A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT AND THEIR COMPETENCE AT NO. (1) BASIC EDUCATION HIGH SCHOOL IN HPA-AN TOWNSHIP, KAREN STATE, MYANMAR

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Abstract: This study aimed to explore teachers' administrative support perspectives and competence at No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hpa-an, Karen State, Myanmar. The study objectives were (1) To identify teachers' perceptions towards administrative support, (2) To identify teachers' perceptions towards their competence (3) To determine the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and their competence at the selected school. Two parts of the questionnaire were administrative support, adopted from Methers' Administrative Support Survey (MASS), 2013, and teacher competence, adopted from Medley's (1977). Seventy-five full-time teachers were surveyed in this study. The study data were analyzed by frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Pearson product-moment coefficient. The study findings showed that teachers' perceptions of administrative support and competence were high. Moreover, the relationship between teachers' perceptions of administrative support and competence was significant.

Introduction

The school is a way to help people develop their capacity to live up to their real lives and the foundation for improving the community, politics, and economics (Ekinci & Acar, 2019). In the 21st Century, facing the challenges regarding teachers' teaching-learning approaches and their objectives is one of the obvious challenges because of the advanced technologies and new information (Rao, 2004). According to Ariratana, Sirisookslip, & Ngang

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(2015), great educators, supervisors, instructor abilities, administrations, devices, teaching materials, and instructional methods are provided to be utilized in the 21st Century educational leaders attempting to discover approaches to educate students better.

It is assumed that teachers' relationship dissatisfaction with principals and students is "one of the reasons for leaving their career" (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2008, p. 2). In other words, a lack of support from administrators such as teaching materials, constructive feedback, open discussion and conversation, personal improvement, and growth also causes dropping the teachers' self-assured and competence. Consequently, teachers' insufficient skills and knowledge also worsen students' academic achievements. The quality of teachers is linked to the quality of education, and skilled teachers usually have good behavior, good knowledge, and good quality (Ninlawan, 2015).

In order to educate students productively and successfully, teachers must be highly competent and able to deliver various teaching approaches, including child-centered ones. Furthermore, teachers should have the evaluation ability to assess students' performance and learning improvement by utilizing appropriate assessment tools. Evaluation is the key factor in analyzing students' achievement and academic growth. It also helps the teachers to realize how well the learners perform. Diana (2011) recognized that teachers should have so many aptitudes, basic knowledge, and expertise to become effective instructors in the study field with the ability to do the new change plan.

In reviewing the teacher-principal interactions at Myanmar public schools, it was apparently going top-down systems. Although education in Myanmar is now entering a reform period, administrators have been largely unproductive in implementing instructional leadership. Teachers rarely had the chance to involve in the decision-making process, and they just had to accept what the principals and education leaders made the decisions or plans. Most principals at public schools in Myanmar practiced autocratic management rather than collaboration with teachers. An excellent and collective teachers-principal relationship can positively impact students' achievements and academic growth. Thus, exploring teachers' perceptions of administrative support they get from principals and evaluating their capacities would benefit schools' and students' achievements.

Research Objectives
1. To identify teachers' perceptions towards administrative support at No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hpa-an, Karen State, Myanmar
2. To identify teachers' perceptions towards their competence at No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hpa-an, Karen State, Myanmar
3. To determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and their competence at No. (1) Basic Education High School in Hpa-an, Karen State, Myanmar

Literature Review
Principal support for teachers has been a key aspect of school leadership. Methner (2013) formulated five components of administrative support:(1) Instructional Improvement, (2) Feedback, (3) Discourse, (4) Reflection and Growth, and (5) Anxiety to explore the fundamental aspects of a contemporary teacher-principal relationship.

In the era of accountability, the role of principals throughout instructional improvement is vital and sometimes challenging, as leaders must not only serve as instructional leaders but also in many other capacities (Hambright & Franco,2008). Principals are expected to oversee the school's general issues, outcomes and teachers' professional development, and students' achievement.

Feedback is basically beneficial to all developments of the school, especially principals to teachers, in order to improve teachers' instructional process. Productive principals must correctly identify which form of feedback is appropriate for a particular teacher. Some teachers may need substantial support, while others merely need reinforcement and constructive strengthening. In addition, (Timperley, 2005) asserted, "in order to provide teachers with feedback beyond standardized teaching, principals required in-depth knowledge of disciplinary and pedagogical content."

Discourse is integral to the feedback process and stresses the interaction and relationship between administrator and instructor. Cosner (2010) further emphasizes the importance of teacher-principal discourse, "improving the quality of school-wide interactions includes not only proactive steps to stimulate and maintain positive teacher interactions but also critical interventions when an individual or collective interactions between teachers become unproductive and unhealthy."

Though not specifically addressed in data-driven assessments, teachers' and administrators' reflections and growth are vital for instructional improvements. Teachers benefit from reflection, and principals get advantage

from it, considering teachers' professional growth. Zimmerman (2011) supported that reflection can help leaders determine unproductive practices, adjust behaviors, self-efficacy values, strengths, and weaknesses, and potentially formulate a successful learning plan.

