



**Leadership Preparation and Development of Secondary School Principals in
Oromia National Regional State of Ethiopia: Policies, Practices and Challenges**

By:

Haile Getaneh Terfassa

**A Dissertation Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies of Addis Ababa
University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in Educational Policy and Leadership**

2 June 2025

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

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Certificate of Statement

I hereby certify that this dissertation constitutes my own work; where the language of others is used set forth, quotation marks, ideas, expressions or writings of others were used, I have given appropriate credit.

Signature  _____

Haile Getaneh Terfassa

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A dissertation entitled "Leadership Preparation and Development of Secondary School Principals in Oromia National Regional State of Ethiopia: Policies, Practices and Challenges"

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
EdAd	Educational Administration
EdPM	Educational Planning and Management
EDT	Education Development Trust
EEDRM	Ethiopian Education Development Road-map
EFDR	Ethiopian Federal Democratic Republic
ESDP	Education Sector Development Program
ESSLCE	Ethiopian Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination
ETDP	Ethiopian Teacher's Development Program
ETP	Education and Training Policy
MAScL	Master of Arts Degree in School Leadership
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
NPSSPE	National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia
OEB	Oromia Education Bureau
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSZSF	Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfinne
PGCPS	Post Graduate Certificate in Primary School Supervision
PGCSS	Post Graduate Certificate in Secondary School Supervision
PGDSL	Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership
REB	Regional Education Bureau

RLA	Rainwater Leadership Alliance
SLPPS	School Leadership Preparation and Practice Survey
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WEO	Woreda Education Office

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Abstract

This study sought to explore and contextualize the practices and challenges associated with the preparation and development of principals in government secondary schools within the Oromia NRS of Ethiopia. To this end, the study adopted a pragmatic paradigm in knowledge creation and employed a parallel mixed research design where quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. A combination of cluster-sampling, simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and availability sampling techniques were employed to select sample zones, secondary schools, and target respondents. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires from key stakeholders, including representatives from the MoE and OEB, WEO, HoDs of principal preparation universities, and secondary school principals across West Harargea, Arsi, West Shoa, and Sheger City Administration in the Oromia NRS. Besides, relevant national and regional policy documents were analyzed as secondary data sources. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis methods.

The study's major findings revealed that a significant majority (68.8%) of public secondary school principals in the Oromia NRS were assigned to principalship positions without any form of leadership preparation and, hence, found to be under-qualified to lead at this particular level. Exacerbating the problem, a considerable number of them had no appreciable experience in school principalship. The finding also unveiled that principal selection was based on unwritten, non-merit criteria (where acquaintance and political loyalty dominated over merit). The study further indicated that professional development practices for the incumbent principals were scarce, mostly consisting of self-initiated activities such as unstructured daily experiences and independent reading of guidelines. Education office-led initiatives were also sporadic and unsystematic, focusing mainly on experience sharing at the CRCs, intermittent school visits by supervisors, and occasional meetings at the Woreda level.

The study concluded that the preparation and development of secondary school principals in the Oromia NRS were inconsistent and insufficient, largely driven by self-initiated efforts. The selection and assignment of principals were heavily influenced by loyalty over merit. Despite the Federal MoE's initiatives to establish policies aimed at professionalizing educational leadership, a significant gap remains between these policies and their practical implementations, implying that the intended initiatives have not been effectively carried out in practice.

Finally, among the major recommendations provided are that Education authorities in Oromia NRS need to develop and implement transparent, merit-based criteria for the selection so as to bring eligible professional principals for secondary schools. The provision of continuous and appropriate university-based in-service professional training for all under-qualified incumbent and aspiring principals deserves serious consideration. Besides, it is imperative to enhance professional development opportunities for incumbent principals by creating systematic and sustained professional development programs that go beyond self-initiated activities. Collaborating with University EdPM departments to deploy peripatetic professors as mentors in clusters of nearby secondary schools will enhance leadership skills and knowledge. Educational planners should ensure that policies are not only developed but also actively enforced, monitored and evaluated to bridge the gap between policy intentions and actual practices. Hence, regular monitoring and evaluation of principal selection, preparation and development practices need to be instituted by OEB to ensure adherence to national policies.

Key words: *leadership, leadership development, leadership preparation, principals' selection, policy, secondary school principals.*

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter deals with the introductory part of the research problem and primary matters regarding the research. It includes background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, conceptual framework of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitation of the study, and definition of key terms used in the study. The chapter winds up by presenting organization of the study.

1.1. Background of the Study

1.1.1 Global Perspectives on School Leadership

Leadership is considered to be a major concern of an organization for it plays a pivotal role in determining the success of an organization. By the same token, there seems to be a consensus in the literature that school leadership is a key factor in school effectiveness (Hargreaves et al, 1998, cited in Salfi, et al., 2014; Leithwood et al., 2006; OECD, 2014). Often time, people associate a successful school with an equally successful principal. The implication is that the leadership behavior of the school principal and the performance of the school are apparently related to one another. Strengthening this idea, writers in the field maintain that the quality of school principal's leadership has a positive effect in improving students' achievement as well as enhancing school effectiveness (Bush, 2008; Leithwood et al., 2006; OECD, 2014; Oyetunji, 2006).

Evidence of the positive impacts of effective leadership is increasingly supporting the widely held notion that successful schooling depends on it (Hallinger 2003; Hallinger & Snidvongs, 2008; Leithwood et al. 2006; OECD, 2014). For instance, Leithwood et al. (2006) explore that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influ-

ence on pupil learning"(p. 4). These researchers evidently draw the conclusion that "there is no a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupils' achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership" (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 5) which in fact vividly calls for the pressing need for the professional preparation and development of school principals so as to enhance their school leadership skill, knowledge, and competence.

Invariably, school principals are required to play a vital role in improving school outcomes by virtue of the strategic leadership position they occupy. To be an effective leader; however, it is imperative that they learn and understand the importance of the various leadership roles and responsibilities that enhance positive performance within their respective schools which, in turn, calls for the pressing need for the preparation and development of principals. Strengthening this notion, Bush and Jackson(2002) maintained that, "...if schools are to be places in which teachers learn, teaching and learning are powerfully planned and delivered, students achieve and leadership is widely distributed; [then]the development of school leaders is a critical component in system building"(p.418). Other writers like Peterson (2002), and Schleicher (2012) also share this view and acknowledge that the educational management and leadership training programs have multivariate effect on the quality of education, in general and educational managers and principals roles, in particular. Eacott and Asuga (2014) in their study of school leadership preparation and development in Africa, emphatically argued that "without significant attention to the preparation and development of school leaders, government initiatives aimed at building world-class education systems are unlikely to succeed"(p. 919). The implication of all these research results is that education systems

need to attract, select, prepare and continuously develop professional principals to efficiently carry out the task of leading today's secondary schools which are significantly changing and becoming exceptionally challenging.

Despite the enormous expectations of school principals; however, some international studies on principal preparation and development revealed that many are poorly prepared for the task. Bush and Jackson (2002), for instance, observe that principal preparation is neglected in many countries, and has been progressively de-emphasized in England over the past decade. Recent studies conducted in Sub-Saharan African countries also revealed lack of training for secondary school principals in leadership and management as major drawbacks. For instance, in a study done in Tanzania, Kuluchumila (2014) found that "many of Tanzanian school heads lack leadership knowledge and skills because of the shortage of training institutes" (p.10). In a similar vein, in a study done in South Africa, Mathibe (2007) also acknowledges: "... South African principals are not appropriately skilled and trained for school management and leadership" (p. 523). Bush and Oduro's (2006) study of beginning principals in Africa also found that there is no formal requirement for principals to be trained as school managers; rather they are often appointed on the basis of successful evidence as teachers with the embedded assumption that "...this provides a sufficient starting point for school leadership"(p.362). Put differently, the beginning principals are simply required to have a teaching qualification and teaching experience as the sole requirement. In here, I think, it is sensible to argue that school principalship is a different role from classroom teaching and, hence, requires specific preparation and development. In connection to this, Crow *et al* (2008) suggest that,

“if school leaders and leadership are important, then perhaps we should be deeply concerned with how leaders learn to do their jobs” (p.2-3).

1.1.2. School Leadership Preparation in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, even though the year 1908 is well documented as the milestone for the introduction of modern education (Alemayehu,2012; Seyoum, 1996; Tekeste, 1996, 2006; Wagaw,1979), evidences show that the issue of educational leadership preparation has a relatively short period of history in the country(Tekleselassie,2002;Maeregu et al.,2016). The few available studies (Ayalew, Berhanu & Befekadu,1995) recognized that the training of school principals dates back to the 1950s, when it used to be organized first at the American University of Beirut and later on by the teacher training school in Addis Ababa. Even prior to this development, archival evidences reveal that the first secondary schools in Ethiopia were headed by expatriates. For instance, “Haile Selasie First Secondary School (Kotebe), the first secondary school which was established in 1945 in Addis Ababa, was headed by Mr. F. Shaw, an expatriate form Britain” (Imperial Ethiopian MoE,1952,p.98).The secondary schools later opened in the capital cities of their respective provinces were also headed by expatriates, mostly by British and Indians(Ibid).Other studies further documented that the Faculty of Education at Addis Ababa University assumed the task of training school principals in the 1960s (Tekleselassie,2002; Ayalew, et al., 1995). School principals’ training, both at diploma, and undergraduate degree level, with different naming: Educational Administration (EdAd) and Educational Planning and Management (EdPM), continued to be under the auspices of Addis Ababa University and the MoE until the early 1990s.

1.1.3. Current Policy Landscape: Insights and Gaps

With the advent of the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) to power in 1991; however, Ethiopia has introduced a broader educational reform to tackle the existing educational problems. As a result, the government set a new Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994. The ETP, among other areas of the education reform package, recognizes the very importance of competent and effective school leaders for the success of schools and the entire education system of the country, as well (MoE, 1994a). The policy document further emphasizes the need for the management of teachers and other education personnel to be “democratic, professional, coordinated, effective and efficient” (p.30).

Within the framework of the policy, the government also launched six Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs) with a time line from 1996/97–2024/25 as strategies for the implementation of the ETP. The ESDP is divided into six phases (ESDP I–VI), each of which provides a sector-wide implementation framework to put the policy statement into practice (MoE, 2015). Educational leadership and management have been identified by all six ESDPs as a crucial strategy for implementing the policy. ESDP I, for instance, intended that “head teachers will be trained in school management, leading to better- managed schools....” (MoE,1997, P.9).ESDP IV also emphasizes improving the standard for quality at all levels and appears to link this need for excellence to the efficacy of educational leadership—a point that has also just been duly noted in the recently designed and unveiled ESDP VI(MoE, 2021).

In light of these policy initiatives and strategic emphasis areas pertaining to leadership preparation and development, the federal MoE has been developing and executing

different guide lines, usually referred to as ‘ Blue print’ and the National Professional Standards for School Principals in Ethiopia(NPSSPE) which are supposed to serve as the building blocks for preparation, certification and professional development(MoE, 2013a).One of these was the Ethiopian Teacher’s Development Program (ETDP) Blueprint which was introduced in 2007(MoE,2007).The Blueprint provided a new direction for professional preparation of school principals. In the document, the professional position of educational leadership is clearly indicated and it states that “educational management, in itself, is a unique and vast profession. It has its own set of scientific theories and guidelines for application. Therefore, the specialists who are in charge of educational leadership will be trained in this profession”(MoE,2007,p.25). Accordingly, Secondary school principals, for instance, have been trained in educational leadership and management (EdLM) in summer program in various public universities. This was done in accordance with the Blueprint (MoE, 2007) that guides that principals for Secondary schools should be Master’s degree holders who attended a specialized training on school leadership. The Blueprint, further addresses that the introduction of the licensing and re-licensing of teachers and educational leaders in the system and its subsequent implementation by ensuring that the professionals meet the set standard that will serve as a guarantee for them to continue in the profession (MoE,2007;MoE,2013a;MoE, 2013b).

Later on, following the revised Blue print of the year 2013, a new graduate program on school leadership named as Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership (PGDSL) was developed and launched by MoE in collaboration with Regional Education Bureaus (REBs) for both primary and secondary school principals (MoE, 2013b). Consequently, Universities were preparing school principals through both summer programs

and a combination of face- to -face and distance modalities. Arguably, this program limits professional preparation of principals to a diploma level being two-year summer training as opposed to the former four-year regular program. The candidates for the program were a combination of first and second degree holders in subject areas; they were nevertheless to be assigned unfairly at two different levels (primary and secondary schools) upon graduation. Sooner, the program faced a challenge from the trainees for secondary school principals. Consequently, while the PGDSL program continued to be provided only for primary school principals; a new graduate program called Master's Program in School Leadership(MAScL) for secondary school principals was introduced(MoE,2014). Though the guidelines give the impression that the current School Leadership (MAScL) training would equip secondary school principals with professional skills, the scant collection of studies (e.g., Gurmu, 2019;Maeregu et al., 2016; Matebe, 2020;Yohannes, 2019) have found that the policy of principals' preparation and development of Ethiopia is lacking such impact in practice which opens a door for further research.

Generally, in spite of the pervasiveness of the deterioration of the quality of education at all levels in general, and that of secondary schools in particular, and the vested interest on school leadership in improving school effectiveness, few researchers examined the leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Ethiopia. Oromia, one of the twelve national regional states in Ethiopia, is where such study is a missing gap. And, I believe, this lack of study in itself justifies the need to conduct the proposed study.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The management and leadership context of today's secondary schools is significantly changing and becoming exceptionally challenging. Barnett and McCormic (2012,p. 653),

as cited in Kuluchumila (2014,p.9), rightly describe the situation as: “...secondary school education contexts are characterized by complexity, diversity and uncertainty posing significant challenge such as that are potentially overwhelming for the ...school leaders”. This can partly be explained from the context of the schools themselves which are expected to assist the increasingly diverse student population (Day, et al., 2011). The fact that secondary schools are dealing with pupils from varied socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, who are in the midst of puberty and are in the state of identity crises and role confusion, also make the task of a public secondary school principal quite challenging (Davies, 2002; Ibrahim,2011). Principals have also professional obligation to cope with changing educational policies and curriculum, along with addressing increasing challenges such as HIV/AIDS, Covid 19, gender issues, and many others that have an influence on secondary schools.

Besides, stakeholders’ expectations are also high and are becoming increasingly challenging to address (Botha, 2004). In this regard, education stakeholders in Ethiopia have very high expectations of public secondary school principals because they feel that a school's success is judged by best performance in Ethiopian Secondary School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESSLCE), and the person accountable for this is the principal. Obviously, meeting such expectations appears to be difficult unless principals are prepared and continually developed for secondary school leadership.

More importantly, educational organizations themselves are increasing in size and complexity (Arikewuyo, 2009), which in turn, increases the degree and the complexity of secondary school leadership and management’s duty (Bush, 2008). The cumulative effect of all these make secondary education more challenging and demanding while mak-

ing its leadership more essential than ever before. By implication, it can be inferred that secondary school principals need to learn and master several dimensions of school leadership skills, knowledge and dispositions so as to lead their respective schools with success.

On top of these, secondary schools are places where the real catalysts of change and development are expected to be shaped in accordance with the needs and interests of the society. The success of schools in attaining these goals is; however, determined largely by the quality of its leadership (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Eacott & Asuga, 2014). In this regard, international studies in educational leadership preparation and development note that effective schools have strong and effective leaders and leadership (Bush & Jackson, 2002; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Darling-Hammond, Lapointe, Meyeron,&Cohn,2007; Huber,2004; OECD,2014). Conversely, as rightly put by Bush (2009, p.386), “where there is failure, inadequate leadership is often a major contributory factor”.

Obviously, the effective school leaders who are acknowledged by outstanding researchers for creating effective schools do not just emerge from nowhere but they come out and pass through unique professional development or preparation pathways (NASBE, 2011; OECD, 2008). Hernandez et al.(2012) also opine that principals’ quality is highly dependent on the quality of their preparation. The implication is that effective leadership preparation and development of the school principal and the performance of the school are apparently related to one another. Hence, if Ethiopia, as a country, is to ensure that its secondary schools are headed by successful leaders, the task of principal preparation and development needs to be much more systematic and rigorous. More specifically, in order to make the best use of principals, to better achieve the aims of secondary schools, first

and foremost, education officials need to focus on the selection of the right people to fill in the school leadership position; and then their abilities and skills also need to be developed continually to their full potential. Furthermore, it should be born in mind that a mere existence of the well- prepared principals does not guarantee the goal attainment of secondary schools; retention and effective utilization is equally important.

In the Ethiopian context, of which the Oromia regional state is a part, research on the leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals is scarce. Even the few available and documented studies found to be either very specific and limited to the analysis of selection of secondary school principals (e.g., Tekleselasie , 2002); or comprehensive enough and focused on analyzing the existing leadership preparation programs like Postgraduate Certificate in Secondary School Supervision (PGCSS); Postgraduate Certificate in Primary School Supervision (PGCPS); Postgraduate Diploma in School Leadership (PGDSL); Master of Arts Degree in School Leadership (MAScL), in Ethiopia (Maeregu *et al.*,2016). Even the recent study by Yohannes(2019) focused on exploring the nexus between leadership preparation and work demands of school principals.

Tekleselasie's study (2002), for instance, targeted at the process in which the school principals were elected by the school staff that removed trained principals from their positions and brought untrained individuals to school leadership posts. The study referred to the 1998 guideline of the MoE for the selection of secondary school principals. However, the MoE has already revised the then guideline and suspended the targeted arrangement with the provision of Ethiopian Teachers' Development Program (TDP) guideline(Blueprint) of 2007(MoE, 2007), and the revised Blueprint of 2013

(MoE,2013a). The 2013 Blueprint has different criteria for principals' selection and preparation (MoE, 2013a), which are the focus of the current study. Thus, this study targets a selection, preparation and development process that is technically different from the one that was studied by Tekleselasie (2002).

After a decade or so, a study sponsored by the MoE(Maeregu et al., 2016), also carried out a comprehensive analysis of educational management and leadership training practices in Ethiopia using a mixed method and found that the existing leadership development programs (PGCSS, PGCPs, PGDSL and MAScL) were launched without adequate preparations and without the fulfillment of the necessary preconditions and infrastructures such as budget, assessment of institutional capacities of hosting universities in terms of human power and materials. The study also revealed that selections of trainees were not made as per the guidelines of the MoE. As can be seen, the major purpose of the study was to make a comprehensive analysis of the then educational management and leadership training practices in Ethiopia. In other words, it didn't go into the issue of secondary school principals' development, a gap which this study aims to fill in.

Above all, even though the FDRE policy document / the Blueprint (MoE, 2007;MoE, 2013a) dictates that principals for secondary schools should be Master degree holders who attended a specialized training on school leadership, the recent ESDP VI document revealed that only 29% of secondary school principals are qualified to lead at this particular level (MoE,2021).The situation in Oromia National Regional State is almost similar to the national percentage of qualified secondary school principal and appeared to be only 29.9% (OEB,2018). It is evident that nearly 70% of secondary school principals are under-qualified to lead at this particular level. And hence, developing their

knowledge, competencies and leadership skills to the standard required is beyond question. Lest, there is no doubt that this will bring a significant challenge in their leadership and their respective secondary schools' effectiveness in the regional state. Worsening the situation, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, no empirical study has been documented in Oromia National Regional State. Hence, this study is set out to explore the practices of and challenges associated with the preparation and development of government secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State.

1. 3. Research Questions

The study attempts to provide answers to the following basic questions.

1. What policies and strategies are in place for:
 - 1.1. Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 1.2. Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
2. What are the current practices in terms of:
 - 2.1. Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 2.2. Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 2.3. What proportion of secondary school principals is qualified in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 2.4. What types of professional development activities do secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State engage in to develop their leadership practices?

3. What policy- practice gaps are there pertaining to:
 - 3.1. Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 3.2. Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 3.3. Selection of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
4. What major challenges exist with regard to:
 - 4.1. Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 4.2. Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general and specific objectives of the study are stated as follows.

1.4.1. General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore the practices of and challenges associated with the preparation and development of principals in government secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State and thereby suggest the way forward for the years ahead.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

1. To explore whether the preparation and development of secondary school principals in the region is in line with the existing policy and strategy or not.
2. To explore the current practices of leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State.

3. To explore the major challenges faced in the preparation and development process of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State.

1.5 Conceptual Framework of the Study

In order to be effective in their profession, school leaders need to continually develop their leadership skills, knowledge, and capacities throughout their careers. Although the need for school leader development is widely acknowledged, there is ongoing debate regarding the nature of this provision and little agreement regarding the essential elements and models of such professional development (Dempster et al., 2011; Guskey, 2000; Nicolaidou & Petridou, 2011). Nevertheless, research findings on the preparation and development of school leaders argue that there isn't a single, clearly defined, or widespread pathway to becoming a principal (AITSL, 2016; Pounder, 2012). Leaders develop in part through personal, on-the-job development activities like coaching and mentoring, accepting more responsibility, or observing and shadowing a school principal while others develop through formal principal preparation programs as well (AITSL, 2016; Bolden, 2007; Darling-Hammond et al., 2007).

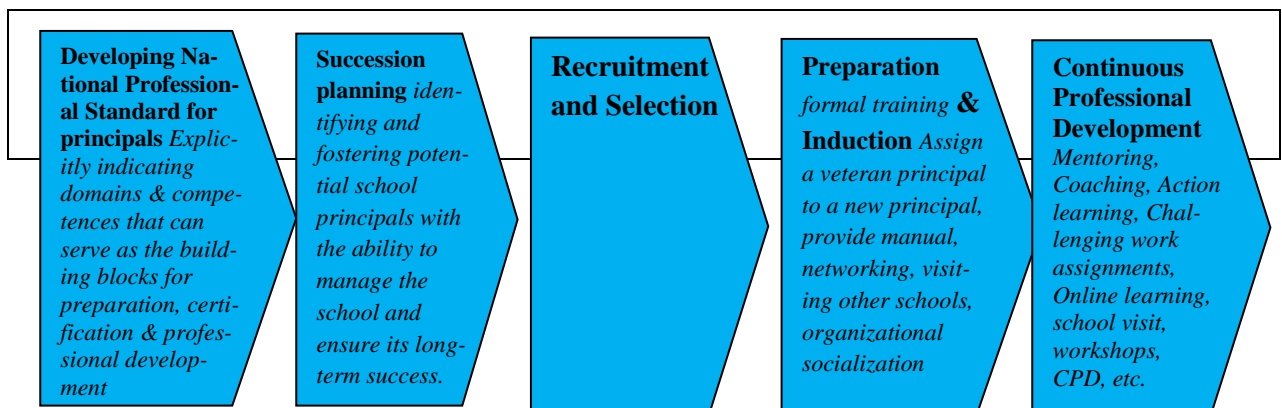
Pounder (2012), who developed a conceptual model for principal preparation consisting of preparation program experiences, for instance, vehemently argue that there was little empirical support for effective teacher preparation, and the research on leadership development was even less, particularly in terms of empirical studies evaluating leader preparation programs and their results. This model, however; emphasized the formal University- based preparation and set out to measure leadership effectiveness of the program alumni.

