacher fidelity and physical education student outcomes. *The Physical Educator*, *72*(5). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18666/TPE-2015-V72-I5-7001>

Maile, S. (2002). Accountability: An essential aspect of school governance. *South African journal of education*, *22*(4), 326-331.ttps://doi.org/310.1787/888932957346.

Merriam, S. (1998). *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education. Revised and Expanded from" Case Study Research in Education."*. ERIC.

MoE. (1994). *Ethiopian education and training policy*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Unpublished Policy Document.

MoE. (2002). *Educational organization and, community participation and Financial Guideline*. Addis Ababa,Ethiopia: EMPDA.

MoE. (2007). *General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP)*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

MoE. (2015). *Education Sector Development Program V Program action plan*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Federal Ministry of Education. <https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/default/files/ressources/ethiopia_esdp_v.pdf>

Ndawi, O., & Peasuh, M. (2005). Accountability and school obligation: a case study of society’s expectations of the schools curriculum in Zimbabwe. *South African journal of education*, *25*(3), 210-115.

Ornstein, A. C., & Hunkins, F. P. (2017). *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles, and Issues, eBook*. Pearson Higher Ed.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, inc.

Pritchett, L. (2015). Creating education systems coherent for learning outcomes: Making the transition from schooling to learning. *Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE)*. <https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/2020-11/RISE_WP-005_Pritchett.pdf>

Proclamation. (2002). *Ethiopian Federal Civil Service proclamation. Negarit Gazeta, No. 262*. Addis Abeba.

Ramsteck, C., Muslic, B., Graf, T., Maier, U., & Kuper, H. (2015). Data-based school improvement: The role of principals and school supervisory authorities within the context of low-stakes mandatory proficiency testing in four German states. *International Journal of Educational Management*.

Smith, W. C. (2017). National testing policies and educator based testing for accountability: The role of selection in student achievement. *OECD Journal: Economic Studies*, *2016*(1), 131-149.

Tucker, M. S., & Codding, J. B. (2003). *The principal challenge: Leading and managing schools in an era of accountability*. John Wiley & Sons.

WDR. (2003). Making service work for the people. In. The world Bank and Oxford University press.

WDR. (2004). World Development Report. Making service work for the people. In. World bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/5986/WDR%202004%20-%20English.pdf>

WDR. (2018). World Development Report: Learning to realize education’s promise. In. The World Bank. <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/pdf/9781464810961.pdf/>

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (3rd.ed.)*. Sage.

.