Principals' evaluations and communications to teacher's anxiety must be taken thoughtfully in determining the teacher-principal relationship and effectiveness (Gold et al., 2010). According to Mintz (2007), "work stress for teachers can come from "workload, the uncertainty of position, school structure and ethos, management style, evaluation by others, poor working conditions and student behavior and discipline problems" (p. 155). When job descriptions and positions are not clear, it makes teachers confused and stressed at the workplace. They must pay attention to various workloads such as teaching, school management, and discipline problems. Moreover, teachers get stressed when others judge them without discussing and conversing.

Medley's (1977) theory of teacher competence is characterized as a collection of knowledge, skills, attitudes, abilities, and beliefs that people need in order to succeed in a profession. Medley proposed four major components in determining teachers' competency, which are (1) Teaching and Learning Competence, (2) Child-Centered Approach Competence, (3) Evaluation (4) Professionalism.

During the time discoursing teaching and learning competence, it is imperative to comprehend the teaching competence and teacher competence so as not to misinterpret its concept. Hagger and McIntyre (2006) supported a clear definition of teaching competence and teacher competence to eliminate misinterpretation. Teaching competence defines as the teacher's function in the classroom, thus directly related to the teaching skills. Teacher competence refers to the professionalism of teachers, which has to do with personal characteristics, attitudes, and ethical standards that emerge during the teacher performs their duty as an educator.

According to Medley (1977), a child-centered approach is an ideal way to develop a positive attitude, enthusiasm, and engagement of students and the learning environment in the various areas and address children's behavioral problems. The learner-centered approach, also known as child-centered, applies to active learning, student involvement, and other student-centered practices (Weimer,2012). These days, child-centered teaching has widely become vital in the 21st education trend. Teachers were encouraged to apply a child-centered approach to teaching, providing students with lesson-related activities and creating project-based or activities-based learning assignments.

It is crucial for teachers to possess the ability to evaluate in order to analyze their task quality and students' performance and progress. Medley (1977) argued that evaluation refers to the mechanism by which students are judged and graded in relation to their achievement during study over time. There are two major types of evaluation widely performed at most educational institutions. The first is a formative assessment that shows teachers about the performance, knowledge, and skills of their pupils. This information can be used to prepare lessons or remediation to enhance the pupils' results. The second form of assessment, summative evaluation, provides a picture of how well a student performs in a particular subject over time on a set of specific learning objectives.

Professionalism is related to teachers' skills and abilities in a particular role which they are taking and subject-related expertise at the school or institution. It is also a commitment to serve a wide range of skills to the school. Teachers expect a good personality, attitude, and work ethic to contribute to teaching and learning to boost professionalism. It is the responsibility of teachers to continuously improve, understand the underlying pedagogy, have a much broader view of what education requires, and take a more critical approach to the job.

Conceptual Framework
The researcher aimed to explore the level of teachers' perceptions of administrative support and their competence and determine the relationship between teachers' perceptions of administrative support and their competence at No. (1) high school in Hpa-an, Karen State, Myanmar.
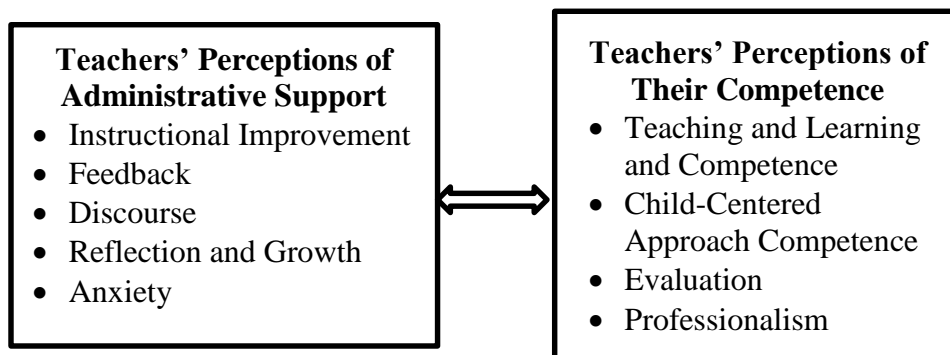
Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support	Teachers' Perceptions of Their Competence
• Instructional Improvement • Feedback • Discourse • Reflection and Growth • Anxiety	• Teaching and Learning and Competence • Child-Centered Approach Competence • Evaluation • Professionalism

Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

Research Methodology
This study was a quantitative and correlational research design. The researcher used mean and standard deviation to identify teachers' perceptions of

administrative support and competence. *Pearson product-moment coefficients* were used to determine the significant relationship between teachers' perceptions towards administrative support and their competence.

The researcher adopted questionnaires from the previous researchers for this study. Questionnaires were translated from the English version to the Myanmar version since the participants in this study are from Myanmar. There were three parts of a questionnaire which are mentioned as follows.

Part I: Personal Information Questionnaire
In this section, the researcher formulated four questionnaires of demographic profiles of teachers, which consisted of teachers' age, grade level of teaching, qualification, and years of teaching experience.