RLA (2010) also developed another model called a continuum of principal preparation which begins from developing principal competency framework to training according to the framework and ends in supporting the principal for placement in schools.

Drawing on the discussion of experiences of other countries, Bush (2011) also proposed a model for leadership preparation and induction that begins with talent identification to leadership preparation followed by induction and ends with in-service development. A close look into the latter two models depict that their major emphasis lies on selection of candidate's from among the pool and provision of formal training to be followed by induction. It can, therefore, be inferred that both models didn't take other principal development methods/forms practiced by other countries on the globe which include on-the-job development activities like coaching and mentoring, accepting more responsibility, or observing and shadowing a school principal situation into consideration at least in clear terms.

Based on the above discussion and the theoretical frameworks to be discussed in the consecutive chapter, the following principal preparation and development model is developed focusing on a continuum from developing National Professional Standards for School Principals, succession planning, principal recruitment and selection, preparation and induction and proceeding to the task of provision of continuous/life-long professional development as a framework to guide this research undertaking as depicted by Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework of the Study





Continuous Follow up and Support

1.6. Significance of the Study

Studying the practices and identifying the challenges related to the leadership development of secondary school principals thereof will have both theoretical and practical implications for school principals, and other education stakeholders like education planners, supervisors, and researchers. Therefore, the proposed study is believed to have the following theoretical as well as practical significance.

1.6.1. Theoretical Significance

Local studies conducted with the aim of exploring the practices and challenges related to the leadership preparation and developments of secondary school principals in the country as well as the Regional state are scarce. Hence, this study aims to:

- Describe the current practices and the challenges hitherto pertaining to the preparation and development of principals in public secondary schools of the regional state.
- Gather and analyze data pertaining to the practices and challenges of secondary school principal's development in the context of the regional state. In doing so, therefore, it is hoped that lessons from this research may give insights into the practices and challenges of secondary school principals' development in Oromia regional state.

- the fact that there is a dearth of research on the issues pertaining to the development of secondary school principal leadership in Ethiopia in general, (Gurmu, 2019; Tekleselasse, 2002), and in Oromia National Regional State in particular, forced researchers to primarily refer to literature from Western nations, whose social, cultural, and political contexts differ from those of Ethiopian secondary schools. In light of this, this research may serve as one source document for further research on the issue.

1.6.2. Practical Significance

As the study focuses on the current practical challenges of secondary school principals' preparation and development, the findings of this study may serve policy makers, training institutions, and education decision makers in any one or all of the following ways:-

- May alert decision-makers in education leadership and management to pay close attention to the leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals.
- May be useful for universities that offer principal preparation programs in planning authentic experiences.
- Providing Higher Education Institutions with information that can be used to supplement their school leadership and management preparation and development program in an effort to properly equip principals with the training that is needed for them to be effective in their school leadership practices.
- Its evidence-based analysis and results may assist in any conversations toward the restructuring, improvement or enhancement of the secondary

school principals preparation and leadership development programs in the regional state.

- Given the challenges faced by secondary school principals and the need for more research on their leadership preparation and development, this study would shed a spotlight on the professional development practices as well as policy-practice gaps in secondary school settings in Oromia National Regional State.

1.7. Delimitation of the study

This study aims at exploring the policy, practices and challenges of the preparation and development of principals in government secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State and thereby suggests workable recommendations to tackle the challenges. Obviously, a study of this sort can be explored from various angles and hence it is crucial to specify the scope of the study, right at the outset, in order to guide readers and future research. Accordingly, this study is delimited in terms of geographic location and variables of the study.

Geographically, the study is delimited to Oromia National Regional State public secondary schools. The rationale behind is the severity of the problem. For reasons that are not yet studied, the proportion of qualified secondary school principals in 2017/18 was very low. According to the Education Statistics Annual Abstract for the 2017/18 academic year, Oromia has only 29.9 per cent qualified secondary school principals (OEB,2018, p.171). Needless to say that the remaining vast majority, which is 70 percent, secondary school principals are unqualified to lead at this particular level. There is no doubt that this will bring a significant challenge in their leadership and their respective secondary schools' effectiveness in the regional state.

With regard to the study's variables, it is delimited to the leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals. More specifically, it considers the existing policy-practice gaps on secondary school principals' preparation and development, how principals are selected for the position, the practices related to their preparation and development, and challenges thereof.

1.8 . Limitations of the Study

While this study aims to contribute significantly to knowledge and professional practice, it does have certain limitations.

As highlighted in the background and problem statement sections of this dissertation, there is a dearth of research on the leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals within the Ethiopian context, particularly in the Oromia regional state. This scarcity limits the ability to compare and contrast the findings of the current study with previous research, hindering insights into any changes that may have occurred over time.

Secondly, the frequent turnover of educational leaders, from the ministry level down to schools, may obstruct a comprehensive understanding of the discrepancies between policy intentions and their practical implementation at the grassroots level. This instability could limit both the depth and volume of information provided for this study. Consequently, these factors represent notable limitations of the research.

1.9. Definition of Key Terms

This study mainly focuses to explore the practices of and challenges associated with the preparation and development of principals in government secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State and thereby suggest the way forward for the years ahead. The

main concepts and key terms to be understood here, therefore, are terms like: Induction, Leadership preparation. Leadership development School Principal, Secondary School, and Woreda Education Office (**WEO**).Therefore, in order to create common understanding in this study, key terms and concepts are defined and operationalized as follow:

Induction: in this study refers to the process by which newly appointed principals, shortly after taking over a leadership position, become familiar with the context of their respective secondary school (Huber, 2005).

Leadership preparation: specific preparations for aspiring school principals to enable them acquire the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to run secondary schools in a professional manner. Usually, it refers to training of secondary school principals before taking over a leadership position.(Huber, 2005).

Leadership development: refers to an intentional effort to provide serving secondary school principals with opportunities to learn, grow, and change (Huber, 2005). More specifically, it refers to the capacity building of secondary school leaders where they continually improve themselves through the formal and informal experiences of work requirements, training and learning activities (Sofa, 2012).

School Principal: is a person who is executive leader of a secondary school and who is responsible for goal attainment and success of a school.

Secondary School : in this study refers to public secondary schools that give education in four years duration (Grade 9-12) which prepare students for higher education and world of work(MoE, 1994).

Woreda Education Office (WEO): is a local governmental body in Ethiopia responsible for the administration, management, and oversight of education within a specific

Woreda (district). It is the immediate higher office next to school in the hierarchy of education structure (ETP, 1994).

1.10. Organization of the study

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one introduces background of the study, statement of the problem, the research questions, objectives of the study, conceptual framework designed to guide the study, significance of the study, delimitation, limitations and operational definitions of terms used in the study.

Chapter two presents the review of published and unpublished literature on overview of leadership, the essence and importance of school leadership, school principalship as a professional career, principal selection, strategies of principal preparation and development, empirical studies on secondary school principal preparation and development from global context to draw lessons. The chapter further contextualizes the study by reviewing historical development of principal training in Ethiopia, and current policy intervention on secondary school principal preparation in Ethiopia.

Chapter three explains the research design and the methodology used to conduct this study. It discusses the design employed to answer the research questions, research site, sampling and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, techniques for data analysis, validity and reliability issues, and ethical issues considered in the course of the study.

Chapter four, on the other hand, deals with the presentation, analysis and discussions of both quantitative and qualitative data gathered in line with the research basic questions.

Chapter five, finally winds up the research main work with the summary of the major points in introduction, design and methods, findings, conclusions, and implications for practice and further research. In addition to the aforementioned, the study's overall report contains a list of references of all citations referred to for the study. Relevant documents are also appended for further reference at the end of the research report.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter provides a review of the related literature regarding the preparation and development of school principals to establish a foundation for the study. The specific contents addressed include overview of leadership, the essence and importance of school leadership, school principalship as a professional career, principal selection for school leadership position, the need for leadership preparation and development of school principals, and strategies of school leadership preparation and development. The review also incorporates empirical studies on principal preparation and development programs, drawing insights from different contexts to inform the current study. Finally, it discusses the historical development of school leadership preparation and current policy interventions regarding the preparation and development of secondary school principals in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, concluding with the Professional Standards for School Principals in Ethiopia.

2.1. Overview of Leadership

There are numerous ways to define leadership, and this variety increases with each new book or research on the subject that is published. This is due to the fact that the essence of leadership has been a subject of extensive study. In connection to this Stogdill (1974, p.259), as cited in Yukl (2013, p.2), observed “there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept”. The variations in the definition of leadership seem to emanate partly from the researchers’ individual perspectives.

Among the various definitions, Yukl (2013) defines leadership as “ 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” (p.7). Another popular definition of leadership is given by Northouse (2016, p. 6) as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”. This writer, for the sake of clarity and ease of understanding, further identified four key components that are central to the conceptualization of leadership as : “process, influence, groups, and common goals” (Northouse,2016, p. 6). One of the widely accepted and commonly shared descriptions of the term emphasizes influence, describing leadership as a process where one person affects others or groups in pursuit of shared objectives. This perspective highlights the leader's role in motivating teams to work enthusiastically towards organizational goals by concentrating on elements deemed crucial for their success. This belief underpins the idea that leadership is vital, as it significantly impacts the success or failure of organizations.

As rightly put by Leithwood et al, (2006), leadership is all about organizational improvement; more specifically, “it is all about establishing widely agreed upon and worthwhile directions for the organization and doing whatever it takes to prod and support people to move in those directions” (p.11). The generic definition of leadership is very simple, then; it is about direction and influence.

From the above definitions, it can be inferred that leadership as a process involves positively persuading others in order to attain organizational objectives. Consequently, this study adopts the operational definition consistent with most conceptual and empirical

studies: the principal's ability to influence teachers, students and other stakeholders to accomplish school's objectives in a particular situation.

2.2 . School Leadership: Essence and Importance

The literature on school leadership highlights its multifaceted nature and the critical role it plays in shaping educational experiences. School leadership plays a crucial role in shaping educational outcomes and fostering a positive school culture. This literature review explores the essence and significance of effective school leadership, highlighting its impact on teacher performance, student achievement, and overall school improvement.

Conceptually, school leadership is often defined as the process of influencing and guiding individuals and groups within an educational setting to achieve shared goals, particularly in improving student learning and school performance. It encompasses various roles, including instructional leadership, organizational management, and community engagement, and is characterized by the ability to inspire and motivate others, build collaborative cultures, and implement effective change (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Discussing the essential functions and impact of school leadership on educational outcomes, Leithwood et al. (2004) suggest that effective leaders are those who can influence and enhance the educational environment by setting a clear vision and fostering collaboration among staff.

Among the critical role school leadership plays in shaping educational experiences is the impact on student achievement. Numerous studies demonstrate a strong link between effective school leadership and student performance. Robinson et al. (2008), for instance, found that school leaders significantly influence student achievement through their influence on teaching quality and school climate. In this regard, Leithwood et al.

(2006) contend that school leadership significantly influences the quality of school organization and student learning. In their review of effective school leadership, they present various types of empirical evidence. The first consist of qualitative case studies from outstanding school environments, which demonstrate substantial positive impacts on both student learning and school conditions. The second and third types of evidence include large-scale quantitative studies that analyzed the overall effects of leaders and the impact of specific leadership practices. From these findings, Leithwood et al. (2006) conclude that school leadership is positively associated, either directly or indirectly, with enhanced student performance and educational experiences.

The other importance of school leadership can be seen from the point of view of its impact on teacher development and retention. Research indicates that effective school leadership is essential for teacher professional development and retention. For instance, Ingersoll (2001), emphasizes that supportive leadership practices contribute to greater teacher satisfaction and commitment, reducing turnover rates, ultimately enhancing instructional quality.

Other studies in the field also indicate that school leaders play a pivotal role in driving school improvement initiatives. In this regard, Fullan (2001) argues that effective leaders are change agents who create a culture of continuous improvement, fostering an environment where both teachers and students can thrive.

As a final note, scholars in the field underscore that strong school leadership involves building relationships with the community and engaging parents and stakeholders. Research by Epstein (2011), for instance, highlights that effective school leaders foster

partnerships with families and communities, thereby enhancing support for student learning.

In general, the literature underscores the essence and importance of school leadership in fostering effective educational environments. By embracing transformational and distributed leadership approaches, school leaders can significantly impact teacher performance, student achievement, and overall school improvement. As educational landscapes continue to evolve, the role of school leadership remains critical in addressing challenges and promoting positive change in schools.

2.3. School Principalship as a Specialized Career

The role of school principal as a recognized professional career in the education sector was not formally established until the 1920s (Grogan & Andrews, 2002). Early researchers acknowledge that school principals had a variety of responsibilities, such as managing school facilities and handling student discipline (Cotton, 2003). Holland's (2004) study further support these earlier findings, highlighting that the main function of early school principals was the day-to-day management and operation of schools. Over the past four decades, literature on school leadership and principal training has emphasized the importance of preparing school leaders and their subsequent effectiveness as a central focus of education reform.

The development of specialized principals depends largely on the professionalization of the principalship. In the twenty-first century, a principal needs to develop advanced educational professional skills to lead schools effectively (Vaillant and Marcelo, 2009).Principalship professionalization is "a social and educational process used to change educators into educational leaders who offer... and... justify their services in terms

of their specialized competence and moral integrity suitable to their profession" (Macpherson, 2010, p. 211). It is a process of change that aids principals in acquiring exceptional knowledge, superior talents, and exceptional professional conduct suitable for successfully managing schools. This suggests that if principals are required to exhibit exceptional professional conduct and attributes in their leadership, they must undergo extensive training (Huber, 2005; Mestry, 2017).

School leadership is typically viewed as a separate aspect of the teaching profession and is sometimes contrasted with traditional classroom instruction (Bush, 2008; Huber, 2005). A school principal must possess a deep understanding of the teaching profession, including its limitations and freedoms (UNESCO, 2009). However, success in teaching does not necessarily equate to success in school leadership (Bush, 2008). Lingam and Lingam (2014) also argue that exceptional teaching skills do not automatically translate to effective leadership. While the ability to mentor and guide students is an important quality of a skilled teacher, it is not the sole indicator of effective principalship. An effective principal requires distinct skills that extend beyond those acquired through formal education and teaching experience. In here, I think, it is sensible to argue that school principalship is a different role from classroom teaching and, hence, requires specific preparation and development.

Multiple sources indicate that becoming a school principal is a distinct professional career that requires comprehensive and systematic training (Huber, 2005; Mathibe, 2007; Tekleselasie, 2002). The school principal of today, according to Botha (2004) "is more a professional leader than a head educator"(p. 241). Huber (2005) also asserts that current educational approaches recognize school leadership as a "profession in its own

right that necessitates a shift in perspective regarding the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required of school leaders" (p. 86). As maintained by Bush (2008), the notion that "leadership is a specialized profession, distinct from teaching, and requiring specific training" is becoming more widely accepted (p.70). These assertions suggest that the role of school principal is on its way to being recognized as a legitimate professional career in today's educational landscape.

A key aspect of professionalizing the role of school principal is the need for them to develop advanced professional expertise and behaviors that foster effective leadership skills. According to Demirkasmog'lu (2010), professional behaviors encompass several elements, including "(a) a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge, (b) a focus on community interests rather than individual self-interest, and (c) a reward system that primarily reflects work achievements." (p. 2048). This perspective suggests that professionalizing principalship can help meet public interests by enhancing the effectiveness of school leadership. Essentially, school leaders who demonstrate a professional ethic and strong commitment to their work have a significantly greater impact on their team members. Professional conduct can be viewed as a set of advantages derived from a principal's ability to elevate and improve educational standards (Capogna, 2016). If school principals lack these qualities, valuable opportunities for ensuring school improvement and students' academic success may be missed.

2.4 .Principal Selection for School Leadership Position

Developing effective school leadership begins with the selection, preparation, and development of skilled and well-equipped principals. Successful change relies on appropriately selected and supported principals who have the right balance of autonomy and accounta-

bility to succeed. Thus, principal selection is a vital process to ensure that schools are led by the most qualified individuals. The process of matching between the selection and preparation of the principal is quite essential for having capable school leaders. Following the perspective of Palmer and Mullooly (2015), Aravena (2020), defined selection as “ the first strategic mechanism to ensure that a competent principal be appointed to a school leadership position”(p. 1206). This process involves establishing selection criteria, collecting data on candidates' qualifications, analyzing that data, and ultimately selecting the best candidates for the role (Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Quraishi & Aziz, 2016). Quraishi and Aziz (2016) contend that a well-structured selection process enhances the likelihood of identifying the most qualified individuals. Therefore, it can be argued that there is little chance for schools to have quality leaders without having a well-defined and quality selection procedure in place.

Authors in the field (e.g., Bush, 2008; Huber, 2005) indicate that selection can occur either for a training program or directly for a leadership position among individuals who exhibit leadership potential, even when surrounded by less qualified candidates. When selection is made for a role, it influences the types of leaders that schools retain. Although the process is intended for training principals, it can also affect the training itself. As noted by Darling-Hammond et al. (2007), the individuals who join a program significantly shape its focus, the effectiveness of the curriculum, and the kind of leaders that will emerge. Hence, whether the selection is for a position or for training, it is essential to choose principals with great care. Establishing and sustaining effective schools demands rigorous, transparent, and well-defined selection processes. Therefore, it can be

inferred that the success of a school is greatly impacted by selecting the ideal applicants for leadership roles.

Various strategies have been suggested to tailor the selection process for different systems and contexts. Two primary methods for selecting candidates for school leadership positions are self-nomination, where candidates apply based on the selection criteria, and the planned approach, where recruiters identify potential candidates for promotion and development. Bush (2008) notes that self-nomination is typically employed in highly centralized education systems, while the planned approach is generally used in centralized systems.

The literature frequently emphasizes that recruiting candidates with leadership potential is crucial for achieving positive outcomes. For instance, Huber (2005) advocates for the recruitment of qualified individuals who can become future leaders, a strategy he supports to prevent the state from investing significant resources in unsuitable candidates. Similarly, Hoyle and Torres (2010) recommend admitting the brightest and most enthusiastic leaders into leadership training programs to maximize impact. While most of these points have been made in the context of the developed world where prospective leaders are selected for leadership preparation, considering leadership potential remains vital even when selections are made directly for leadership positions. Overall, it is essential to incorporate various selection criteria and procedures that emphasize both leadership effectiveness and the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance principal selection.

2.5. Challenges in Principal Selection

The challenge of attracting high-quality candidates for school principal positions is widely recognized in educational research (Aravena, 2020; Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Quraishi &

Aziz, 2016). For example, Quraishi and Aziz (2016) identified several issues in Pakistan, including ineffective selection strategies, restrictive merit selection policies, and a lack of professional standards that hinder the recruitment and selection of secondary school principals.

Conversely, Blackmore et al., as cited in Aravena (2020), highlighted five significant selection challenges in Australia as: “(1) an overreliance on written applications by selection panels; (2) a conflict between experience and potential; (3) an unspoken rule favoring the appointment of preferred candidates through family connections; (4) concerns regarding the competency of selection panels; and (5) evidence of inconsistent decision-making” (p. 1207).

Palmer and Mullooly (2015) highlight additional issues with selection procedures, notably their highly subjective nature and the influence of non-merit criteria in principal selection. Their study reveals that just over three-fourths of respondents believed that non-merit-based factors—such as the gender, race/ethnicity, political affiliations, favoritism, and length of service of candidates—were considered during the selection process (Palmer & Mullooly, 2015). Consequently, this creates an inequitable application pool, where less qualified individuals are more likely to be hired (Aravena, 2020; Palmer & Mullooly, 2015).

In sum, one of the significant challenges in the process of principal selection is the absence of professional standards that could provide a framework for the program and all of its components, including preparation and selection. In the absence of such standards, both selection and preparation processes may lack a benchmark for assessing their quality, resulting in outcomes that could rely more on chance than on merit.

A similar challenge is the use of ineffective selection methods that are shown to be highly subjective and fail to align with the importance of the principal's responsibilities (Quraishi and Aziz, 2016; Palmer and Mullooly, 2015). Consequently, the principal selection process should incorporate a range of procedures and reliable criteria to ensure a strong alignment between the most suitable candidate and the needs of the school for its advancement.

2.6 .The Need for Professional Preparation and Development of School Principals

The realization that principalship is a specialized career necessitating specific training and continuous professional development is gaining recognition in the twenty-first century for several reasons. Bush (2009), for instance, categorizes these reasons into four main areas: “(1) the expanding responsibilities of school principals, (2) the growing complexity of school environments, (3) the acknowledgment that preparation is a moral obligation, and (4) the awareness that effective preparation and development lead to significant improvements” (p. 376).

The requirement for principals to have professional qualifications arises from the need to equip them with the necessary competencies and skills for educational leadership. Black, Martin, and Danzig (2014) emphasize that professional development and ongoing education programs are essential to “equip principals with on-going and significant learning that advance education practice” (p. 9). Other researchers strongly assert that, similar to teachers, principals require both formal training and continuous, practical opportunities for professional development to ensure ongoing improvement (Derrington & Sharratt, 2008, as cited in Duncan et al., 2011). Furthermore, knowledge and problem-solving skills are gained through training and development rather than being inherent traits.

Avolio (2005), as cited in Bush (2009; 2011), also conveys a strong argument for leadership development based on the idea that leaders are "made not born," which leads to the idea that deliberate preparation and development, rather than accidental experience, is more likely to generate effective school leaders. Therefore, it is crucial to focus on the continuous professional development of principals, especially since evidence shows that their effectiveness improves over time (Bickmore, 2012; Kim, 2020).

Professional development activities are essential not only for the effectiveness of school principals but also for initiatives aimed at improving student achievement in schools (Miller et al., 2016). The evidence supporting the importance of high-quality leadership for school improvement and student outcomes highlights the necessity for specialized training for school principals. In this context, an empirical study by Leithwood et al. (2006) indicates that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning" (p. 4). According to this study, approximately twenty-five percent of the overall variance among schools, and between five and seven percent of the variation in student learning and achievement, can be attributed to leadership. The authors conclude that "there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented leadership" (Leithwood et al., 2006, p. 5), providing a strong rationale for the importance of principals' professional qualifications.

Another important justification for the necessity of professional training and development for school principals is their potential influence on school improvement and organizational change. Studies have shown that principals who participate in continuous training can play a decisive role in school improvement and are more qualified to support

the adoption of constructive organizational changes and ensure their long-term sustainability (Levin, et al., 2020; Rushing, 2022). One strong argument in favor of supporting leaders in charge of schools is the rising understanding and belief that they require reform (Rushing, 2022). School principals who are committed to their own personal development are necessary for transforming a local school since organizational transformation has a personal component and typically begins with a mindset shift (Burke, 2018).

Overall, in a country like Ethiopia where the general quality of secondary education is deteriorating (MoE, 2021) and principal preparation is de-emphasized (Gurmu,2019; Tekleselassie,2002; Yohannes,2019), the need for professional learning and development of secondary school principals appears to be obligatory than being a matter of choice or chance.

2.7. Strategies of School Leadership Preparation and Development

The role of school principal is one of the most dynamic, significant, and evolving positions in education, requiring special talents and attitudes (Pounder & Crow, 2005). This highlights the urgent need for well-structured preparation and development programs. This necessitates the urgent need for their preparation and development programs to be carefully devised. The rationale behind this assertion is that how principals are prepared has an impact on how they lead and manage their schools, teachers, and pupils (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007). Consequently, it is essential to create effective leadership preparation and development programs that adequately address the question of what school principals need to know and how they can acquire that knowledge.

The process of preparing and developing principals for positions in school leadership takes several forms. The most popular ones include a variety of pre-service, induc-

tion, in-service, and other informal interventions aimed at improving school leaders' knowledge, abilities, and attitudes. In what follows, therefore, these forms of preparing and developing principals are addressed.

2.7.1. Pre-service Training Programs

Cliffe, Fuller and Moorosi (2018), conceptualize pre-service leadership preparation as “... deliberate action taken by the individual and for the individual, which requires a willingness to proceed to learn the skills associated with the leadership role”(p.3). Pre-service is considered to be the ideal model to provide definite preparation and development opportunities before principals assume their posts, for a number of reasons. One possible argument for this assertion is that school leadership issues and challenges won't wait until in-service training has been completed (Bush,2008). Pre-service training also offers the opportunity to introduce the trainee to the fundamental qualifications for a particular leadership position in a school system, such as the principalship. Moreover, such an approach will assist in developing principals' confidence and competence prior to their appointment to leadership positions in schools. Furthermore, the pre-service preparation programs might be a component of a pre-selection or pooling procedure to make sure that candidates are appropriately qualified to fill the vacancies (Bush, 2008; Sullivan et al., 2013). In the absence of these initial influences, programs are unlikely to have an effect on the subsequent leadership practices and outcomes.

Many countries provide pre-service leadership preparation courses in partnership with universities that lead to a university degree or specialized qualification. In Canada, England and the USA, for instance, aspirants in search of becoming principals are required to have the necessary qualification (Bush, 2008).

The key to creating and implementing effective pre-service training programs has been highlighted by the literature on the subject. According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2007, p.6), for instance, the following program features are critical to the effectiveness of pre-service programs: 1) specific, well-targeted recruitment and selection processes that proactively bring in experienced teachers with leadership potential to the principalship; 2) a unified program philosophy and curriculum that prioritizes instructional leadership, school improvement, organizational growth, and change management while adhering to state and professional standards; 3) coursework and fieldwork that are well-designed and strongly integrated. This refers to Integrating and connecting key discipline theories and concepts to internship experiences; 4) subject-matter experts, including expert scholars and practitioners with teaching as well as school administration experience; 5) active, student-centered instruction using pedagogies including problem-based learning, action research, field-based projects, journal writing, and portfolios that include ongoing feedback as well as self, peer, and faculty assessment; 6) well-designed and supervised administrative internships that allow applicants to get practical leadership experience while being mentored by experienced principals; and 7) strong linkages between local school districts and universities, with a clear focus on a shared mission and a precise vision of instructional transformation at the heart of the endeavor. Leithwood et al (1996) also add to the list emphasizing the need for structured mentorship and advising by qualified teachers and experienced principals as key for designing and implementing successful pre-service training programs.

Obviously, the local context, such as national, district, and university policies that provide funding and direction for the program, might influence these program features.

Nonetheless, it is critical to learn from the literature. In summary, the studies on the subject appear to suggest that careful recruitment of aspiring candidates, a well-designed curriculum, and a strong cooperation with key stakeholders are among the most important aspects for the effectiveness of pre-service training programs.

2.7.2. Induction Programs

Newly deployed principals, regardless of their appointment experience, need induction to familiarize themselves with the work situations of the school they are going to lead. Villani (2006,p.19. as cited in Donley et al, 2021, p.9), define principal induction as “a multidimensional process that orients new principals to a school and school system while strengthening their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be an educational leader”. Induction can therefore, be conceptualized as “the process by which new incumbents become familiar with the context in which they are leading, including the school culture” (Bush, 2008, p.65). In this sense, induction involves a kind of socialization process whereby new principals learn how to lead their respective schools in a particular context. Other researchers (e.g., Donley et al., 2021; Fusarelli et al., 2018) also suggest that programs for inducting new principals should provide socialization opportunities so that they can exchange issues and insights with their colleagues while learning from them. Hence, all first-time principals require professional socialization (a preparation to enter the profession) and, for many, as there is additional challenge of leading an unfamiliar school, organizational socialization (learning how to lead a particular school) is also needed (Crow, as cited in Bush, 2008; Bush, 2011).

Authors in the field (e.g. Bush, 2008; Huber, 2004) assert that induction may be a deliberate process or an incidental activity. When it is an intentional and planned process,

it has a clear purpose and defined components. When it is considered as an incidental activity, it is mostly determined and arranged by principals themselves. Heck's (2003) review of studies in one US state also reveals that "the socialization process accounted for about one-fourth of the variance in administrative performance"(P. 246). This is a significant finding that supports the idea that preparation and induction should be a conscious effort rather than an unforeseen and an inadvertent occurrence.

In general, while an effective induction program is meant to ease the transition for recently deployed principals, expedite their socialization process, aid in their understanding of the intricate realities of school leadership, and boost their self-confidence so that they can effectively perform their duties. Conversely, A lack of or an insufficient induction method might have an impact on and slow down the learning process;and in a severe case, there is a higher chance that such induction process may make the recently appointed principals to become doubtful about their ability to lead secondary schools effectively(Bush, 2008).

2.7.3. In-Service Training Programs

In order to facilitate support for on-the-job learning, several countries including Australia, England, New Zealand, and Sweden also provide systematic in-service training programs for school leaders (Sullivan et al., 2013). Cliffe, Fuller and Moorosi (2018, p.3) conceptualize in-service as "leadership development programs where there are planned activities as part of the process to equip individuals and build their capacity as they learn and adapt to shouldering responsibility and accountability". Bezzina, as cited in Bush (2008), refers to the significance of lifelong learning for leaders and observes the specific im-

portance of in-service development for principals who were not “adequately trained, prepared or exposed before taking up their posts”(p.104). This kind of program is designed with the basic assumption that it could respond to specific needs and allow principals to establish basic leadership skills and knowledge (Sullivan et al., 2013).

In-service provision can also have additional advantage that directly relates to the particular situation confronting the novice principals. Crow, as cited in Bush (2008, p.131), distinguishes between ‘professional socialization’ which concerns with the preparation to perform the task of principal; and ‘organizational socialization’ that relates to the adjustment to the specific school context. In-service preparation program for principals helps in connecting these two phases so as to help them build up their knowledge and skills to carry out their responsibility effectively.

The other advantage of in-service provision can also be viewed from resource utilization perspective. Such provision can help in targeting the limited resources at newly appointed principals which is believed to be much more cost-effective as compared to the pre-service provision which can also be seen as an important part of their induction (Bush and Oduro, 2006; Bush, 2008).

In-service training covers a range of different aspects of school leadership but can also focus on new national requirements. Countries provide course-based training, group training, self-study and other arrangements (OECD, 2012). Professional networks can also be used to develop school leaders and leadership teams informally. In Australia, England, New Zealand and Northern Ireland, for example, virtual networks help school leaders to share best practices (OECD, 2012). Some, such as Finland, stipulate a minimum annual requirement for development training. In Scotland, requires school leaders

and teachers to participate in an additional 35 hours of training per year and record of their activities (Sullivan et al., 2013).

In the literature, many of the features discovered in the exemplary pre-service programs were also present in districts' supports for on-the-job learning for veteran principals. Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) on the exemplary in-service programs have identified three noteworthy aspects of on the job support approaches:

First, leadership learning grounded in practice: a comprehensive approach to developing practice in practice. Much of school leaders' professional learning is grounded in analyses of classroom practice, supervision, or professional development using videotapes or on-the-job observations. This requires districts/state to design an approach that enables principals to develop their instructional leadership abilities in practice, by connecting new knowledge to specific, concrete activities of the principalship (Ball & Cohen, 1999).

Second, extensive and high-quality learning opportunities: this signifies leadership development as a continuum extending from pre-service through induction, ongoing support, and engagement of expert and retired principals in mentoring. The range of strategies used to focus the work of school leaders on teaching and learning includes regular principals' conferences and networks focused on curriculum and instruction, as well as mentoring and coaching. Both the extent and the quality of these learning opportunities are unusual, with principals experiencing more opportunities to visit other schools, participate in a network, receive coaching, and attend professional development activities.

Finally, collegial learning networks/leadership learning as a communal activity rooted in collective work around practice, rather than as a solitary activity. The primary

delivery strategy for professional development in this case is to create leadership learning communities of practice.

The implication of literature on in-service training programs appears to show that districts, universities, along with other key stakeholders shall facilitate and provide a set of well-articulated methods for helping principals learn practice in practice to develop stronger schools, where more effective teaching and learning can occur.

When it comes to looking across programs, Darling-Hammond et al. (2007) observed that the pre-service and in-service programs share a number of common characteristics like rigorous recruitment and admission practices, admitting strong candidates, diverse cohorts into the programs, aligned programs with state and professional standards, forming collaborative relationships of programs, working with institutions in their regions to provide a comprehensive and integrated experience for program participants.

Therefore, pre-service and in-service programs should not be viewed as mutually exclusive options. A more appropriate viewpoint is that leadership development should be ongoing, reflecting the current emphasis on lifelong learning. Accordingly, pre-service preparation should be complemented by a robust induction program to help leaders adapt to the specific school environment (Crow, as cited in Bush, 2008) and then, appropriate continuous development opportunities should be offered to school leaders to refresh their knowledge and enhance their leadership skills (Bush, 2008).

2.7.4. Other Informal Interventions for School Leaders' Professional Development

The development of school leaders has garnered significant attention from policymakers and educational researchers, reflecting the increasing acknowledgment of the vital role these leaders play (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Huber, 2011). Consequently, many countries

are dedicating substantial portions of their education budgets to the professional development of school leaders, leading to the rising popularity of school leadership development programs (Bush, 2009; Leithwood, 2008). However, what exactly does leadership development entail? But, what does leadership development refers to?

In the context of this study, leadership development is defined as a deliberate effort to provide current school principals with opportunities to learn, grow, and evolve (Huber, 2005). Specifically, it involves building the capacity of positioned school leaders, enabling them to continuously improve their skills through both formal and informal work experiences, training, and learning activities (Rushing, 2022; Sofo, 2012). These educational opportunities aim to help school leaders become more effective in their roles, ultimately improving student learning and contributing to the overall school improvement (Bush, 2012; Lumby et al., 2008).

The key components of these learning strategies, which have received considerable attention in the literature (Bolden, 2007; Bush, 2009; Bush et al., 2011; Cothorn, 2020), include induction, mentoring, coaching, networking, action learning, problem-based learning, and online learning. In what follows, therefore, an attempt has been made to conceptualize these strategies along with their significance and practices as a method of school leadership development initiatives.

2.7.4.1. Induction Programs

Newly deployed principals, regardless of their appointment experience, need induction to familiarize themselves with the work situations of the school they are going to lead. Villani (2006), as cited in Donley et al.(2021), defines principal induction as “a multidimensional process that orients new principals to a school and school system while strengthen-

ing their knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be an educational leader”(p.19). Induction can therefore, be conceptualized as “the process by which new incumbents become familiar with the context in which they are leading, including the school culture” (Bush, 2008, p.65). In this sense, induction involves a kind of socialization process whereby new principals learn how to lead their respective schools in a particular context. Other researchers(e.g.Fusarelli et al., 2018; Donley et al.,2021) also suggest that programs for inducting new principals should provide socialization opportunities so that they can exchange issues and insights with their colleagues while learning from them. Hence, all first-time principals require professional socialization (a preparation to enter the profession) and, for many, as there is an additional challenge of leading an unfamiliar school, organizational socialization (learning how to lead a particular school) is also needed (Crow, as cited in Bush, 2008; Bush, 2011).

Authors in the field (e.g. Bush, 2008; Huber, 2004) assert that induction may be a deliberate process or an incidental activity. When it is an intentional and planned process, it has a clear purpose and defined components. When it is considered as an incidental activity, it is mostly determined and arranged by the principals themselves. Heck's (2003) review of studies in one US state also reveals that "the socialization process accounted for about one-fourth of the variance in administrative performance"(P. 246). This is a significant finding that supports the idea that preparation and induction should be a conscious effort rather than an unforeseen and an inadvertent occurrence.

In general, an effective induction program is designed to facilitate the transition for newly appointed principals, accelerate their socialization, help them grasp the complexities of school leadership, and boost their self-confidence to enable them to fulfill

their responsibilities effectively. Conversely, a lack of or an insufficient induction method might have an impact on and slow down the learning process; and in a severe case, there is a higher chance that such an induction process may make the recently appointed principals to become doubtful about their ability to lead secondary schools effectively (Bush, 2008).

2.7.4.2. Mentoring

Mentoring is also among these interventions which has become increasingly popular in recent times (Bush, 2009; Davis et al., 2005; Dinham et al., 2011; Donley et al., 2021; Smith, 2007) and is considered an important component in the provision of leadership development (Daresh, 2004; Huber, 2013). Bush (2009) conceptualizes mentoring as “a process where one person provides individual support and challenge to another professional [where] the mentor may be a more experienced leader” (p.379). Mentoring is also defined as a relationship between less experienced colleagues (mentees) and more experienced colleagues (mentors), where the latter aim “to support the mentee’s learning, development and well-being, and their integration into the cultures of both the organization in which they are employed and the wider profession” (Hobson, 2016, p. 88, as cited in Kutsyuruba and Godden, 2019).

In their systematic review, Hobson and Sharp (cited in Bush, 2009) found that all major studies on formal mentoring programs for new principals highlighted their benefits, indicating that mentoring can offer various advantages for both mentees and mentors. Among the benefits for mentees, Parylo et al. (cited in Rushing, 2022) note that mentoring assists new principals in overcoming feelings of social isolation, and peer mentorship fosters connection development. Bush and Coleman (1995) also note significant ad-

vantages for new principals, including enhanced confidence and self-esteem, social integration, and opportunities to exchange ideas and concerns with experienced principals. Moreover, Daresh(2004) also outlines the major advantages that participants may experience from the mentoring process as self- assurance in their professional competence, ability to apply theory to practice on daily basis, effectiveness in communication, knowledge on how to lead from more experienced principals, and, a feeling of pride in their new role. As a result of participating in mentoring programs, new principals who are guided by seasoned principals report gaining self-confidence with competence, practical knowledge and skills, a sense of socialization to their new profession, and increased professional networking (Playko,1995; cited in Gumus, 2019).

Studies also indicate that school principals who have been working as mentors for a long time might reap several benefits from mentoring. For instance, Daresh (2001) identifies the benefits of mentoring to mentors as having career development opportunities, higher job satisfaction, effective peer relationships, and personal renewal for the work. Dukess (2001) as cited in Gumuş (2019), concluded that principals who take on the role of mentor experience several benefits, including increased self-awareness and critical thinking about their own practices, public recognition of their accomplishments, a thorough understanding of teaching and learning, effective staff communication, and personal and professional development. Finally, Bush and Coleman (1995), as cited in Gumus (2019), indicated that the mentoring experiences provided by the mentors enhanced their ability to solve problems, gave them important insight into how schools are currently run, taught them about various school leadership philosophies, and allowed them to have professional conversations with peers.

As a final note, the literature has placed a strong emphasis on the selection and training of principal mentors as an integral aspect of a successful mentoring program. Daresh (1988), as cited in Gumuş (2019), opines that "only the very best principals can serve as true mentors, and care must be constantly exercised to make certain that the 'best of the best' become role models and mentors" (p. 26).

It is therefore, not unexpected that mentoring has grown in significance as a means of developing leadership in many nations, including the USA, Australia, England and Wales, France, Singapore, and England (Bush & Glover, 2003; Day & Huber, 2008).

2.7.4.3. Coaching

Coaching is also one of the professional development activities that can help in the development of school leaders (Blackman, 2010; Bush, 2009). Whether referred to as a stand-alone term, as a subset of mentoring, or as an interchangeable term, coaching emphasizes the relationship between coach and coachee in order to support the latter's social circumstances, psychological well-being, and skill development (Fletcher and Mullen, 2012, as cited in Kutsyuruba & Godden, 2019). Anderson and Cawsey (2008) assert that mentoring and coaching share the goal of assisting and fostering the development of a protege. However it is suggested that coaching tends to have a specific emphasis pertaining to an individual's work duties, talents, or capacities and focuses more on technical skills, knowledge acquisition, and execution (Anderson & Cawsey, 2008). According to Bloom, et al (2005), coaches offer ongoing, secure, and private assistance with the intention of fostering significant individual, organizational, and professional improvement through a gradual process. In order to do this, Holmes (2003) proposes that coaching effectiveness depends on four factors: the task emphasis of the coaching, the coach's own

mastery and competencies, the coachee's abilities, attitudes, and knowledge, and the setting of the school.

Coaching, among other things, supports the ongoing implementation of school initiatives and relies on the distinctive qualities of each leader and the particular school that s/he serves (Schumacher, 2007); it allows for flexible scheduling because it can be arranged around the school leaders' other obligations and meetings with the district (Peterson & Cosner, 2005); and it enables the modeling of behaviors desired by the individual and the organization (Pete & Cosner, 2007). However, in order for coaching relationships to be beneficial to school leadership, it is crucial that the coach and the coachee be a good fit (Braun & Carlson, 2008), and coaches need to have substantial training in order to avoid making mistakes. Boyce et al. (2010) also suggest that the quality of the relationship between the trainer (coach) and the trainee (coached) is the single most important factor for successful outcomes of coaching as a professional development activity.

2.7.4.4. Action Learning

Action learning has emerged as an effective approach to leadership development utilized by organizations to cultivate leaders, build teams, and enhance corporate skills, alongside other work-based learning interventions (O'Neil & Marsick, 2014; Roupnel et al., 2019). It is characterized as a reflective and learning process designed to address real-world challenges, emphasizing that individuals learn and develop more effectively through experimentation and reflection on experiences rather than through formal, decontextualized instruction (Baron, 2020; Roupnel et al., 2019). Day (2001), on his part, described action learning as “a continuous process of learning and reflection, supported by colleagues, with a corresponding emphasis on getting things done.”(p,601). Therefore, action learn-

ing resides on the idea that individuals learn best while tackling current organizational issues and coming up with solutions that work in the actual world of work context. As a result, action learning prioritizes learning through action or during the process itself, contrasting with traditional classroom methods that tend to be more passive (Sofa et al., 2010). It also stands apart from other learning approaches due to its focus on problem-solving.

Action learning centers on addressing problems, refining techniques, and achieving optimal outcomes rather than solely on self-discovery (Baron & Baron, 2015; Roupnel et al., 2019). Roupnel et al. (2019) explain that in practice, action learning development programs are typically conducted in small groups of five to twelve individuals who commit to regular meetings over a set period. This structure fosters active engagement in discussions, reflection, and action, with members collaboratively developing projects aimed at tackling persistent issues. This process enables participants to closely observe their behaviors, reflect on their experiences, explore new ideas and approaches, and ultimately adopt fresh perspectives and methods of thinking and action (Ibid).

In the process of action learning, all participants get together to address their issues and advance the learning process (Baron & Baron, 2015; Coughlan & Coughlan, 2015; Walia & Marks-Maran, 2014). Overall, action learning emphasizes empowering participants to address real-world challenges rather than merely gathering necessary learning resources (Chivers, 2011; Roupnel et al., 2019). This development program employs a reflective approach that incorporates action as part of the learning cycle, bridging the gap between learning and practical application. As a final note, authors in the field suggest that participants and their organization must be willing to admit their limits and,

in fact, challenge the beliefs and justifications for action that are at the core of their identity in order to realize the full potential of an action learning-based program (Baron & Baron, 2015).

In summary, action learning programs play a crucial role in the leadership development of school principals by fostering essential skills such as decision-making, teamwork, and communication (Baron, 2016; Roupnel et al., 2019). Additionally, action learning is relevant because it focuses on specific, personally relevant leadership skills and addresses practical issues with actionable solutions (McNamara et al., 2014, as cited in Roupnel et al., 2019).

2.7.4.5. Collaborative Networks

Another experiential learning which has received attention and is being integrated into leadership development programs is collaborative networking in schools and it has been highlighted in the literature (Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2012; Scott & Rarieya, 2011). Tingle et al. (2017) advocate that principals have the chance to learn from others by participating in collaborative networking, and they also have the chance to ask the group questions to gain a deeper knowledge of a variety of experiences associated with principalship. Bush and Glover (2004) on their part, promote networking as one of the four basic methods of leadership development, while Bush, Glover, and Harris (2007) found that networking was the most popular method of leadership learning after reviewing the literature on the subject.