Part II: Administrative Support
The researcher adopted this study's questionnaire from Methner's Administrative Support Survey (2013). There were 22 items for five components of the administrative support area: Instructional Improvement (1-5), Feedback (6-9), Discourse (1—12), Reflection and Growth (13-17), and Anxiety (18-22).

Part III: Teacher Competence
The questionnaire for the teacher competence area was adopted from the previous researcher called Ribeiro (2018) based on Medley Theory (1977). This area had 30 questionnaire items which are Teaching and Learning Competence (1-6), Child-Centered Approach Competence (7-15), Evaluation (16-24), and Professionalism (25-30).

Results
Research Objective One
Table 1. *Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support (n=75)*

No.	Administrative support	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Instructional Improvement	3.91	.508	High
2.	Feedback	3.84	.523	High
3.	Discourse	3.67	.503	High
4.	Reflection and Growth	3.70	.542	High
5.	Anxiety	3.57	.475	High
	Total	3.74	.445	High

Table 1 presents the summary of the mean and standard deviation of teachers' perceptions towards administrative support, which consisted of five components mentioned in the table above. Interestingly, all components of

administrative support appeared "High," and the total mean score was also "High," with a mean score of 3.74. The highest mean score was the "Instructional Improvement" component with a mean score of 3.91, and "Feedback" had a 3.84 mean score which was the second-highest component. The rest of the components "(Discourse, Reflection and Growth, Anxiety)" fell within the range of 3.51-4.50, which is also interpreted as "High."

Research Objective Two
Table 2. *Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation of Teachers' Perceptions of Their Competence (n=75)*

No.	Teacher Competence	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.	Teaching and Learning Competence	3.82	.468	High
2.	Child-Centered Approach Competence	3.93	.504	High
3.	Evaluation Competence	3.87	.532	High
4.	Professionalism	3.87	.475	High
	Total	3.87	.475	High

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation data of teachers' perceptions of their competence. The total mean concluded with a score of 3.87, which was noted as "High," and all components also described a "High" level for teachers' competence. All the components fell within the range of 3.51 – 4.50, which is interpreted as "High." "Child-Centered Approach Competence" resulted in the highest mean score (3.93), while "Teaching and Learning Competence" had only (a 3.82) mean score.

Research Objective Three
Table 3: Pearson Correlational Coefficient Between Teachers' Perceptions of Administrative Support and Their Competence (n=75)

		Teachers' Perceptions of their Competence	Conclusion
Teachers' Perceptions of the Administrative Support	Pearson Correlation	.744**	There is a significant relationship between the two variables
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

Table 3 describes the Pearson correlation coefficient data between teachers' perception of administrative support and their competence. Administrative support and teacher competence were highly correlated *r = .744, p = .000.* Correlation is significant at the *.01* level (2-tailed). Thus, it is determined that

there is a significant relationship between teachers' perception of administrative support and their competence.

Discussion

The study showed that teachers had high perspectives on administrative support at the selected school. There were five components within the *"Administrative Support"* area. Obviously, all the components in this administrative support area of teachers' perception were "High." It is considered that teachers have strong perspectives on administration assistance which has an impact on their teaching and learning improvement and personal growth. Among all the components, *"Instructional Improvement"* rated the highest mean score (3.91) compared to others. According to this finding, teachers are highly agreed that principal support improves their instruction and lesson planning, gives new ideas and styles or techniques for teaching, and facilitates collaboration among teachers for instructional improvement.

In contrast, "Anxiety" within the administrative support area was the lowest component with the mean score (3.57), but it is still determined as a "High" perception of teachers according to the Likert scale interpretation. It is considered that teachers have less worry and nervousness regarding their needs, performance, and experience in general. However, they still feel uncomfortable when they talk to the principal.

Furthermore, teachers' perceptions of their competence at No. (1) high school appeared to be high level according to the data analysis with a mean score (3.87). It is generally determined that teachers have strong perceptions regarding their competence which they apply in their career. The study finding showed that teachers' competence matters to students' achievement and has impact of the school growth.

"Child-Centered Approach Competence" was the highest components with the mean score (3.93). The study showed that teachers at the selected school are good at student-centered teaching. Teachers use available resources and technology for their teaching. In addition, they provide feedback and clear information to learners throughout lesson. Teachers create safe learning environment for students and use the instruction time effectively. Moreover, teachers build a friendly interpersonal relationship with students.

However, teachers have low perception of *"Teaching and Learning Competence"* component which is considered as the important component in teacher competence area. According to the statistics finding, teachers are not able establishing challenging expectations for students' learning outcomes.

Teachers work with individual and group effectively and demonstrate adequate knowledge sharing in subject matters, but teachers expect continuous improvement related to academic, social, and emotional, which they still need to keep fostering for further development.

There was a significant relationship between teachers' perceptions of administrative support and their competence as Pearson Correlation value $r = .744$ the sig 2-tailed value was 0.00. The significant value is accepted at the 0.01 level, so the researcher claimed that there was a significant relationship between the two variables and accepted the research hypothesis (H1) and rejected the null hypothesis (H0).

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