The learning process, which is characterized by shared information and co-constructed knowledge, is central to the idea of networking (Jackson & Temperley, 2006; McCormick et al., 2011). According to Hadfield & Chapman (2009), Kiggundu &

Moorosi (2012), and Townsend (2011), learning in this context is viewed as a voluntary process of participation that network members engage in. Chapman (2008), Day (2001), Huber (2011), and Kusi & Mensah (2014), also emphasize the importance of providing school leaders with opportunities to share ideas and resources with their peers for their professional development, personal growth, and practices. Professional learning communities and networks are essential elements of situated learning opportunities (Huber, 2011). They serve as a physical and virtual venue for bringing together school leaders and creating communities of practice for them to collaborate on real-world issues and bring about change in schools to enhance learning and teaching (Mathibe, 2007).

Crow (2007) notes that newly appointed head teachers reported using national funds for head teachers conferences or utilizing the local education authority's learning opportunities, which included head teachers' meetings and briefings, when identifying the content and methodologies used in the professional and organizational socialization experiences of new English head teachers. The ways in which head teacher meetings promoted learning were highlighted by the heads themselves, including activities such as problem-solving, reflective thinking, discussing mistakes, sharing policy documents and other resources, and engaging with experts on selected issues. Stroud (2006) also notes that head teachers value networking and teamwork, believing that opportunities to discuss their professional development with peers and reflect on their practices were beneficial.

Barber et al. (2010) observe that various educational systems are increasingly providing school leaders with opportunities to share knowledge, particularly through networks and clusters. Their review of leaders from high-performing educational systems reveals that lateral learning was widespread, with nearly all principals visiting other

schools at least once in a year for learning purposes. Herriot et al. (2002) mention that the establishment of head teacher support groups in Kenya, which aims to create a space for idea exchange among school leaders and address management challenges. They found evidence that interactions, especially among head teachers, facilitate mutual learning, allowing them to share insights with other group members. Consequently, networking fosters a supportive community for those involved in these networks.

2.7.4.6. Online Learning/ Professional Development Program

Research suggests that utilizing technology for training principals in remote schools could be a viable option (Arnold et al., 2005; Bizzell, 2011). Several scholars, including Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004) and Onguko et al. (2008), recognize that online professional development has become an effective alternative to traditional learning methods for school leaders. Onguko et al. (2008) further argue that integrating information and communication technology into leadership development programs allows school leaders to enhance their leadership skills while simultaneously learning how to effectively use the technology.

In developed nation including Australia, England, and New Zealand virtual networks were created as a mechanism for principals to exchange their practices (Pontet et al., 2008). Notwithstanding the ever-growing usage of the Internet in school leadership development, it has not been successfully used in Africa (Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2012; Kusi & Mensah, 2014; Kusi, 2008; Scott & Rarieya, 2011). Similar issues were raised by Kusi (2008) on the challenges of studying remotely, particularly for school leaders in rural Ghana. He further states that only a small number of individuals in the country's major centers have access to the Internet and other information technology resources.

Contrary to this trend, the use of IT has not been utilized effectively in developing school leaders in Africa (Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2012; Kusi,2008; Kusi & Mensah,2014; Scott & Rarieya,2011). Obviously, this contrasting variation could be attributed to the state of development across different nations. In South Africa, for instance, the lack of technology-based communication, which made it challenging for leaders to connect in the absence of face-to-face meetings, was one of the most obvious issues revealed by Kiggundu and Moorosi (2012) while researching the nature of networks incorporated in the ACE project. They pointed that despite the fact that texting on mobile phones was a common practice in South Africa and that many urban schools were connected to the Internet, school leaders did not appear to be using these modes of communication or more recent forms of social networking for the purposes of work-based learning.

In addition to the previously mentioned professional development methods, evidence from international studies—such as those in England (Zhang & Brundrett, 2010), Georgia (Zepeda et al., 2014), and Virginia (Bizzell, 2011)—suggests that school principals engage in informal learning methods to enhance their leadership skills. These methods include independent reading, informal networking, on-the-job experiences, and collaborative teamwork. Thus, even in education systems with limited formal leadership preparation and development programs, it is clear that school principals can still pursue alternative avenues for professional growth and improvement in their leadership abilities, which warrants further research.

2.7.4.7. Professional Meetings/Workshops

Professional development activities such as conferences, meetings, and workshops have been commonly identified in the literature as key learning opportunities for school lead-

ers (Duncan et al., 2011; Rushing, 2022). In his systematic review on the professional learning and development of principals and assistant principals, Rushing (2022) highlights that professional development through these activities—along with university partnership programs—are considered valuable when the learning experiences are differentiated (Acton, 2021), individualized (Serrão et al., 2020), tailored to the leader's learning style (Cardno & Youngs, 2013; Honig & Rainey, 2014), aligned with the leader's career stage (Duncan, 2013; Duncan et al., 2011), and varied based on school level (Spanneut et al., 2012). Research from various regions indicates that participants often prefer conferences and workshops as their main learning avenues, with workshops being particularly favored by principals in rural districts lacking professional development opportunities (Cothem, 2020). Similarly, principals in Portugal expressed a strong preference for workshop-based learning (Serrão et al., cited in Rushing, 2022), while Australian principals actively pursued conferences for networking purposes (Lazenby et al., 2020).

2.8. A Model for Leadership Preparation and Induction

Drawing on the discussion of experiences of other countries, Bush (2011) introduced a model for leadership preparation and induction that could be applied in any educational system. The approach, according to the author, can be adapted to match the needs of the specific setting. The model is designed in such a way that it gives a comprehensive longitudinal approach/ thorough, long-term strategy for developing school leaders, beginning with succession planning. The following table summarizes the key developmental processes as well as the goals for each phase of development.

Table 2.1:

Model for Leadership Preparation and Induction

Development phase	Purpose
Succession planning	Talent identification
Leadership preparation	To develop leadership understanding and skills
Recruitment and selection	Careful matching of qualified candidates with schools (avoid ‘square pegs’ in ‘round holes’)
Induction	An ongoing process focused on professional learning
In-service development	Leadership learning as a career-long process

SOURCE: Adapted from “Preparation and Induction for School Principals: Global Perspectives” by T. Bush (2011, p.8).

The leadership preparation and induction model, as shown in the table above, follows a developmental path/ trajectory. The procedure starts with succession planning, which involves identifying the potential of future school principals. Succession planning is a proactive, intentional process that anticipates organizational demands and tackles staffing issues before they escalate into a leadership crisis (Rothwell, 2015). From the viewpoint of school organizations, it is a systematic approach to recognizing and nurturing individuals who have the capacity to lead the school effectively and ensure its long-term viability. Leadership succession planning in secondary schools is, therefore, essential for maintaining continuity as well as for sustaining leadership effectiveness. Put differently, it helps in preparing future leaders and ensures the school’s vision and missions are upheld (Grogan & Andrews, 2002; Hargreaves& Fink, 2006; Pounder, 2003).

Once a school principal's potential has been discovered, the procedure moves on to leadership training in order to improve their knowledge and leadership abilities. Following the leadership training, a deliberate and personalized selection of eligible applicants who best match the school's context is made. As per the assertions of the model,

after competent individuals have been carefully recruited, ongoing professional learning through an induction procedure that helps them get acquainted with the school's unique environment must be offered. Finally, the process should then be complemented by a long-term in-service development program—a professional learning as a career-long process so as to assist the school principals in updating their knowledge and further improving their leadership abilities (Bush,2011).

2.9. Overview of Preparation and Development of Principals: Global Context

There is a widespread recognition that effective school leadership is crucial for the success of schools. There is also a growing recognition that school principals need specialist training and preparation if they are to be effective in providing appropriate leadership (Bush, et al., 2011; Crow et al., 2008; Huber, 2004). Even though there is an ever-increasing body of evidence that leadership makes a significant difference, there is less agreement about what preparation is needed to develop appropriate leadership behavior (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011). Consequently, principals' preparation and development appeared to be systematic in some countries while it remained unsystematic and unorganized in others.

In most industrialized nations, including the United States, Australia, and England, the preparation and development of school principals is systematically organized by higher education institutions. These institutions provide training for principals both before and after they take on leadership roles (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; Ibrahim, 2011). This approach ensures that aspiring principals receive comprehensive preparation prior to their appointments and ongoing development afterward to enhance their perfor-

mance. Moreover, in these countries, such preparation and development are mandatory for those seeking principal positions (Ibrahim, 2011). The frequently cited example of such institutions is the National College for School Leadership (NCSL) in England, where aspiring principals participate in the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) program (Fink, as cited in Ibrahim, 2011). Once promoted to principal, they undergo the Early Headship Programme (EHP), and those already serving continue their development through the Head for the Future (HftF) program (Brundrett & de Cuevas, as cited in Ibrahim, 2011).

In the United States, there is a longstanding tradition of formal principal preparation programs (Daresh & Male, 2000; Su, Gamage & Mininberg, 2003). Since the late 19th century, efforts have been made to establish academic programs that allow individuals to enter the field of school management and administration at universities (Su, Gamage & Mininberg, 2003). Comparative studies have indicated (Daresh & Male, 2000; Su, Gamage & Mininberg, 2003) that aspiring principals are required to have a minimum of three years of teaching experience, hold a master's degree from an accredited institution, and complete necessary study programs to obtain licenses or certificates for serving as school principals in their states.

In Asia, Singapore and Hong Kong are leading the way in establishing institutions and programs for the preparation and development of school principals (Arikewuyo, 2009; Huber, 2005; Ibrahim, 2011). Many of their programs are modeled after those in developed countries. For example, in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Education Department laid the conceptual groundwork for leadership education for principals in 1999, following study visits to similar programs in England, Scotland, Austria, and Singapore (Arikewuyo,

2009; Wong & Chung-Chi, cited in Ibrahim, 2011). Newly appointed principals are required to complete a nine-day mandatory induction course offered by the education department, which aims to equip them with essential knowledge of school management theory and practice. In 2002, the Certification for Principalship (CFP) was introduced for aspiring principals as a quality assurance measure to ensure they meet specific leadership criteria in their preparation for the role (Wong, cited in Ibrahim, 2011).

Singapore, which launched the Diploma in Educational Administration (DEA) in 1984, was one of the first countries to mandate a specialized leadership qualification for school principals (Arikewuyo, 2009; Bush, 2008). The National Institute of Education accepted an annual cohort of 50 vice principals, who were selected and sponsored by the Ministry of Education. The DEA was a full-time pre-service program that included an eight-week internship at a school led by a mentoring principal. In 2001, the DEA was succeeded by the Leaders in Education Program (LEP) (Bush, 2008, p. 57). The primary emphasis of this training is on "action learning," where participants generate their own knowledge through collaborative team learning. This occurs in small groups, known as "syndicates," consisting of six participants who meet weekly under the guidance of a university professor. Participants only recognize the knowledge they have developed only when they come to the end of the programme (Chong et al., cited in Bush, 2008, p. 57).

In most countries of the developing world, particularly in Africa, the preparation and development of principals is not as organized or emphasized as it is in the developed world. Research findings reveal that in most cases it is either lacking or appears to be informal (Bush, 2008; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Ibrahim, 2011). In this regard, Bush and Oduro (2006, p.362) note that "throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals

to be trained as school managers”. The studies further indicate that good teaching experience and good performance are considered as the best criteria for one to be promoted to school headship positions (Bush, Kiggundu, & Moorosi, 2011; Bush & Oduro, 2006; Ibrahim, 2011).

Despite the challenges, some countries have taken steps to establish principal preparation and development programs. A notable example is the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in South Africa. The Department of Education, in partnership with 14 universities, unions, and the Professional Association of Principals, has created the ACE program to train aspiring school principals and enhance the skills of those already in service. The goal is to build a pool of trained school managers, with plans to make this course a requirement for individuals selected for principal positions by 2011 (Ibrahim, 2011).

2.10 .Empirical Studies on Principal Preparation and Development Programs: Implications to the Current Study

Several studies have been held to mark the breadth, depth and quality of principal preparation and development programs all over the world including East Africa, in particular. This part of the review elucidates and summarizes the existing research in order to forward workable implications for the current study.

To begin with, Su, Gamage and Mininberg (2003) researched the professional preparation and development of school leaders in Australia and the U.S.A., and came up with the findings that, the principals’ preferences were different in the two countries since the Australians liked to be principals for personal satisfaction and provision of effective leadership whereas the Americans liked to help children and young adults thereby to contribute to the society. By and large, whereas the vested principals varied in their training

initiatives and motives they had intrinsic reasons of seeking high payment and job-security. Seen from comparative perspective, principals of both countries had altruistic and intrinsic reasons to enter leadership positions. In that, Americans tended to be more idealistic and reform-oriented than the Australians. With respect to challenges, the Americans tended to be more stressed in their positions to the extent of leaving their positions whereas the Australians expressed feelings of powerlessness and stress, though preferring to remain in their positions.

Differences were also visible with respect to status whereby Australians had lower academic status owing to high importance given to age and teaching experience in the process of recruiting principals. In the American case, formal graduate level and university-based credential programs led the process. There were also differences in training preferences wherein Australians tilted to field experiences of apprentice-model which gave more emphasis to the nexus in theory-practice realms.

Thody et al., (2007), on their part, studied school preparation in Europe and found out that, more centralized systems had less principal preparation than the less centralized counterparts. In that, the lesser the staff preparation, the greater was the staff apprehension to take office responsibilities when assigned.

Kwan (2008) investigates the vice-principal experience as a preparation for principalship examined the job-responsibilities undertaken by vice-principals in Hong Kong, by investigating the respective contribution of each responsibility for principalship. Seven job responsibility dimensions such being external communication and connection; quality assurance and accountability; teaching, learning and curriculum; staff management, resource management, leader and teacher growth and development, and strategic

direction and policy environment. In that, staff management in terms of treating grievances and work-relations was highly practiced whereas financial resource management was the least concern. The deficiency in financial skill boosting was attributed to the principals' reluctance to delegate the vice-principals on financial decisions. Shortage in financial management skills was traced as the overriding problem for vice-principals taking up the principalship position through unplanned succession. The article suggests proactive and reactive training to be in place.

Onguko, et al. (2008), reflecting on *Mapping of principal preparation in Kenya and Tanzania*, came to the deduction that, while principals played very essential roles as leaders, accounting officers and public relations officers representing their schools, insufficiency in the number of institutions providing training, very short period of training and minimal exploitation of information and communication technology resources were the successively daunting pitfalls. The article winds up forwarding some recommendations pertaining to increase in the number of institutions, extending the programs to long-term provisions while the short-term programs serve the in-service mission, and redeveloping the current programs to embrace a wide array of problem-solving through enrichment of knowledge-base, skills and values. Skill-balance between leadership and management was also stated as indispensable in order to cope with rapid changes in global settings which require principals to be armed with *self-learning*, *problem-solving* and *action research skills* in response to issues of emerging ICT, student administration, gender and diverse forms of pandemic such as HIV/AIDS.

Ibrahim (2011), on his part, investigates the preparation and development of public secondary school principals in Kenya, and found out that though there was lack of

specific preparation and development of principals, there were in-service courses, principal conferences, and personal initiatives. Perhaps, former principals' supports, in-service courses and financial facilitation from private and non-government agencies were traced as foremost concerns.

Hutton (2013) investigates effectiveness of training programs in West Indies (2006 to 2009) for secondary school principals and found out that, trainees gained technical and relational skills than cognitive or conceptual skills. In terms of support, positive responses were secured to have been favorable from site professionals than the central ministry. Positive impact was in the areas of confidence, collegiality and overall leadership. Areas identified to be enhanced for any further programs included school law, financial management, policy development and interpretation, and conflict management and relational skills.

Amakyi and Ampah-Menash (2013) studied the preparation of school-leaders in Ghana with specific concern on theoretical knowledge, and delineated the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and core technical skills in school leadership and management to be the foremost requirement. By far, specific requirement included professional graduates with satisfactory work history and conduct, service-rank to deputy director, and other lower level experiences with age limit of fifty-five and below. In spite of the requirements of the General Education Service, majority of the school leaders were appointed primarily on the basis of their teaching records. So, sheer appointment of school heads on the basis of their teaching records rather than on leadership merit and educational preparation was a big jeopardy to success in creating effective school-leadership.

Mestry (2017) investigates techniques of empowering principals to lead and manage schools in South Africa, with special focus on promoting a culture of *professional development* to prepare principals to confront educational challenges and obstacles. In the experiential explication held, sample principals denoted that, there was no formal preparation for aspiring principals since there were few in-service programs for professional development. There were no rigorous criteria for educators assigned as school principals as well, which makes out the country to be void of a compulsory and specific qualification for principalship.

Additional evidences on principal preparation were presented in Hollman and Novey (2018), who, after researching “ Developing a national model for principal preparation through service leadership”, noted seven meta-cognitive elements to be given due consideration in principal preparation programs (PPPs) such being understanding of self through thinking, speaking and serving; leading via experiential immersion by relating current practices with prior experiences; purpose-driven practices; data-directed projects; listening to stakeholders and capturing their language in order to give implications for practices besides reading pertinent research works and portfolio development.

Bush and Oduro (2006) studied challenges facing new principals in Africa, and found out the most staggering challenges to have been inadequate school leadership preparation due to rarity in leadership training, mere assignment of school principals as per their teaching records rather than focusing on their leadership potential, and lack of in-service induction.

Daniel (2023) studies the nexus between school leadership preparation and students’ academic achievement in Dire-Dawa Administrative Region of Ethiopia, and came

up with the finding which showed positive interplay to have existed. The research showed, however, that the most common leadership preparation techniques were rooted in experience sharing where short-term trainings were less common.

As a final note, Wamba (2015) delineates in the study on “ Head teacher preparation in Mizuzu of Malawi” that, lack of pre-service and in-service training, principals’ assignment on the bases of prior teaching and leadership records, and principals’ nomination based on religion and political endowment to have been the daunting blows to success on principals’ effectiveness.

The studies reviewed highlight several implications for school leadership preparation in Ethiopia. Firstly, there is a clear need for structured and systematic principal preparation programs, as many existing initiatives in other regions reveal gaps in training and support. For instance, findings from Su, Gamage, and Mininberg (2003) emphasize the importance of intrinsic motivations for aspiring principals, implying that Ethiopia should consider these motivations when designing leadership programs.

In addition, the research indicates that a lack of formal training leads to significant challenges for new principals, as noted by Bush and Oduro (2006). This underscores the necessity for comprehensive training that not only addresses leadership skills but also equips principals with essential management capabilities, including financial literacy and conflict resolution, as highlighted by Hutton (2013) and Onguko et al. (2008).

Moreover, the emphasis on experiential learning and practical training, as seen in the Australian model, could be beneficial for Ethiopian programs. Creating opportunities for field experience and mentorship, similar to the ACE program in South Africa, may enhance the readiness of aspiring principals.

Furthermore, the studies also suggest that reliance on teaching experience alone for leadership appointments can undermine effective school management, as pointed out by Amakyi and Ampah-Menash (2013). Ethiopia should develop criteria for principal selection that prioritize leadership potential and formal training.

Finally, fostering a culture of ongoing professional development is crucial for effective school leadership. Findings from Mestry (2017) and Hollman and Novey (2018) emphasize the importance of continuous learning and adaptation among school leaders to address evolving educational challenges. Therefore, Ethiopia should implement regular in-service training programs and establish support networks for incumbent principals to ensure their sustained development and effectiveness in their roles.

Overall, these studies collectively suggest that Ethiopia needs to enhance its principal preparation frameworks by establishing formal training programs, focusing on leadership qualities, and promoting continuous professional development.

2.11.School Principals’ Preparation and Development in Ethiopia: Past Experience

In Ethiopia, even though the year 1908 is well documented as the milestone for the introduction of modern education (Alemayehu,2012; Seyoum, 1996; Tekeste, 1996;Tekeste, 2006; Teshome,1979), evidences show that the issue of educational leadership training has a relatively short period of history in the country(Tekleselasie, 2002; Maeregu et al., 2016). The few available studies recognized that school principal’s training dates back to the 1950s, when it was organized for the first time at the American University of Beirut (Ayalew et al., 1995).Even prior to this development; archival evidences reveal that the first secondary schools in Ethiopia were headed by expatriates as follows:

Table 2.2:***The First Three Secondary Schools with their Expatriate Principals in Ethiopia***

Rank Order	Name of the Secondary School	Year of Establishment	The then Headmaster	Citizen-ship
1 st	Haile Selasie First Secondary School(Kotebe),Addis Ababa	1937 E.C. (1945)	Mr. F. Shaw	British
2 nd	General Winget Secondary School, Addis Ababa	1938 E.C. (1946)	Mr.H.E. Lourence	British
3 rd	Teferi Mekonnen Sercondary school, Addis Ababa	1939 E.C. (1947)	Dr.Lusien Mart	Canadian, Jesuit

Source: MoE (1952, pp.98-106).

The secondary schools later opened in different parts of the country were also established in the capital cities of their respective provinces and were headed by expatriates, mostly by British and Indians. For instance, Ambo Secondary school, which is located at a distance of 120 kilometers to the west from Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, was established in 1955/56 and was then headed by an expatriate Mr. D.B. Pack, from Britain (MoE, 1952). His successor was Tekeba Biratu, an Ethiopian, who led the school from 1959/60-1962/63. By the same token, the Haile Selassie First School in Nekemte is among those established by His Majesty the Emperor before invasion. It was founded in 1933 as a government school for boys, and upgraded to secondary school level in 1960 (MoE,1952) and headed by Mr. Masi, an Indian expatriate succeeded by Ato Yisehak Angos, great educator and an outstanding role model for his students of the 1960s at Nekemte.

The first training program for school principals at a higher education institution in Ethiopia was launched by the then Haile Selassie I University in the 1962/63 academic year, following an agreement with the Ministry of Education (Asayehgn, 1979, as cited in

Gurmu, 2018). Subsequently, Addis Ababa University continued this one-year training program for school principals (Asayehgn, 1979, as cited in Gurmu, 2018) and introduced undergraduate degree and diploma programs for junior and senior secondary school educators. Candidates for these programs were selected nationwide based on their administrative experience and performance, receiving stipends from their respective zones or regions throughout the training (Tekleselassie, 2002). I can personally attest to this, as I pursued my first degree in the Department of Educational Administration at Addis Ababa University from 1991/92 to 1993/94 on an advanced standing basis. The establishment of the principals' training unit at the university, which evolved into a full-fledged department in 1978 under the name 'Department of Educational Administration (EdAd)' (Addis Ababa University, 2013, p. 49), represented a significant milestone in the history of principal training in Ethiopia.

Despite the establishment of the department, a study by Tekleselassie(2002) revealed that “the rapid expansion of schools in the mid-seventies... sparked a renewed interest in training school principals that exceeded the university's capacity”(p. 58). Consequently, in 1979, the program for training primary school principals was discontinued, while Addis Ababa University continued to oversee the training of principals for junior and senior secondary schools. In 1981, the Ministry of Education implemented a short-term, six-week training program as a substitute for the suspended program, which was conducted at Teacher Training Institutes. This initiative resulted in the training of over 12,000 principals before it was discontinued in the early 1990s (Ayalew et al., 1995; Gurmu, 2018). However, this training scheme faced criticism for its short duration and repetitive curriculum, among other issues (Ayalew et al., 1995; Tekleselassie, 2002).

In 2000, the department's name was changed from Educational Administration (EdAd) to Educational Planning and Management (EdPM) due to concerns from the Ministry of Education that the training curriculum was not meeting the needs of the country's educational leaders. As a result, the training program was redesigned to cater to educational leaders at various echelons, from schools to the Ministry of Education, offering both undergraduate and graduate programs. Since then, the name Educational Planning and Management (EdPM) has gained popularity and is now widely in use by several other universities in the country that offers principal training programs at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

2.12. Policy Interventions on Secondary School Principals' Preparation in Ethiopia: Current Developments

With the establishment of the federal governance system in 1991, Ethiopia initiated a comprehensive educational reform to address existing challenges in the education sector. Consequently, the government introduced a new Education and Training Policy (ETP) in 1994. This policy, part of the broader education reform agenda, highlights the crucial role of skilled and effective school leaders in ensuring the success of both schools and the overall education system in the country (TGE, 1994). The policy document further underscores the necessity for the management of teachers and other educational personnel to be “democratic, professional, coordinated, effective, and efficient” (TGE, 1994, P.30).

As part of the policy framework, the government introduced six Education Sector Development Programs (ESDPs) covering the period from 1996/97 to 2024/25 to facilitate the implementation of the ETP. Each of the six phases (ESDP I–VI) provides a comprehensive framework for executing the policy (MoE, 2015). Educational leadership and management have been acknowledged as crucial components in all the six ESDPs. For

example, ESDP I aims at training head teachers in school management, which would lead to better-managed schools (MoE, 1997, P. 9). Similarly, ESDP IV focuses on raising quality standards at all educational levels and connects the need for excellence to the effectiveness of educational leadership—a point also highlighted in the recently introduced and unveiled ESDP VI (MoE, 2021).

Irrespective of the provisions of the policy to professionalize the educational management of the country, however, research findings reveal that there had been a shift of practice pertaining to the preparation and placement of school principals since 2001/02. A study by Tekleselassie (2002), for instance, disclosed the kind of arrangement whereby principals were elected by the staff every other year which consequently led to the replacement of trained principals by the untrained ones. The provision blocked the trend in which the assignment of principals used to be performed mainly based on the applicants' degree or diploma in Educational Administration. The occurrence also seems to have obstructed the existing training programs of principals at diploma and degree level in favor of a one month in-service training.

Subsequently, in 2007, the Ministry of Education launched the Ethiopian Teacher's Development Program (ETDP) blueprint, which outlined a new approach for the professional development of school principals. The document recognized the strong connection between the performance of teachers and that of school principals and supervisors. Additionally, it included profiles for school principals and supervisors alongside those of teachers. The blueprint clearly defines the professional role of educational leadership, stating that “educational management, in itself, is a unique and vast profession. It has its own set of scientific theories and guidelines for application. Therefore, the specialists

who are in charge of educational leadership will be trained in this profession” (MoE, 2007, p. 25). Furthermore, the blueprint addresses the implementation of licensing and re-licensing for teachers and educational leaders, ensuring that these professionals meet established standards to maintain their positions in the profession (MoE, 2007; MoE, 2013b).

To enhance the preparation of school principals, the Federal Ministry of Education implemented several practical initiatives. Subsequently, universities across the country began offering principal training at both undergraduate and graduate levels. This training was provided through various modalities, including regular, weekend, summer, and distance programs, focusing on areas such as Educational Leadership (EdL) and Educational Planning and Management (EdPM).

Following the revised blueprint in 2013, the Ministry of Education developed and launched a new graduate program called the Post Graduate Diploma in School Leadership (PGDSL) for both primary and secondary school principals (MoE, 2013a). As a result, universities began preparing school principals through summer programs that combined face-to-face and distance learning. However, this program limited the professional preparation of principals to a diploma level with a two-year summer training, in contrast to the previous four-year regular program. Candidates for the PGDSL included individuals with both first and second degrees in various subject areas; upon graduation, they were assigned to different levels (primary and secondary schools), which was deemed unfair. Trainees expressed dissatisfaction with the PGDSL program due to de-motivating factors and the lack of certification that would facilitate career advancement. This led to challenges from trainees aspiring to become secondary school principals. Consequently,

while the PGDSL program continued exclusively for primary school principals, a new graduate program called the Master's Program in School Leadership (MAScL) was introduced for secondary school principals (MoE, 2014).

As a result, universities began training school principals through summer programs that combined face-to-face and distance learning. According to the same blueprint, secondary school principals are required to hold a Master's degree in School Leadership, Educational Planning and Management (EdPM), or a relevant school subject, along with the PGDSL, and must have at least five years of teaching experience (MoE, 2013a, p. 2014). In this context, the Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus agreed to implement a two-year in-service MA program in School Leadership (summer-bega-summer-bega) for candidates who demonstrated effective leadership in teaching and learning practices and met the entry requirements (MoE, 2014). Although the guidelines suggest that the current School Leadership (MAScL) training would provide secondary school principals with essential professional skills, the scant collection of studies (e.g., Maeregu et al., 2016; Gurmu, 2019) indicate that the policy for principal preparation is not achieving the desired impact in practice, which opens avenue for further research.

2.13. Professional Standards for School Principals in Ethiopia

The presence of skilled and committed school leaders is widely recognized as a crucial element in the quality of education within a country. Obviously, this can be achieved by establishing appropriate and relevant professional standards, allowing principals to meet these criteria through evaluation systems. Over time, educational leadership standards have shifted to emphasize the role of principals as instructional leaders within their schools, which is vital for fostering their development (Canole & Young, 2013; Hackman,

2016). In line with this perspective, the Ministry of Education of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia created the National Professional Standard for School Principals, outlining the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of principals across all educational levels—pre-primary, primary, and secondary (MoE, 2013b).

The National Professional Standard for school principals aims to define the role of principals and strengthen the profession in the country by articulating their professional practices in common language. As a result, the standard is divided into three key domains: school vision and community leadership, instructional leadership, and administrative leadership. Each of these domains encompasses five competencies intended to serve as foundational elements for preparation, certification, and professional development (MoE, 2013b). The following table depicts the three domains with their respective competencies.

Table 2. 3:

Domains and Competencies of School Principals in Ethiopia

Domain N^o	Domains	Competences
I	School vision and community leadership	1. Lead and facilitate vision of learning 2. Develop and manage school community Relations
II	Instructional leadership	3. Lead and manage learning and teachings 4. Lead and develop individuals and team
III	Administrative leadership	5. Lead and manage school operations and resources

Source: Ministry of Education (2013b, p.12).

In line with the competencies required during their tenure, the professional standard provides principals with opportunities for career progression across four levels: beginner

principal, proficient-I principal, proficient-II principal, and lead principal (MoE, 2013b). Studies indicate that after obtaining their principalship license, principals continue their professional development through in-service training received during induction at the start of their roles, as well as ongoing professional learning to maintain their initial license (Steinberg & Yang, 2020). Researches further suggest that principals who participate in in-service professional development are more likely to remain in their schools compared to those who do not (Goldring & Taie, 2014; Jacob et al., 2015; Steinberg & Yang, 2020). This highlights the importance of continuous learning.

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia's MoE claims that the triggering of the professional standards for teachers and educational leaders is part of the government's strategy for developing and holding back the quality of teaching and leadership, and improving students' learning outcomes (MoE,2013b). Besides, the MoE's policy documents, such as the Ethiopian Teachers' Development Blue print (MoE, 2013a), justify the introduction of a licensing and re-licensing system for teachers and education leaders based on their fulfillment of relevant professional standards. In general, the development of professional standards for principals in Ethiopia seems to be a welcome step toward addressing the long-standing challenge in educational quality at all levels; nonetheless, its practical implications provide further avenues for research.

2.14. Chapter Summary

Chapter Two, titled "Review of Related Literature," explores the critical themes surrounding school leadership and the preparation and development of principals. It begins with an overview of leadership concepts, emphasizing its significance in educational settings. The chapter highlights the specialized nature of the principalship, discussing the

unique challenges and responsibilities that accompany this role. It examines the selection processes for school leaders, identifying common challenges and biases that can affect outcomes. The necessity for professional preparation and development is underscored, advocating for comprehensive training programs, including pre-service, induction, and in-service training, along with informal interventions. A proposed model for effective leadership preparation and induction is presented, alongside a global context comparison of principal preparation practices. Empirical studies are reviewed, revealing implications for the current research, while historical practices in Ethiopia regarding principal preparation and development are reflected upon. The chapter concludes with a discussion of recent policy interventions aimed at improving principal preparation in Ethiopia and outlines the professional standards guiding school principals' preparation and development in the country.

Chapter Three

Research Design and Methodology

In this chapter, the research design and methods are the two major components discussed briefly. The design part deliberates on the philosophical assumption that guides the study. The methods part, on the other hand, discuss the study population, the sample and sampling techniques, data gathering tools, procedures of data collection, method of data analysis, and ethical considerations followed in the course of this study.

3.1. Research Approach

The philosophical concepts embedded inside the study have a significant impact on the research practice. According to Creswell (2014), and Creswell and Creswell (2018), while organizing a study, researchers should consider the bigger philosophical principle that they support since this knowledge might clarify why they chose the specific approach. Additionally, the scholars categorize the four major paradigms, beliefs, worldviews, that researchers bring into their inquiry as post positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism. In addressing the central assumptions of each paradigm, Creswell (2014), Creswell and Creswell (2018), point out that post-positivists adhere to a deterministic philosophy, in which causes possibly determine effects or outcomes (viewed as a quantitative approach); constructivists hold that people seek to understand the world in which they live and work (viewed as a qualitative approach); a transformative worldview maintains that political change and research inquiry are inextricably linked in order to address social oppression at all levels; and pragmatic worldview concentrates on the study topic in social science research, after which knowledge regarding

the problem is derived via the application of pluralistic approaches (considered as mixed approach).

The philosophical assumption that guided this study in the process of knowledge formation was pragmatism. The reason for choosing this world view is twofold: first, pragmatism opens the door for the use of multiple methods. Secondly, it allows the application of different forms of data gathering and analysis to best answer the research questions (Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Accordingly, this research used mixed research approach since it was rooted on the pragmatic viewpoint. That was done with an aim of utilizing the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative approaches (Bryman,2004; Creswell, 2009); and to build on the synergy and strength that exists between both research methods to understand the practices and challenges associated with the preparation and development of secondary school principals more fully than is possible using either quantitative or qualitative methods alone (Gay, Mills & Airasian,2012).

3.2. Research Design

Research designs are forms of inquiry that fall within the qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodologies categories and offer precise guidance for the procedures inside a study design (Gay, Mills & Airasian,2012; Creswell, 2014; Creswell and Creswell , 2018). Despite the fact that mixed method research approaches have many different designs, three are particularly common: convergent parallel, explanatory sequential, and exploratory sequential designs. Creswell (2014) states that in convergent parallel research designs, researchers generally gather both types of data at roughly the same time and then combine them to interpret the overall findings; in explanatory sequential mixed methods, researchers conduct quantitative research first, analyze the findings, and then build on the

findings to provide a more detailed explanation using qualitative research; and in exploratory sequential mixed methods, researchers start with a qualitative study phase, which investigates participant opinions, is preceded by the quantitative phase.

In this study, both the qualitative and quantitative data were collected at the same time and were integrated at the analysis stage. The rationale for integrating both quantitative and qualitative methods was that of complementarily since it aimed to gather various but complementary data on the same subject to better comprehend the research problem. The insights gained from the quantitative data were enhanced, expanded, shown, and clarified using the results of the qualitative analysis. Furthermore, during the course of the study, the researcher gathered both types of data (using questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis) at the same time and later included them into the analysis of the overall findings. Thus parallel mixed method design was used with the intention of providing an in-depth analysis of the posed research questions utilizing both the questionnaire and interview replies.

Another consideration was the potential for matching or corroborating findings from one instrument with the outcomes from the other. According to Patton (2002), the goal of employing this design is to combine the distinct strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative methods. Additionally, it is employed when a researcher wants to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings or to confirm or supplement quantitative results with qualitative data.

3.2.1. The Quantitative Design

The designs used in quantitative research are many in number. In this study, the survey research design was used among the many designs. As per some writers, for instance,

Creswell (2014), Creswell and Creswell (2018), and Gay et al. (2012), the survey research design in quantitative research can be helpful in describing the attitudes, views, behaviors, or traits of study participants or the overall population. The survey design has the benefit of gathering quantitative data through questionnaires, which can then be statistically analyzed to support research objectives, according to the same authors. More precisely, among the two survey design techniques—cross-sectional and longitudinal—cross-sectional survey design facilitates the collection of information regarding attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments that are prevalent at the time (Creswell, 2014). This design is frequently used in education as well. For instance, Creswell, (2014) highlights the significance of this specific design in educational research, noting that it will allow the researcher to gather data one at a time and deliver information in a short period of time.

The survey method seems to fit this study's objectives, which included exploring principals' attitudes toward leadership preparation and development in the regional state. More specifically, the survey design was particularly suitable for the study's objectives as it could help gather information on principals' actual experiences, values, and beliefs in relation to leadership preparation and development policies and practices in the regional state.

3.2.2. The Qualitative Design

For the qualitative section of this study, a narrative description approach was used as the research design. According to Patton (2002), the narrative description approach is a form of inquiry wherein a researcher studies the personal experiences of people via the creation, reading, and contemplation of stories.

As mentioned in the objectives section, the purpose of this study is to explore whether or not there is policy- practice gap pertaining to leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in the regional state. This includes reflecting on the existence, suitability and appropriate implementation of policies and strategies to support principal preparation and development. Therefore, gathering and incorporating the views and tales of the research participants was the only way to ensure that the study's objective was realized. Based on this justification, narrative description method is chosen for the qualitative part of this study.

3.3. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A combination of cluster-sampling, simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and availability sampling techniques were applied to select the sample Zones, secondary schools and the target respondents.

3.3.1. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques of the Quantitative Study

3.3.1.1. Selection of Sample Zones

Oromia is the largest regional state in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. There are twenty Zones and nineteen Town Administrations (OEB,2021). When the population is very large or spread over a wide geographic area, scholars suggest the use of cluster sampling so as to ensure representation of the sample (Creswell, 2014; Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012).For the purpose of this study and to ensure representation of the sample, the Zones were clustered/grouped in to four Clusters based upon their geographical location as: Western Oromia, Eastern Oromia, Southern Oromia, and Central Oromia, using cluster sample selection procedure. Then, from each cluster, one zone was selected

using simple random sampling so as to ensure every zone has the same probability of being selected, and in a way selection of one zone in no way affects selection of another Zone. Accordingly, West Shoa Zone from Western Oromia; Western Hararge Zone from Eastern Oromia; Arsi Zone from Southern Oromia ; and Sebeta and Burayu from Central Oromia (Sheger City) Administration were selected using simple random sampling technique.

3.3.1.2. Selection of Sample Secondary School Principals

In the four zones, there were 243 government Senior Secondary Schools (OEB, 2022, P.167). Scholars propose that a variety of factors, including geographic dispersion, the availability of resources such as funds and time, might influence sample selections made in research projects (Creswell, 2014; Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012). Accordingly, owing to the inadequate research budget allocated for the study by AAU (only forty five thousand EtB), and the time pressure (five years have been devoted for course work),the decision was made to systematically select manageable and representative sample size from among the 243 Senior Secondary Schools scattered over the wider geographic area of the regional state for the study. In order to determine a convenient number of sample size from the available target population for the purpose of accuracy, the researcher further limited the sample size to 20%, which is acceptable in research undertaking of this sort (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012). Finally, using proportional sampling, the above sample size was calculated to determine the number of sample participants in each zone by using Yamane's (1973) sample size determination formula. The formula applied for sample size determination was:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size

N = population size

e= error (0.05) reliability level 95% or; e= level of precision always set the value of 0.05.

The level of precision, often known as the sampling error, indicates how well the sample is close to the population's true values (Kothari, 2004). In social science research, the standard confidence level is usually 95% (p=0.05). Hence, the decision in this research was to employ the previously mentioned formula to ascertain the ultimate number of principal participants in the quantitative part of this research.

Finally, the sample size for each Zone is being calculated using proportional sampling technique so as to give equal chance to the respondents. By the same token, the sample size for the Principals appears to be exactly equal to the sample size of senior secondary schools (for each Senior Secondary School is headed by one main principal).Accordingly, 15 principals from West Shoa, 10 principals from West Hararge, 19 principals from Arsi, and 4 principals from Sheger city were selected as a sample for this study. Details of the samples for each of the forty eight secondary schools are evidently indicated in the following table.

Table 3.1:
Summary of the Sample Size for the Quantitative Study

Cluster	Western Oromia	Eastern Oromia	Southern Oromia	Central Oromia	Total
Zones	West Shoa	West Hararge	Arsi	Sheger City Admn	4
*Population Size	77	50	94	22	243
**Sample size	15	10	19	4	48

Source: * OEB (2020/21, p.193).

**Researcher's own calculation using Yamane's (1973) formula.

3.3.1.3. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques of the Qualitative Study

The purpose of the qualitative data collection was to catch participants'/ informants' experiences and reflections pertaining to the practices and challenges of principal preparation and development in public secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State. Because of this, information was gathered from two sources: relevant informants and pertinent documents. With regard to the relevant informants one relevant Education Official at the federal MoE, one relevant Education Official from Oromia Regional Education Bureau, and three experts from Woreda/Town Education Offices were recruited using purposive sampling for they are appropriate education officials who have a stake in principal development policy formulation and execution. Besides, three Head of Departments of EdPM at Universities currently are hosting secondary school principals' preparation for the regional state using purposive sampling. Farther more, four principals (two of them were attended a preparation program at university level) using a snowball sampling technique to learn their lived experience related to their preparation and development programs attended. The reasons for involving each of these participants is specifically discussed hereunder.

3.4. Sources of Data

In this study, both primary and secondary sources of data were used so as to triangulate the information obtained from different sources. The primary data source included research participants who were considered to provide pertinent information with regard to the leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in the regional state.

Accordingly, relevant expert from the Federal Ministry of Education, Oromia Regional Education Bureau and Woreda Education offices, EdPM department heads from Universities hosting the MScL training of secondary school principals for the region, incumbent secondary school principals, were used as sources of primary data.

The reason for the inclusion of relevant experts from the Federal Ministry of Education and Oromia Regional Education Bureau in the participant group is that they are in a strategic position for they formulate policy and make decisions with regard to principals' selection, preparation and development.

Focal persons from Woreda/town Education offices are also included in the participants' group for they are responsible bodies for handling issues pertaining to principals' selection and placement, as well. As they are the immediate officers to whom the principals are accountable to and are mandated to work closely with the schools in their respective Woreda, it is believed that they can better describe the process in which principals are assigned to school leadership position. Moreover, as they are in charge of supporting and monitoring the day-to-day performance of the principals, it is also assumed that they could better explain if the training was able to prepare professional principals as stipulated in the policy document.

Likewise, EdPM department heads are also included in the participants' pool for the simple reason that they are the sole actors who provide the training at University level. Hence, it is assumed that they are legitimate professionals to explain the way in which the current secondary school principals' preparation program is going on and how it helps them in developing the required leadership skills, knowledge and competence.

Secondary school principals are selected to participate in this study for two reasons: in the first place, they come to school leadership position through the selection and placement process currently in place in the national regional state. Secondly, two of the four principals have already attended the post graduate or Master of Arts Degree in school leadership (MScL) program run by universities and are currently serving as secondary school principals. Hence, they could provide valuable information about the principals' selection for the position and the leadership preparation and development program currently in place. Put differently, they can possibly describe their lived experience pertaining to the current leadership preparation and development program, selection and placement processes.

Secondary sources of data for this study are official public documents issued by government at different times. Accordingly, policy documents such as Education and Training policy (TGE, 1994), the Education Sector Development Program(ESDP VI)(MoE,2021),Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap(2017-30) (MoE,2017), the National Professional Standard for School principals (MoE,2013b) , the revised Ethiopian Teachers', Principals' and Supervisors' Development Blueprint (MoE,2013a); and the National Curriculum Framework for MA Degree in School Leadership (MoE,2014), and the revised guideline for Principals', Assistant principals, and Supervisors' selection,

Placement and Career Development Guideline (OEB,2018), were consulted to assess and analyze both the practices and challenges pertaining to the leadership preparation and development processes of principals in secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State.

3.5. Data Gathering Instruments

In research undertaking, the application of multiple data gathering instruments is recommended so as to triangulate the research findings and arrive at sound conclusions. In this regard, Berg (2007) claims that researchers may gain a more substantial view of reality, a richer, more comprehensive array of symbols and theoretical notions, and a method of confirming many of these aspects by merging several lines of sight. Based on this theoretical assumption, multiple instruments were used, including a questionnaire, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis.

3.5.1. Quantitative Data Gathering Tool

Questionnaire

Questionnaire was the main instrument to collect quantitative data. Since it allows for the collection of information from numerous respondents on variables like behaviors, experiences, or attributes(Creswell,2012; Gay, Mills & Airasian,2012), questionnaire was employed to gather data from the incumbent secondary school principals. As suggested by Cohen et al.(2000), the overall objective of the survey instrument was made clear, and specified to the purpose. The questionnaire is sought to investigate the professional preparation and development activities of school principals. In order to attain this objective, it was divided into four parts: items relating to the background information (demographics) of respondents, University- based leadership preparation activities as em-

phasized in the National Professional Standard for School Principals (MoE,2013b), and professional development (learning) activities of school principals, which included items that emerged from extensive literature review, the researcher’s personal experiences as primary and secondary schools’ principal, dean of Nekemte College of Teacher Education, lecturer in the department of EdPM at Ambo University as well as Senior expert at Oromia Education Bureau, and in consultation with other education experts and educational authorities currently working in Nekemte town Education Office.

The rationale for referring to the National Professional Standard for School Principals while developing the instrument/questionnaire was two-fold. Primarily, the MoE claims that the National Professional Standard for School Principals ,was prepared detailing the required knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that principals at all levels – pre-primary, primary, and secondary schools – are expected to display (MoE, 2013b, p.12). Secondly, the three domains of the NPSSP are composed of five competencies which are supposed to serve as the building blocks for preparation, certification and professional development of school principals in Ethiopia, to which the regional state under study is a part (MoE, 2013b, p.12). Hence, the researcher is interested in learning, from the horse's mouth, to what extent these domains and competences are aliened in the professional preparation and development of secondary school principals and the extent to which it helped them in their professional career .

Accordingly, the survey questionnaires were designed in a single format in different parts. As a result, the questionnaire contained four major parts as I, II, III and IV. Specifically, part I introduced all about the purpose of collecting the data. Part II provided items that ask for the demographic information of the respondents. Part III provided

the items that required respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement on the extent that the University-based preparation they attended helped them to develop the leadership competences as claimed by MoE (2013b) and indicated in the National Professional Standard for School Principals. The developed questionnaire was made to measure responses with five-point Likert scale, their values ranging as follows: 5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1= Strongly Disagree for all dimensions of the questionnaire which include the attitude of principals who attended a University-based leadership preparation towards the alignment of the course they attended with the three domains and five competences of the National Professional Standard for School Principals(see Appendix-E) for detail.

Part IV, on the other hand, provided the items that required incumbent secondary school principals (both trained and untrained) to indicate how often they participated in such professional development activities, after they occupied principal position, to improve their leadership skills in their respective schools, with values assigned as: 5=Almost always, 4=Many times, 3=Sometimes, 2=Rarely, and 1=Not at all (see Appendix-E, for detail).

3.5.2. Qualitative Data Gathering Tools

3.5.2.1. Interview

In this study, as recommended by Creswell (2007, P.79), while interview was used as a primary data gathering tool for the qualitative phase; document analysis was employed as the supplementary data collection instrument. In doing so, the face-to-face interview was conducted with the assumption of ensuring detailed data collection of which may not be accessed when questionnaires are used (Corbetta, 2003). There was also considerable

flexibility, as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (2007); and Corbetta (2003), allowing respondents to talk and freely express their feelings and perceptions of their lived experience. Accordingly, an in-depth semi-structured interview guide questions were developed based on the leadership preparation domains and competences as emphasized in the National Professional Standard for School Principals (MoE, 2013b), the National Curriculum Framework for MA Degree in School Leadership (MoE, 2014), and the revised guideline for Principals', Assistant principals, and Supervisors' selection, placement and Career Development Guideline of 2018(OEB,2018). Besides, principal respondents were required to assess their leadership learning on concepts or practices such as lead and facilitate vision of learning, develop and manage school community relations, lead and manage learning and teaching, lead and develop individual and team, and lead and manage school operation and resources as well as assessing the overall program quality. These effective leadership characteristics are reasonably aligned with the National Professional Standard for School Principals as the domains and competences are supposed to serve as the building blocks for preparation, certification and professional development (MoE, 2013b). Thus, an in-depth semi-structured interview guide questions were used to collect data from incumbent school principals, EdPM department heads from Universities hosting the ScL training and education officials at Woreda Education Office, Regional Education Bureau and Federal Ministry of Education(see Appendices A-D). Due attention was given to the reflections of informants in analyzing and reporting from the insiders' view of the research participants.

On top of the manageability of their number, these participants were appropriately addressed through interviews to solicit rich information about issues under consideration.

In this regard, in the current study, an in-depth semi-structured interview guide enabled the researcher to gain subjective and narrative descriptions of the perceived practices and challenges of the preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State. Besides, it was also meant to explore how far the guide lines enshrined and stipulated in the policy documents are put/ translated into practice. Put differently, the in-depth semi-structured interview guide helped the researcher to learn whether or not there is policy-practice gap in secondary school principal preparation and development in Oromia National Regional State.

3.5. 2. 2. Document Analysis

Document analysis was also conducted to complement with the interview. Accordingly, important national and regional policy documents were gathered and analyzed in order to get meaningful explanations of the problem. Furthermore, conducting document analysis was believed to help in making comparison of matches and/or mismatches pertaining to what has been stated in the policy documents and to see to what extent the policies are practiced on the ground. Accordingly, Education and Training Policy (ETP,1994); Ethiopian Teachers', Principals' and Supervisors' Development Blueprint of 2013 (the revised Blueprint);the recent Education Sector Development Program(ESDP VI)(MoE,2021), Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap(2017-30)(MoE, 2017), the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia (MoE,2013b), the revised guideline for Principals', Assistant Principals, and Supervisors' Selection, Placement and Career Development Guideline of 2018(OEB,2018), and the National Curriculum Framework for MA Degree in School Leadership (MoE,2014) were consulted to assess and analyze both

the preparation and development process of principals in secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State.

3.6. Validity and Reliability of the Quantitative Data

3.6.1. Content and Face Validation

In order to adapt and qualify the data gathering tools to the study context, as suggested by Creswell and Creswell (2018), and Creswell (2014), it was subject to the review of professionals and experts from education policy and leadership. This validation process, I believe, helped me to re-write the instrument and make necessary additions, omission and modification to the questionnaire. After having done this, the questionnaire was made ready for pilot study.

3.6.2. Pilot Test

The two characteristics that are most important for determining a measurement's "goodness" are validity and reliability (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012). Validity and reliability are two different concepts. Validity is the extent to which a measurement can be repeated, or the degree to which measuring the same phenomenon more than once yields consistent results over time; reliability, on the other hand, is the degree to which a measurement can be replicated (Gay, Mills and Airasian, 2012). According to Toddle and Tashakkori (2009), the distinct criteria for evaluating data quality in the qualitative and quantitative strands are typically used to identify the quality of the data in mixed research. The study's validity/credibility and reliability/dependability concerns are described in the section that follows.

In this study, a pilot test was carried out to verify the study's objectives, test instrument validity, and ensure adherence to research protocols. Moreover, the pilot study was also believed to get the necessary feedback on the clarity of the instructions, wording of the items, uses of the scales, simplicity and clarity of the language. Based on this assumption, the instrument was pilot tested in the eight secondary schools found in Nekemte town, the capital city of Eastern Wallaga (one of the 22 Zones of Oromia Regional State). Participants who took part in the pilot test shared similar features with the research participants as suggested by Gay, Mills and Airasian (2012). Moreover, Hair et al. (2007) recommended that data gathering tools have an internal consistency threshold coefficient of at least 0.70. In order to do this, the researcher used the coefficient alpha (Cronbach's alpha) statistical approach to examine the instrument's internal consistency reliability as follow:

Table 3.2:***Pilot Test Result of Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for Principal Preparation and Development Constructs***

No	Subscale	Reliability
I. School Leadership and Community Leadership		
1.1	Lead and facilitate learning vision of learning	.986
1.2	Develop and manage school community relation	.975
II. Instructional leadership domains		
2.1.	Lead and manage learning and teaching	.895
2.2.	Lead and develop individuals and team	.962
III. Administrative leadership domain		
	Lead and manage school operations and resource	.923
	Principal leadership development practices	.948

As can be observed from the above table, using the information gathered for the study, the reliability coefficients of the three domains and five competences for Principal Leadership Preparation sub-scales used in the current study were further examined. The range of alpha coefficients was between .895 and .986. The analysis of the pilot study indicated that the dimensions of the questionnaire have items with good internal consistency as the Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient obtained ranged from 0 .895 and 0 .986.

The process also reveals that, while some of the professional development activities listed in the questionnaire were utilized by the respondents, others were either not mentioned or were unknown to them. As a result, the professional development activities were revised to include new options and to eliminate those that raised concerns. Beyond this adjustment, no further changes were made to the device.

3.6.2. Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Data

The trustworthiness of the instrument and the study's results were protected with reference to the qualitative portion. Reduced bias is the most feasible strategy to increase validity in qualitative methods (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007). Since the researcher is the instrument in qualitative inquiry, Patton (2002) notes that the skill, competence, and rigor of the fieldworker have a major role in ensuring the validity of qualitative techniques. Therefore, an effort was made to improve the trustworthiness of the qualitative data in this study. These included writing down interview questions, creating trustworthy interview guidelines, finding credible data sources, and recording the interview results. To further guarantee the validity of the qualitative data, triangulation (Creswell, 1998) was also used. In other words, combining data from several sources, such as interviews, open-ended questionnaire answers, and document analysis was done. The other was involving member checking. In this regard, Creswell (2007) states that member checking is returning the information, analysis, interpretations, and conclusions to the participants so that they can assess the truthfulness and precision of the report. Although its inherent difficulties have been noted in the literature, Lincoln & Guba (1985) cited in Silverman (2010), view this as the essential method for generating trustworthiness. In this study, the researcher played back the recorded conversation to the interviewees at the end of each session to ensure they approved of the information disclosed. Likewise, the fact that every interview session was audio recorded, preserving the respondents' opinions in their original form, also added credibility to the qualitative data used in this study.

3.7. Methods of Data Analysis

The type of research questions being studied essentially dictates the methods of data analysis. Hence, in this study, the quantitative data obtained through questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics. This was done because the questions were descriptive in nature and hence the use of descriptive statistics for the analysis was quite appropriate to provide valuable information about the extent to which the school principals engaged in the types of the professional development activities used in the study. The data were analyzed by the help of SPSS, version 27. Accordingly, descriptive statistics like frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation were employed to analyze and arrive at the conclusions.

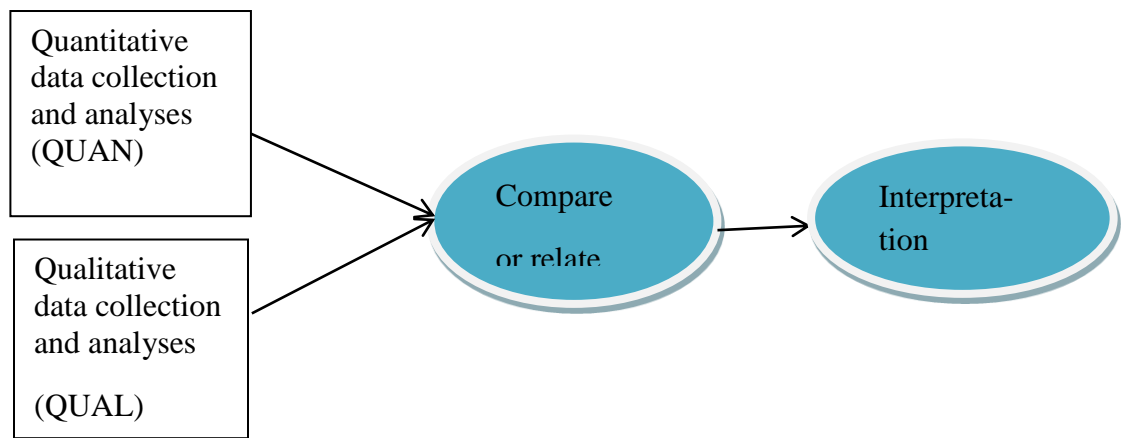
On the other hand, the data collected through interview and document review were analyzed qualitatively. After revisiting each interview results to ensure the accuracy of the data, the researcher first transcribed and organized all interview data. In doing so, each participant's interview, both the recorded and short notes, were transcribed and analyzed thematically according to the data analysis procedures suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (2007); Creswell (2007); and Saldana (2009), which call for development of coding, categorizing, mechanical sorting, and analysis of the data within each coding category. Data triangulation by document analysis was made to crosscheck the data collected through interviews and questionnaire.

Document analysis was also conducted to complement with the interview. Accordingly, important National, Regional and institutional documents were gathered and analyzed in order to get meaningful explanations of the problem. In this regard, the Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (MoE, 1994); the Education Sector Development

Programs [ESDP I-V]; National Professional Standard for School Principals; the revised guideline for Principals’, Assistant principals, and Supervisors’ Selection, Placement and Career Development Guideline of 2018(OEB,2018); and the National Curriculum Framework for MA degree in School Leadership were consulted to explore whether the professional preparation and development of secondary school principals in the region is in line with the existing policy and strategy or not.

Figure 3.1:

Convergent Parallel Mixed Design



Source: Creswell, J.W. (2014, P.270).

3.8. Ethical Consideration

In research undertaking, researchers have moral and professional obligation to protect research participants from any harm (Neuman, 2007). In order to maintain such ethical consideration, this research was conducted with careful adherence to the essential scientific and professional ethics. To this end, the study was started after the appropriate authorization and the necessary approval was obtained from the relevant authorities at different levels. Similar ethical concerns about the participants and their involvement—such as their willingness to engage, anonymity, and the freedom to quit the research— were

strongly upheld. Each participant was thoroughly informed of the research's purpose and was given the go-ahead to participate in order for this research to proceed smoothly. The researcher also ensured the confidentiality of the respondents' personal identities and the information they provided for this research.

Overall, while developing this dissertation, the researcher generally made every attempt to comply with all ethical and legal guidelines set forth in the American Psychological Association (APA), sixth edition (APA, 2010) that dictates that safeguarding the rights and privacy of research participants, protecting intellectual property rights, and maintaining the integrity of scientific knowledge.

Chapter Four

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation of Data

This chapter of the study deals with presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through parallel mixed research design. Accordingly, the chapter is divided into three sub sections. The first sub- section deals with the demographic characteristics of respondents. The second sub- section, on the other hand, presents broad analysis of the findings on the preparation of secondary school principals; while the third sub- section deals with the findings on professional development activities of the incumbent school principals. In general, presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data is done in line with the basic research questions that guided the study and in comparison with policy documents as well as scholastic works on similar issue. The data analysis process also followed an iterative step that included switching between quantitative and qualitative data and considering the salient aspects of each case as well as recurring themes.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Under this sub- section, the profile of respondents and/or informants concerning sex, age, total years of work experience, educational qualification and field of specialization are presented. For the sake of simplicity, the background information presentation and analyses of the quantitative and qualitative respondents were made separately as follows.

4.1.1. Background Characteristics of Respondents of Quantitative Data

Four demographic characteristics: sex, age, qualification and specialization, and work experience were taken into consideration as background characteristics for the quantitative respondents in this study. These background characteristics were chosen because

they directly relate to the study's objectives and the subsequent discussion on professional preparation and development of school principals. To be specific, as one of the objective of this study sought to explore the proportion of qualified principals in secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State, the information pertaining to this issue appeared to be mandatory and helpful to produce evidence for comparing policy - practice gap. Besides, these background characteristics were thought to give readers about the composition of secondary school principals in the region in terms of their level of education and field of specialization (subject area vs leadership preparation). In what follows, each of the background characteristics are presented and discussed.

Table 4.1:
Sex and Age Categories of the Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Sex	Male	43	89.6	89.6	89.6
	Female	5	10.4	10.4	100.0
	Total	48	100.0	100.0	
Age	between 30_39	37	77.1	77.1	77.1
	40_49	11	22.9	22.9	100.0
	Total	48	100	100	

The data in the above table shows that the majority of respondents are males. This condition looks a reflection of the long-standing gender- imbalance persisting in the education-

al leadership, as the number of male principals is by far larger than that of female principals at secondary schools of the regional state. For instance, the female percentage of the participants in the study is only (10.4%); while, percentage of the male participants in the study appears to be (89.6%). This implies that there is lower presentation of females in school leadership in secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State.

The documents reviewed also reveal similar finding. For instance, the recent ESDP VI, which provides a sector-wide framework for policy and execution for educational development for the years 2021-2025(MoE, 2021), reveals that the overall proportion of female leaders decreased from a baseline of 14% (2014/15) to 8% (2018/19) at secondary school (MoE, 2021,p.15).

The finding of the current study is comparable to the finding of Yohannes's (2019) study that report that women participation in leadership and in the teaching force is low which shows persistent challenge of the education system of the country. This finding also corresponds with the results of a study by EDT (2019) that reports the general lack of interest in becoming school leaders and the high turnover of female school leaders as challenge for low participation of female in school leadership. Furthermore, the Federal MoE in its ESDP VI (2021) , referring to the findings of a study by Jimma University (2019), convened that the poor results in increasing the number of female leaders is due to the difficulty to attract competent and experienced female teachers, as they would likely be assigned to distant and remote schools, and in some cases were not assigned to the intended positions.

The data in Table 4.1 further showed that the vast majority (79.2%) of the secondary school principals fall between the age range of 30 and 39 implying that they are youngsters.

Table 4.2:

Educational Level and Field of Specialization of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Educational level	MA/MSc	44	91.7	91.7
	BA/BSc	4	8.3	8.3
	Total	48	100.0	100.0
Field of specialization	Subject area	33	68.8	68.8
	School Leadership	15	31.3	31.3
	Total	48	100	100

The data in the above table presented the second demographic survey item that asked about the educational level of participants and their field of specialization. In item one of the table, attempt has been made to identify whether they are Diploma, Bachelor's degree, Master's degree, or other degree holders. Accordingly, only a token (8.3%) held bachelor's degree which is, in fact and as per the policy of the federal MoE(2007; 2013a) appears to be below the minimal qualifications for one to serve as a principal in Ethiopian secondary schools. However, the highest level of education attained by the vast majority (91.7%) of the respondents was found to be Master's degree, heralding a good news that majority of the secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State are Mas-

ter’s degree holders; but “at what cost of leadership preparation/specialization?” is the next question.

Item 2 of the same table, therefore, sought to identify their field of specialization. Accordingly, it was found out that only (31.3%) respondents claim to have specialization in school leadership/ EdPM/ EdLM; while majority of the respondents (68.8%) were subject specialists, specializing in various subject areas that are common in the curriculum for secondary schools in Ethiopia, as depicted in the following table.

Table 4.3:

Specific Areas of Specialization of Respondents

Specific areas of Specialization	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Mathematics	3	6.3	6.3
Physics	4	8.3	8.3
Sport science	2	4.2	4.2
Afan Oromo	3	6.3	6.3
Biology	6	12.5	12.5
History	4	8.3	8.3
Chemistry	5	10.4	10.4
TEFL	6	12.5	12.5
*EdPM/*EdL/*ScL	15	31.3	31.3
Total	48	100.0	100.0

*EdPM=Educational Planning and Management; * EdL=Educational Leadership; *ScL=School Leadership.

This section further identified the specific areas of specialization of the respondent principals. As shown in Table 4:3, majority (68.8%) of the respondent secondary school principals currently serving in the sampled schools of Oromia National Regional State were subject specialists, specializing in various subject areas without any kind of specialized training in school leadership. Surprisingly, the data further revealed that 20 principals out of 33(60.6%) had natural science background. Obviously, these school principals are

leading their respective schools without having the required knowledge and skill necessary for them to be effective in their current career.

The data further reveals that only a little more than a quarter; i.e. (31.3%), of the respondent secondary school principals have specialized in at least one of the three graduate programs (EdPM, EdL or ScL) run by various Universities that have principal preparation programs in regular, weekend, and a combination of summer-distance-summer. Out of curiosity, the researcher raised a follow up question that would help to identify whether they have ever attended any leadership preparation program or not; and if attended, to specify the type of principal preparation program from among the choices available, which are meant for both aspiring as well as serving principals in various universities across the country as follow:

Table 4.4:

Whether or Not Principals Attended any Leadership Preparation Course

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percent
Have you ever attended any leadership preparation program	Yes	15	31.3	31.3
	No	33	68.8	68.8
	Total	48	100.0	100.0
Type of principal preparation program attended	EdAd	-	-	-
	EDPM	5	33.3	33.3
	EDL	6	40	40
	PGDSL	-	-	-
	ScL	4	26.7	26.7
	Total	15	100	100

Accordingly, the data in table 4.4 portrays that only a little more than a quarter(31.3%) of the serving principals attended leadership preparation program with different nomenclature as: EDL ,comprising 40%, the next larger group being EDPM,33.3% and the remaining ScL constitute nearly a quarter (26.7%). The data in the above table also reveals a surprising result in the sense that the vast majority(68.8%) of the incumbent secondary school principals in the regional state haven't attended any leadership preparation program. From this it follows that the school principals' educational preparation/ specialization is not in line with a direction in the FDRE MoE policy document / Blue Print (MoE,2007;MoE, 2013a) that dictates that principals for secondary schools should be master degree holders who attended a specialized training on school leadership. The document also states that principals for secondary schools should have one of their degrees in educational management.

The policy document reviewed, ESDP VI, also revealed that only 29% of secondary school principals in Ethiopia are qualified to lead at this particular level (MoE, 2021). The situation in Oromia National Regional State is almost similar to the national percentage of qualified secondary school principal and appeared to be only 29.9% (OEB, 2018). Needless to say, that nearly three-fourth (70%) of secondary school principals are not qualified enough to lead at this particular level. Furthermore, the Federal Ministry of Education in its recent ESDP VI (2021), also explains the low rate of increase in the number of qualified secondary school leaders 'as being caused by trainees' lack of interest, as the qualification is not highly valued'. (MoE, 2021, p.15).

This finding is comparable with the findings of Daniel's (2013) study that found that most (78%) of the primary school leaders had no leadership training but have educa-

tional qualification for teaching different subjects in the schools in Dire Dawa Administrative region of Ethiopia. It is also consistent with the findings of Yohannes's (2019) study that found that (72.2%) of secondary school principals in Ethiopia had natural sciences backgrounds.

Overall, the data collected from various sources and the subsequent analysis indicate that little emphasis is placed on specialization in school leadership when assigning principals in secondary schools within the Oromia National Regional State. This implies a persistent gap between policy and practice. It is important to recognize that school leadership is not simply a job that individuals can enter without the necessary qualifications and specialization. Rather, it demands expert knowledge, specialized leadership skills, and a strong sense of professional responsibility. Effective leadership in the complex and challenging landscape of the twenty first century secondary education is achievable only when the requisite skills are both possessed and actively applied. In here, I think, it is sensible to argue that school principalship is a different role from classroom teaching and, hence, requires specific preparation and development. Therefore, to better attain the desired educational objectives, the importance of specialization and appropriate assignment of secondary school principals must not be overlooked.

Table 4.5:***Work Experiences of Respondents***

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Years served in teaching	6-10	16	33.3	33.3
	11-15	5	10.4	10.4
	16-20	15	31.3	31.3
	>20	12	25.0	25.0
	Total	48	100.0	100.0
Years served as school principal	1-5	26	54.2	54.2
	6-10	22	45.8	45.8
	Total	48	100.0	100.0

The last demographic characteristic considered is work experiences of respondents as teachers as well as school principalship. Accordingly, the data in item one of the table depicts that a little more than half (56.3%) of the current school principals have served as teachers for over 16 years; while the remaining 43.7% have served between 6 and 15 years.

Item two of the same table portrays respondents' work experience as school principal. Accordingly, while a little more than half (54.2%) of them revealed that they have served between 1 to 5 years; the remaining 45.8% claimed to have served between 6 to 10 years in the school leadership position. From this therefore, it goes without saying that a little more than half of secondary school principals in the regional state have no adequate experience to be legible for the position as a direction in the FDRE MoE policy document / Blue Print (MoE,2007; MoE, 2013a) dictate that one has to serve at least for five years as a teacher to compete for principal ship. In other words, majority of them

have served between one and five years which is minimum service in the profession required to qualify as a principal (MoE, 2013a).

4.1.2. Background Characteristics of the Qualitative Research Participants

The qualitative data for the study was gathered from relevant Education Officials at the Federal MoE, Oromia Regional Education Bureau, and experts from Woreda/Town Education Offices who were recruited using purposive sampling for they are appropriate education officials who have a stake in principal preparation and development policy formulation and execution, as well. Besides, qualitative data were gathered from Head of Departments of EdPM at Universities currently hosting secondary school principals' preparation for the regional state using purposive sampling. Furthermore, the data were secured from four principals (two of them were attended a preparation program at university level) using a snowball sampling technique to learn their lived experience related to their preparation and development programs attended. The following background variables were taken into account for the respondents: sex, age, years spent in leadership roles, qualification, and field of specialization. Due to the respondents' comparatively lengthy tenure in leadership roles and the relevance of their field of study, the inclusion of years served in leadership as well as their field of study, in addition to the background characteristics of sex and age, is to enrich the quality of qualitative data. In other words, it was believed that because of their comparatively extended stay in the leadership position, they would have the chance to offer insightful information based on their experience. The following table portrays the whole story in a nutshell.

Table 4.6:***Personal Data of the Qualitative Research Participants***

Category	Parti- pant's Code	Sex	No of years in		Qualification	Field of Spe- cialization
			Teaching	Leadership		
Ministry of Education	M-1	M	Twelve	Eleven	MA	EdL
University HoD*, EdPM*	U-1	M	Ten	Three	MA	EdPM
	U-2	M	Seven	Six	MA	EdL
	U-3	M	Five	Four	MA	EdL
Oromia Education Bureau	EB-1	M	Eleven	Three	MSc	Biology
Woreda/Town Education Officers	EO-1	M	Nine	Three	BA	EdPM
	EO-2	M	Six	Four	MA	English
	EO-3	M	Eight	Three	BSc	Maths
Principals	P-1	M	Seven	Four	MA	ScL
	P-2	F	Five	Three	MA	EdL
	P-3	M	Six	Two	MSc	Biology
	P-4	M	Nine	Three	BA	English

*HoD= Head of Department

*EdPM= Educational Planning and Management

As can be observed from Table 4.6, three out of the four principals are males, while only one is found to be female which is comparable to the FDR Ethiopian MoE's recent ESDP VI report indicating the overall proportion of female school principals which decreased from a baseline of 14% in 2014/15 to 8% in 2018/19 at secondary school (MoE, 2021,p.15); and the annual statistical abstract of Oromia Education Bureau's report indicating the proportion to be only 1.9% at secondary school level(OEB,2019 /20,P.193).The data further revealed that almost all leadership positions at various eche-
lon of the education structure, from top MoE to Woreda Education Office and even at

university HoD level, participated in this study were dominantly occupied by male, which provide avenues for further research.

With regard to the educational qualification of the participants, the data reveals that nine out of twelve participants of all the three categories (i.e., focal persons in Education Offices, HoD at Universities, and secondary school principals) hold Master's degree; while three of them (two of the Woreda Education Officers and one of the secondary school principals) hold only first degree. It is evident that the two education office experts and one school principal, who only holds a Bachelor of Arts degree, may find it challenging to provide their followers, who are all second-degree holders, with the appropriate professional assistance. In the same vein, leaders who are expected to offer professional support, yet have lower qualifications, may not be heard/ trusted by their followers. Furthermore, Table 4.5 shows that, although two of the three interviewees in the Woreda education offices and one of the four secondary school principals had a Bachelor's degree, where only one of the former and three of the latter group had a second degree, a requirement necessary to be a principal. This means that only one of the Woreda education office experts and three of the school principals were fit for their respective roles.

The last, but not least, demographic data considered for qualitative study participants was their field of specialization as it has a make-or-break effect in the leadership of educational institutions. Accordingly, the data in table 4.5 portrays that all the three HoDs at Universities were specialized in educational leadership, though the program varies as EdPM and EdL. When it comes to the specialization of the education experts across the ladder of educational hierarchy, one can find mixed type of specialization. With the ex-

ception of an expert at the MoE and only one of the three woreda education experts who specialized in EdL and EdPM respectively, an expert from Oromia Regional Education Bureau and two of the Woreda Education experts were found to be subject specialists. By implication, they were drawn from classroom teaching without having any specialized training in educational leadership.

Out of the four secondary school principals participated in the qualitative study, only two have specialized in school leadership and fit-for-the-purpose; while two of them do not have leadership training, i.e., they have natural science and language background and, therefore, are subject specialists. This finding is comparable with Yohannes's (2019) study that found that majority, i.e., eight out of eleven (72.2%) secondary school principals in Ethiopia had natural science backgrounds. This result is also consistent with research from Tanzania and Kenya that shows "many school heads are promoted to headship positions without the requisite qualifications" due to lack of training institutes for educational leaders (Onguko et al., 2008, p. 721).

In summary, the demographic characteristics data secured from both quantitative and qualitative analysis reveals that secondary school principalship in Oromia National Regional State is male dominated (89.6%), majority of whom (79.2%) are young (in the age range of 30-39), and a little more than half (54.2%) of them have served between 1 to 5 years.

The data further reveals that majority of (68.8%) the secondary school principals currently serving in Oromia National Regional State were subject specialists, specializing

in various subject areas, without having any kind of specialized training in school leadership implying policy-practice gap.

Moreover, even though the vast majority (91.7%) of the respondents attained master's degree, a token (8.3%) of them held bachelor's degree which is, in fact, and as per the policy of the Federal MoE(2007; 2013a) appears to be below the minimum qualifications for one to serve as a principal in Ethiopian Secondary schools.

4.2. Leadership Preparation Activities/Practices of Principals

The purpose of this section was to ascertain from leaders at all levels to what extent does the University-based training given helped secondary school principals to develop the leadership competencies envisioned in the National Professional Standard for School Principals as outlined in the policy document of MoE(2013b, p.12). Accordingly, the following sections sequentially convey the research findings—both quantitative and qualitative—pertaining to the alignment of competencies of the National Professional Standard for School Principals and/with principals' university - based preparation programs/ initiatives.

The National Professional Standard for Ethiopian School Principals comprised a list of domains and competencies that are meant to act as the cornerstones for training, certification, and professional development (MoE, 2013b).As a result, the standard is organized into three key domains as: (1) school vision and community leadership, (2) instructional leadership and (3) administrative leadership. Each of the three domains was further made to incorporate five different competencies respectively as: 1.1. lead and facilitate vision of learning 1.2. developing and managing school community relations; 2.1. lead and manage learning and teaching; 2.2. lead and develop individuals and team; and

3.1. lead and manage school operations and resources intended to serve as foundational elements for preparation, certification, and professional development (MoE, 2013b). As these five areas are related to the duties expected of principals, they must be covered in principal preparation programs. The study's findings were scrutinized and assessed in light of the core research questions and relevant research findings from literature reviews, all while adhering to the aforementioned guiding principles.

This portion of the of the analysis and interpretation of data is, therefore, based on the questionnaire, which was derived from the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia, that comprised a list of three domains and five competencies that were further broken down into twenty-six categorized principal preparation activities in the principals survey. The incumbent principal respondents (N=15) who disclosed or verified having participated in a university-based program for leadership preparation were asked to rate the degree to which the university-based training they received had assisted them in developing the leadership competencies listed in the MoE policy document. There were five descriptions on the rating scale, which went from "1 to 5", indicating: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree (See Appendix-E). Finally, the quantitative data relating to this part was analyzed through descriptive statistical analysis by computing the mean score and standard deviations for the principal respondents in response to the frequency with which they rate on the five- point Likert scale. In order to better understand and make easier for interpretation the extent to which the principals agree or disagree with the assertion that university- based leadership preparation helped them to develop the leadership competencies outlined in the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia, specific cut- points with labels for

the survey mean scores were set. Scale interpretation ranges for the scale means: 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.49), 2 = Disagree (1.50-2.49), 3 = Undecided (2.50-3.49), 4 = Agree (3.50-4.49), 5 = Strongly Agree (4.50-5.00).

Competencies Acquired as a Result of the Leadership Preparation Program

Participants were provided with a sub scale to capture their views on ways in which the university- based training programme prepared them to develop and demonstrate the two major competencies: ‘Lead and facilitate vision of learning’, and ‘Develop and manage school community Relations’; which are categorized under ‘School vision and community leadership Domain’ in the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia.

Table 4.7 presents a summary of responses obtained from principals who reported to have undergone the formal university-based postgraduate degree (MA) preparation program regarding whether the current training programs for secondary school principals are aligned with the Principal’s Professional Standard of Ethiopia/competence framework.

Table 4.7:***Respondents' Rating on Competencies Acquired Under School Vision and Community Leadership Domain***

1.1 Lead and facilitate vision of learning	Rating scale (N= 15)				
	Strongly disagree & Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Strongly agree & Agree (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Build and sustain an educational vision for the school	-	20	80	4.27	.799
2. Use clear ethical principles to guide decision-making and problem solving	-	6.7	93.3	4.60	.507
3. Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	-	20	80	4.20	.414
4. Encourage staff initiative and innovative efforts		13.3	86.7	4.33	.724
5. Take staff opinion into consideration when facilitating change		6.7	93.3	4.60	.632
1.2. Develop and manage school community relations					
1. Work with families to support their students' learning	13.3	40	46.6	3.93	1.033
2. Promote a culture of open communication with families		46.7	53.3	3.80	.862
3. Communicate effectively with families about the school mission and performance expectations		26.7	73.3	4.00	.756
4. Collaborate with school community stakeholders to support teaching and learning	6.7	6.7	86.6	4.27	.884
5. Mobilize the community's cultural, social, and intellectual resources		33.3	66.7	3.93	.799

Note: N = 15. Scale interpretation ranges for the scale means: 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.49), 2 = Disagree (1.50-2.49), 3 = Undecided (2.50-3.49), 4 = Agree (3.50-4.00), 5 = Strongly Agree (4.5-5).

As can be seen from Table 4.7 above, the incumbent principals who participated in the study agreed that the University- based preparation program helped them to develop the two major competencies (i.e., leading and facilitating vision of learning; and develop-

ing and managing school community relations). The mean scores for this competencies/dimension of the preparation program range from 3.80 to 4.60 implying that majority of the respondents agree/strongly agree with all the items on the sub scale. While the least score is associated with the perception of principals pertaining to promote a culture of open communication with families (M=3.80, SD=.862), the highest one goes to taking staff opinion into consideration when facilitating change and using clear ethical principles to guide decision-making and problem solving (M=4.60, SD=.632).

Besides, the second-lowest result compared to the other items was related to the competencies pertaining to working with families to support their students' learning (M=3.93, SD=1.033) and mobilizing the community's cultural, social, and intellectual resources (M=3.93, SD=.799). This implies that principals may lack the necessary competencies that can help them to mobilize the community's cultural, social, and intellectual resources which are of paramount importance in facilitating school improvement as well as students' academic achievement. This, in turn, emanates from lack of adequate training in the area of school- community relations. Secondary schools are not and cannot remain islands in the larger community; they are social institutions established by the society, for the society. Hence, if principals are expected to mobilize the community's cultural, social, and intellectual resources for the common good of the society they are meant to serve, first and foremost, they must be trained and equipped with the leadership competencies in the area of school- community relations.

Connected to the previously mentioned thematic area is the participants' viewpoint on whether the current preparation programs for secondary school principals align with the two key competencies outlined in the 'school vision and community leadership

domain’—specifically, leading and facilitating a vision of learning, and developing and managing school-community relations—as stipulated in the national policy document, i.e., National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia (MoE, 2013b). This discussion draws on qualitative data collected from interviews with principals and Educational Planning and Management (EdPM) department heads at the hosting Universities, which mainly supports some of the quantitative findings presented. The next section summarizes the responses gathered on this subject.

One of the principal respondents who graduated from Ambo university with MA degree in ScL in 2018 felt that the newly introduced principal preparation program helped him to acquire important leadership skills. He added,

During my university days, I came to know how to create vision for my school and lead my staff and students in that direction. Really, I can say the course ‘Instructional Leadership (ScL 602)’ helped me a lot than any other courses in this regard. I found the course very practical and pertinent to school level leadership, though I feel inconvenience with a course like school-community relations (P-1, December, 2023).

Haile: You said “I feel inconvenience with a course like school-community relations”. Why uncomfortable? I mean, anything wrong related to its content, method of delivery? - Or what forced you to say so?

P-1: You know, it was a distance course and we were told to attend tutorial classes during semester break in our university but they failed to do so due to shortage of budget. Even the contents are downloaded from the internet and do not reflect

the Ethiopian context. This is the area where I'm feeling unsuccessful both in my training and career so far (P-1, December, 2023).

Another respondent who reported that she is a graduate and have a Master's degree in EdLM, acknowledged that the training she attended in the university helped her to lead and manage secondary school affairs properly. The following quote illustrates this:

I have taken important courses like Strategic and School Development Planning, and instructional supervision which dealt with contemporary issues in school leadership today. In fact, the course "Leadership in Education"; though more theoretical, also helped me to wisely handle the complex issues in today's secondary school. So, these are important skills I acquired from the training program I attended (P-2, December, 2023).

Educational Planning and Management (EdPM) department heads at the hosting Universities were also asked to explain whether or not the current training programs for secondary school principals in place are aligned with the Principal's Professional Standard of Ethiopia/competence framework. Accordingly, one of the interviewees (U-1) who was a graduate of EdPM himself, forwarded that there were alignment of the competencies outlined in the Principal's Professional Standard of Ethiopia particularly with MA ScL preparation. He added,

...as far as my knowledge of the ScL is concerned, the National Curriculum Framework for MA Degree in School Leadership was prepared by a team of EdPM professionals who were representatives of seven universities under the auspices of Ministry of Education. Other programs like EdPM were not for these

were designed long before the formulation of the Principal's Professional Standard of Ethiopia (U-1, December,2023).

For the same interview question, all the three department heads at the sample university responded more or less in the same fashion. For example, one of the respondents (U-2) said, "the curriculum guide for MA degree in school leadership program was prepared centrally at MoE and appears to be based on the competencies of the Principal's Professional Standard of Ethiopia designed by the federal MoE".

A further look into the National Curriculum Framework for MA degree in School Leadership document also witnessed that the curriculum designers were a team of eight professionals drawn from seven universities - one each from Addis Ababa, Jimma, Haramaya, Mekele, Bahirdar, and two of them were from Dilla University (MoE. 2014, P.2) under the auspice of the Federal Ministry of Education. Therefore, it could be said that because it is centrally designed curriculum under the ownership of the federal Ministry of Education who at the same time initiated and organized the National Professional standard for Principals, the alignment of the competencies envisioned was certain.

In connection to the competencies that relates to 'Develop and manage school community Relations' principals and Woreda level education experts were consulted through interview on how well prepared are ScL graduates. Participants from both group revealed that they are performing better as compared to those who did not trained in leadership. However, they were also of the opinion that there are practical challenges in the actual work situation particularly in the areas related to school-community relations. One of the Woreda level education experts, for instance, echoed,

Secondary school principals in my Woreda are not that much successful so far in promoting a culture of open communication with the surrounding community. As far as my knowledge is concerned, there is the course commonly known as school and community relation in principal preparation programme. However, even those who are qualified in school leadership are not effective in this area. Due to this, our schools remained an island and remained institutions that look for all the resources required for the school improvement from government.(EO-1, October,2023).

A similar observation was made by a process- owner for teachers and school leaders in one of the Woreda Education Offices of the sample area, as he noted that

Principals' capacity to work with parents and community members is weak. In my opinion, this partly emanates from community's misconception that providing schools with all the resources needed is the sole responsibility of government. School principals themselves also lack the necessary skill of creating meaningful relation between schools and the surrounding community; instead, they simply rely on working with PSTA members as a substitute for community participation (EO-3, November,2023).

Data generated from document analysis also reveal that “School Community Relations (ScL 608)” is one of the core courses in the curriculum of MA program in School Leadership training program with 2 credit hours and five chapters. The curriculum guide further identified five competencies to be acquired by the trainees after successful completion of the course as:

Competence#1. Understand the concepts and philosophy of school community relationship;

Competence#2. Build a school culture that ensures community participation in school governance, school resources management and instructional processes;

Competence#3. Identify potential school–community partnership and areas of participation;

Competence#4. Manage diversity in schools and community;

Competence#5. Identify challenges and design mechanisms to resolve the problems faced in the school community relationship (MoE, 2014, pp.65-70).

In addition to this, out of the eight competencies in the course ‘ Instructional Leadership (ScL 602)’, the fifth chapter and the fifth competency that reads as “Facilitate the involvement of parents in the learning of students” is devoted to eliciting parental involvement in the education of their children (MoE, 2014, p.28). The curriculum guide further identified five competencies to be acquired by the trainees after successful completion of the course as:

Participants who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Competence#1.communicate the school vision, mission and goals ;

Competence#2.Manage the school curriculum and instruction effectively and inclusively

Competence#3. Ensure that teachers are applying academic standards in their work with students;

Competence#4. Shape and maintain an academically oriented school climate;

Competence#5. Facilitate the involvement of parents in the learning of students;

Competence#6. Establish and maintain systems and structures that strengthen quality of teaching and learning including students with special School needs and students at risk;

Competence#7. Monitor quality of instruction with respect to input, process and output to enhance students' and school performance;

Competence#8. Apply interpersonal approaches and techniques of supervision to enhance teachers professional development and improve students' performance (MoE,2014,pp.27-28).

Thus, it could be said that adequate contents are included in the course guide book to help the trainees acquire the competencies related to develop and manage school community relations. The complain of the participant principals seem to focus on the preparation of contents and delivery of the course as it was meant to be handled as a distance modality.

In general, as can be understood from the concern of the interviewees, the University- based MA in ScL preparation program, in particular, seems to be aligned with the competencies outlined under school vision and community leadership Domain, as indicated in the NPSSPE, the policy document of MoE(2013a, p.12) and have helped incumbent principals in the process of acquiring leadership skills and competencies designed for the program. However, the fact that some courses are offered in a distance modality than face-to- face(e.g, School Community Relation) and/or for a limited duration of time (as the summer program is only six weeks long), as well as lack of centrally prepared training module whereby the depth and scope of course contents are usually determined

by the course instructors based on their own experience and prior reading are obvious shortcomings because the graduates believe that they could not gain as much as they should from the courses.

Participants were also provided with a sub scale to capture their views on ways in which the programme prepared them to develop and demonstrate the major competencies-Lead and manage learning and teachings and Lead and develop individuals and team- categorized under Instructional leadership Domain . Table 4.8 below presents the data related to this.

Table 4.8:***Respondents' Rating on Competencies Acquired under Instructional Leadership Domain***

2.1 Lead and manage learning and teachings	Rating scale (N= 15)				
	Strongly disagree & Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Strongly agree & Agree (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Establish high expectations for student learning	6.7	20	73.3	4.03	.733
2. Hold teachers accountable to improve student learning		26.7	73.3	4.03	.660
3. Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning		6.7%	93.3%	4.08	.616
4. Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning	4.7	22	73.3	4.00	.641
5. Create a coherent educational program across the school		20	80	4.05	.639
6. Conduct teacher observations and assessments to improve teaching effectiveness		6.7	93.3	4.15	.700
2.2. Lead and develop individuals and team					
1. Work with teachers to develop goals for their practice and professional learning		20	80	4.00	.655
2. Provide constructive criticism and challenge teachers to become better teachers		33.3	66.7	3.93	.799
3. Work with teachers to develop goals for their practice and professional learning	20	6.7	73.3	3.93	1.163
4. Work with teachers to change instructional methods if students are not doing well		20	80	4.33	.488
5. Plan and implement professional development activities for teachers		13.3	86.7	4.13	.640

Note: N = 15. Scale interpretation ranges for the scale means: 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.49), 2 = Disagree (1.50-2.49), 3 = Undecided (2.50-3.49), 4 = Agree (3.50-4.00), 5 = Strongly Agree (4.5-5).

Table 4.8 portrays the mean ratings of the respondent principals' level of agreement pertaining to the preparation they attended helped them to develop the two major competencies (i.e., Lead and manage learning and teachings, and Lead and develop individuals and team) indicated under Instructional leadership Domain II in the NPSSPs. The mean scores for these competencies of the preparation program range from 3.93 to 4.60, implying that respondents agree/strongly agree with all the items on the sub scale. While the least score is associated with the perception of principals pertaining to provide constructive criticism and challenge teachers to become better teachers ($M=3.93, SD=.799$), the highest one goes to working with teachers to develop goals for their practice and professional learning ($M=4.33, SD=.488$). Besides, the second-lowest result, in contrast to other items, was related to the competences pertaining to work with teachers to change instructional methods if students are not doing well ($M=3.93, SD=1.163$), and planning and implementing professional development activities for teachers ($M=3.93, SD=.799$).

In connection to the alignment of the competencies that pertains to 'Lead and manage learning and teachings' and 'Lead and develop individuals and team' - categorized under 'Instructional leadership Domain', pertinent documents were also reviewed. One of such documents was the curriculum guide for MA in ScL prepared centrally under the auspice of Ethiopian MoE. The data generated from this official document reveal that the competencies were outlined in different courses. One of these courses found to be 'Instructional Leadership (ScL 602)', which was organized into eight major themes with three credit hours, where four of the important competencies are outlined in clear terms as:

Participants who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Competence #3.Ensure that teachers are applying academic standards in their work with students;

Competence #4.Shape and maintain an academically oriented school climate;

Competence #7. Monitor quality of instruction with respect to input, process and output to enhance students’ and school performance ;

Competence #8. Apply interpersonal approaches and techniques of supervision to enhance teachers professional development and improve students’ Performance” (MoE,2014,p.28).

Besides, the competencies are clearly indicated in one of the core- courses of the program known as ‘Foundations of School Leadership (ScL 601)’ organized in five chapters with four credit hours. Out of the five competencies outlined for the course in the curriculum guide, competence # four that reads as: ‘Lead self, teams and organizations effectively and efficiently’ (MoE, 2014, p.21) relates itself to one of the two competencies portrayed in table 4.7 above. Moreover, in the course ‘ School Resources Management (ScL 605)’, two of the nine competencies, i.e., competence #2 which reads as “ Ensure that procedures and practices support staff and students to contribute to the realization of a conducive learning environment” and competence #5 that reads as “ Acknowledge excellence and challenge poor performance at all levels and ensure effective and corrective action and follow-up;”(MoE,2014,p.46), were purposely included in the curriculum guide of MA in ScL to help secondary school principals acquire basic competencies outlined in the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia, during their stay in University-based two years School leadership in-service (summer-bega-summer-

bega¹)preparation program designed and agreed upon by both the Federal Ministry of Education and Regional Education Bureaus(MoE,2014).

Therefore, based on the evidences secured from both quantitative and qualitative data sources, it appears to be safe and logical to generalize that the curriculum guide for MA in ScL University-based two years School leadership in-service (summer-bega-summer-bega²)preparation program was aligned with basic competencies outlined in the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia, as outlined in the policy document of MoE (2013b, p.12), than other preparation programs like EdPM and EdL .Participants were also provided with a sub- scale to capture their views on ways in which the program prepared them to develop and demonstrate the major competence- ‘Lead and manage school operations and resources’- categorized under ‘Administrative leadership Domain’. The means and standard deviation for the items are illustrated in Table 4.8 below.

¹ In the Ethiopian context, "Bega" typically refers to the winter months of December to February. Schools are closed for the mid-year vacation from the end of January until the first week of February. As a result, tutorial classes are common for teachers and principals during this time.

Table 4.9:***Respondents' Rating on Competencies Acquired under Administrative Leadership Domain***

3.1. Lead and manage school operations and resources	Rating scale (N= 15)				
	Strongly disagree & Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Strongly agree & Agree (%)	Mean	Std. deviation
1. Manage school resources (e.g., personnel, instructional time, supplies/ equipment) to optimize teaching and learning	-	6.7	93.3	4.07	.458
2. Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	-	13.3	86.7	3.93	.458
3. Manage support services to enhance learning for all students	-	20	80	3.80	.414
4. Manage school policies and procedures (e.g., schedules) to optimize teaching and learning	-	13.3	86.7	4.53	.743

Note: N = 15. Scale interpretation ranges for the scale means: 1 = Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.49), 2 = Disagree (1.50-2.49), 3 = Undecided (2.50-3.49), 4 = Agree (3.50-4.00), 5 = Strongly Agree (4.5-5).

As can be observed from Table 4.9 above, the incumbent principals who participated in the study acknowledged that the University- based preparation program helped them to develop the third major competence (i.e., Lead and manage school operations and resources). The mean scores for these competencies of the preparation program range from 3.80 (SD=.414) to 4.53 (SD=.743), implying that respondents agree/strongly agree with all the items on the sub scale. While the least score is associated with the perception of principals pertaining to managing support services to enhance learning for all students (M=3.80, SD=.414), the highest one goes to managing school policies and procedures (e.g., schedules) to optimize teaching and learning (M=4.53, SD=.743). Likewise, the second-lowest result compared to the other items was related to the competence pertaining to managing facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment (M=3.93, SD=.458). In terms of percentage, the third item (manage support services to enhance learning for all students) was rated 'undecided' by less than a

quarter (20 percent) of the respondents, though who rated this item ‘agree’ and/or ‘strongly agree’ accounted for 80 percent of the respondents respectively.

In connection to the competencies that pertains to managing support services to enhance learning for all students, principals and Woreda level education experts were consulted through interview. The principals reflected that they have a kind of understanding, acquired just from the training they get as well as from reading manuals. However, they forwarded inhibiting factors for its practicality from their own school context. For instance, one of the principals who is currently serving in one of the rural secondary schools of West Hararge, expressed the reality in his Woreda as follows:

Even though, I believe that, I have adequate know-how for managing and organizing different support services to enhance learning for our students, due to shortage of budget, support services are not facilitated in my school for we are using the meager resource we have at hand, year after year, for running the teaching-learning process confined only in the classroom, as usual. Owing to the absence of chemicals and apparatus, for instance, teachers are teaching chemistry theoretically like history. This is really a very sad and disgusting for the thinking mind; you can’t practice at least what you have in-mind. What is the purpose of having certain skills unless a school you are leading is running short of budget? (P-2, December,2023).

Participant P-1 likewise says that “of course, having the skill is only a necessary precondition to enhance students’ learning; however, possession of the skill alone is not suffice to bring about the desired behavioral change in students- the availability of adequate budget is equally important”.

Data generated from document analysis also reveal that “School Resource Management (ScL 605)” is one of the core courses in the curriculum of MA program in School Leadership training with 4 credit hours in Ethiopia. The same course with different course number ‘Resource Management in Education, (EdPM 602)’ is also one of the major courses in the curriculum of MA program in Educational Leadership and Management training program with the same credit hours. The curriculum guide for MA in ScL, in particular, identifies the following nine competencies to be acquired by the trainees after successful completion of the course:

Participants who successfully complete this course will be able to:

Competence#1. Mobilize, allocate and utilize resources to support learning and teaching;

Competence#2. Ensure that procedures and practices support staff and students to contribute to the realization of a conducive learning environment;

Competence#3. Ensure that resources are managed in line with the finance & material utilization, public code of conduct, policies and accountability practices;

Competence#4. Assign , develop and retain staff appropriately and manage their work load to achieve the vision and goals of the school;

Competence#5. Acknowledge excellence and challenge poor performance at all levels and ensure effective and corrective action and follow-up;

Competence#6. Prepare an HR (human resource) plan for the school;

Competence#7. Ensure the proper allocation, distribution and utilization of different school funds;

Competence#8. Ensure the proper allocation, utilization and maintenance of school material and property (buildings, playground and other facilities);

Competence#9. Ensure the proper utilization of time and information (MoE,2014, pp.27-28).

Thus, adequate contents are included in the course guide book to help the trainees acquire the competencies related to leading and managing school operations and resources. The complain of the participant principals seem to focus on the implementation of this competencies in the real work situation due to budget constraint.

Overall, based on the evidences secured from both quantitative and qualitative data sources, it appears to be safe and logical to generalize that the curriculum guide for MA in ScL University-based two years School leadership in-service (summer-bega-summer-bega)preparation program was aligned with basic competencies outlined in the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia, as indicated in the policy document of MoE (2013b, p.12), than other preparation programs like EdPM and EdL. The fact that incumbent principals who confirmed that they attended MA in ScL gave the competencies a high rating suggests that they thought the university-based preparation program addressed some important issues that were connected to the competencies outlined in the National Professional Standard for Principals in Ethiopia (MoE,2013b)and roles in their work as principals and school leaders. This finding appears to be consistent with what has been forwarded by Lovely's (2004) assertion that affirmed that better program alignment is necessary for principals to enhance performance.

4.3. Leadership Development Practices of Principals

This section of the study aimed to find out from the incumbent secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State (both those who complied attending University-based leadership preparation program as well as those who did not, N=48) what kind of leadership development activities they use to hone their leadership skill after being appointed to leadership positions in their respective schools. The quantitative and qualitative research findings of the leadership development practices that secondary school principals in the study area are currently engaged in are presented in the following sections.

This portion of the questionnaire, which was developed from a review of the related literature, comprised a list of seventeen items/activities that were categorized into two major principal development activities in the survey. The incumbent principal respondents (N=48), both who disclosed or verified having participated in a university-based program for leadership preparation as well as who did not, were asked to rate how frequently they involved in different kinds of leadership development activities to develop their leadership skills after they occupied secondary school principalship position. There were five descriptions on the rating scale, which went from "1 to 5", indicating: **1**=Not at all; **2**=Rarely, **3**=Sometimes, **4**=Many times, **5**= Almost always (See Appendix-E). Finally, the quantitative data relating to this part was analyzed through descriptive statistical analysis by computing the mean score and standard deviations along with percentile and rank- order for the principal respondents in response to the frequency with which they rate on the five point Likert scale. In order to better understand and make easier for interpretation how frequently the principals engaged in the leadership development activities

to develop their leadership skills, specific cut- points with labels for the survey mean scores were set. Scale interpretation ranges for the scale means: 1 = Not at all (1.00-1.49), 2 = Rarely (1.50-2.49), 3 = Sometimes (2.50-3.49), 4 =Many times (3.50-4.49), 5 = Almost always (4.50-5.00).

Accordingly, participants were provided with a sub scale to capture their views on how frequently they involved in different kinds of Self- initiated leadership development practices to develop their leadership skills after they occupied secondary school principalship position and their responses are summarized in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10:

Respondents' Ratings on Self - initiated Leadership Development Practices

1. Self- initiated LDP*	Rating scale (N= 48)					
	Not at all(%)	Rarely/ Some-times(%)	Many times/Almo st always (%)	Mean	Std. deviation	Rank
Unstructured and non-intentional experiences resulting from daily work		25	75	3.75	.729	1
Reading (books, newspapers, articles, magazines, manuals. guidelines, directives)		41.6	58.4	3.67	.859	2
Participating in a committee or working task- force		49.7	50.3	3.25	.601	3
Internal or external 'knowledge networks' or communities of learning	2.1	70.9	27	2.67	.907	4
On-line learning through internet	53	44.9	2.1	1.52	.545	5

*LDP=Leadership Development Practices

Table 4.10 portrays the mean ratings and rank orders of how frequently the incumbent principals engaged in the leadership development practices that are initiated by them-

selves. Accordingly, the data in the above table revealed that the incumbent principals engaged many times in two self-initiated leadership development activities to develop their leadership skills. More specifically, majority (75%) of the principals disclosed that the top self-initiated leadership development strategy practiced frequently is unstructured and non-intentional experiences resulting from daily work ($M=3.75$, $SD=.729$). The second frequently practiced self-initiated leadership development strategy confirmed by a little more than half (58.4%) of principals appears to be through reading books, articles, magazines, manuals, guidelines and directives related to school leadership and management with ($M=3.67$, $SD=.859$), in that order.

In terms of percentage, the least leadership development activity from among the five self-initiated development practices was found to be on-line learning through internet which was rated as 'not at all' by the majority (53%) of the respondents with ($M=1.52$, $SD=.545$). This could be due to the lack or inadequate internet services particularly in rural areas of the regional state. Only a token (2.1%) of the principals reported that they were engaged in such activity 'many times' and this group could possibly belong to those principals of secondary schools who were in the urban centers of the regional state. This finding corroborates the results of some researches conducted in different parts of Africa (Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2012; Kusi, 2008; Scott & Rarieya, 2011; Usman, 2016) that reported restricted internet usage in the process of school leader's development.

The second least practiced leadership development activity that was reported 'rarely' by the vast majority (70.9%) of the principals was the internal or external 'knowledge networks' or communities of learning' with ($M=2.67$, $SD=.907$).

In addition, principals who took part in the interview were asked to share their personal experiences pertaining to developing their own leadership skills since taking on the role of secondary school principalship. Accordingly, they mentioned resources like guidelines, directives, manuals, circulars, etc., sent to their schools by Woreda Education Office, Zonal Education Department, Oromia Education Bureau and the federal MoE at different times. For example, when discussing some of the other items he read, one of the interviewees said,

In my school, there is a document entitled ‘Educational Management, Organization, Community Participation and Finance Guideline’ prepared by Ministry of Education’. Additionally, there is a guideline ‘Educational Supervision Manual: Educational Programme Supervision Directive’, prepared by MoE. I refer to these guidelines before I make decisions on matters related to school leadership. These guidelines also informed me a great deal about school leadership (P-4, December, 2023).

Of course, irrespective of their initial training for the position, school principals need to refer to and master the guidelines and directives issued by higher officials so as to inform themselves and build their own capacity and be able to lead their respective schools in line with the prevailing policy direction.

One of the participant principals added to the list ‘supervisor’s record book’, while narrating its importance for professional development, he noted:

As it gives a record of specific areas for further improvement at least before next-round supervision; I really found that as one of the important means for developing my leadership skill. It actually focuses on the strength as well as ways of im-

proving deviations observed in the course of leadership practices (P-3, December, 2023).

Interviewees also mentioned other reading materials they used to read so as develop their own school leadership skills during their leisure time. Interview P-1, for instance, reflected on his own experience as “I usually refer to the course materials and books on educational leadership and management I got from university at the time of my stay in the MA program in School Leadership”.

The other two principals (p-3 and p-4), who stated that they had never taken any leadership course, indicated that they typically use their phones to surf the Internet, and that they look up information on school leadership to update on their knowledge. One of the principals in this group, P-4, candidly admitted that he feels uncomfortable in his current role, as he previously taught English, which was his major area during his undergraduate studies.

Participants were also provided with a sub scale to capture their views on how often they participated in the leadership development practices initiated by government and /or non -government organizations currently working on education- related projects in their surrounding and their responses as summarized in table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11:***Respondents' Ratings on Government/NGO- initiated Leadership Development Practices***

2. Government/NGO- initiated LDP*	Rating scale (N= 48)					
	Not at all(%)	Rare-ly/Som - times(%)	Many times/ Almost always (%)	Mean	SD	Rank
Experience sharing at CRC** level		25	75	4.10	.778	1
Visiting and observing other effective school principals in action		16.7	83.3	4.00	.583	2
Coachingby supervisors, peers and/or super-ordinates		33.3	66.7	3.67	.753	3
Performance appraisals		49.3	50.7	3.21	.874	4
Conferences of school principals(at Woreda, zone, regional and national levels)		75	25	3.17	.808	5
Workshops, Seminars, Conference,		75	25	3.17	.808	5
Working on CPD		83.4	16.6	3.08	.767	7
Internal and external meetings of school leaders	8.3	83.4	8.3	2.75	.729	8
Challenging work assignments or projects completed on-the-job	68.1	13.3	18.6	2.25	.838	9
Classroom training - short-term or long-term courses	68.8	18.8	12.4	2.08	.679	10
Formal university-based leadership development	68.1	31.9	-	1.81	.673	11
Induction	69.3	30.6	-	1.42	.525	12

*LDP=Leadership Development Practices;

**CRC= Cluster Resource Centers

Table 4.11 presents the mean ratings and rank orders pertaining to how often the serving principals engaged in the leadership development activities/practices in place that are initiated by government and/or none- government organizations currently working on education-related projects in Oromia National Regional State . As can be observed vividly from the data displayed in the above table, the top three leadership development strategies availed by government and/or none- government organizations for them and frequently practiced include experience sharing at CRC level(M=4.10, SD=.778), visiting and observing other effective school principals in action(M=4.00, SD=.583), and coaching by supervisors, peers and/or super-ordinates(M=3.67, SD=.753).The data also

further revealed that three- fourth (75%) of the incumbent principals participated in workshops, Seminars, Conference of school principals at Woreda, Zonal, Regional and National levels only sometimes and/or in rare cases, implying that such leadership development strategies are organized and practiced sporadically as these might have budget implications.

From the dark side, leadership development strategies that appear to be common in several principal preparation and development programs rated the least implying that the practice is a missing- gap in the secondary school principal preparation and development in Oromia regional state. As can be observed from the data displayed in the above table, majority (69.3%;68.8% and 68.1%) of the incumbent principals had the opinion that the induction program ($M=1.45,SD=.525$); formal university-based leadership development ($M=1.81, SD=.673$) and classroom training both short-term and long-term courses ($M=2.08,SD=.679$) have been reported rarely and in a severe case never, implying that the opportunity for formal leadership preparation for secondary school principals is scarce. These formal leadership preparation practices were deliberately included in leadership development strategies so as to triangulate responses given by principals under the biographic data section (tables 4.2,4.3 and 4.4) above. This finding is comparable with Daniel's (2023) study that found that most (78%) of public school principals in Dire-Dawa City Administration of Ethiopia had no leadership training.

Even though, the policy by the federal Ethiopian MoE(MoE,2007;MoE, 2013a) dictates that principals for secondary schools should be master degree holders who attended a specialized training on school leadership; as the data analysis reveals, the majority of the incumbent secondary school principals in the regional state were not given the

chance to take part in the leadership preparation and development programs. This implies that it is a common practice to assign teachers to principalship positions without providing them with the formally mandated leadership training necessary for their performance in the role. This further implies that the current education system operates under the assumption that anyone on the basis of successful evidence as a teacher can lead secondary school, regardless of leadership preparation and development. However, it can be argued that principalship is a different role from classroom teaching and, hence, requires specific preparation and development for several reasons. The increasing complexity of principalship responsibilities is one of several factors that make it essential for school leaders to get professional training and development (Arikewuyo, 2009; Bush, 2009; Vaillant, 2015). The need for specialized training for school principals is also linked to the evidence that high-quality leadership is essential for school improvement and student outcomes (Bush, 2009). Hence, education policy-makers need to bear in mind that principalship positions certainly require complex leadership skills that can only be possessed through professional training and development as the job is becoming more demanding.

In addition, principals who participated in the interview were also asked to discuss their own experiences on whether or not they attended an induction program when they were initially appointed to the role of school principal. In addition, if the answer seemed to be "yes," by way of probing, a follow-up question was posed to learn about the topics or issues and the identities of the supervisors and organizers of the induction program. Consequently, two of the principals (P-1 and P-4) participated in the current study disclosed that induction programs were not that much prevalent in our educational system; as new principals, they were not even provided with any sort of orientation upon taking

on the role of school principal. One of the respondents, the only subject area expert who assumed the principalship role two years ago, told a very telling narrative or scenario as follows:

Driven by my desire to become a school leader and anticipating leadership training, I competed for the principalship and, fortunately, won the competition, being assigned to one of the secondary schools in our Woreda. Since both the school and the role were new to me, I expected at least some orientation on how to address issues related to school leadership. Unfortunately, they merely handed me the letter of my new appointment and urged me to begin my duties immediately. Just imagine how challenging the situation was for a novice principal like me.

Haile: That's quite strange! What coping strategy did you apply to overcome the challenge, then?

Principal-3: The only choice I had was to consult senior teachers and unit leaders to help me in how things used to be handled. And, I begun doing things as usual guided by the senior staff members. Can you imagine a school principal who was supposed to lead the staff, in turn, led by them- I was rather disappointed that the experts in the education offices were unable to fulfill their responsibilities in this regard (P-3; December, 2023).

In fact, from professional ethics point- of -view, as well as for those who think with their right mind, it is unfair to assign a novice principal without prior orientation on how to lead and handle school- related issues. It is for this reason that several notable researchers in the area of educational leadership emphasized the importance of familiarizing the new

incumbents with the context in which they are leading, including the school culture itself (Bush, 2008;2011; Donley et al., 2021; Fusarelli et al., 2018; Villani, 2006).

In general, an effective induction program is designed to facilitate the transition for newly appointed principals, accelerate their socialization process, help them grasp the complexities of school leadership, and boost their self-confidence, enabling them to perform their roles effectively. Conversely, a lack of or an insufficient induction method might have an impact on and slow down the learning process. According to Bush (2008), there is a greater possibility that this kind of on boarding procedure may cause the newly appointed principals to become doubtful about their ability to lead effectively.

4.4. Challenges Related to Selection and Preparation of Principals

This theme was emerged to seek answers to the fourth basic research question. Basically, it aimed at gathering data regarding the major challenges faced with regard to selection, preparation, development, and placement of principals in secondary schools within the Regional State. Therefore, it sought insights directly from key stakeholders, including experts from the Regional Education Bureau, Woreda Education Offices, and the principals themselves who have experienced the process. Reference is also made to the policy document for selection of secondary school principal currently in use in order to triangulate the data obtained via interview.

4.4.1 Principal Selection for School Leadership Position

Developing effective school leadership starts with the selection and preparation of skilled and well-equipped principals. Successful change depends on appropriately selected and supported principals given the required combination of autonomy and accountability to perform. Principal selection is, therefore, a crucial mechanism to ensure that schools are

led by the most suitable principals. The process of matching between the selection and preparation of the principal is quite essential for having capable school leaders. Following the perspective of Palmer and Mullooly (2015), Aravena (2020), defined selection as “ the first strategic mechanism to ensure that a competent principal be appointed to a school leadership position”(p. 1206).It includes procedures such as setting selection criteria, gathering data on the candidates' qualifications, processing the data gathered, and ultimately selecting the right candidates for the position (Palmer & Mullooly, 2015; Qurai-shi & Aziz, 2016).

Bearing this in mind, an attempt was made to look into the practices of principal selection for secondary schools in Oromia National Regional State of Ethiopia using interview and document analysis. In Oromia, the usual practice is that principals are first recruited from among teachers to leadership roles and are then made to attend the training. In order to get the true picture of the current practice pertaining to principals selection for secondary school leadership position, first interviewees from the decision -makers group were asked what criteria they consider when they select principals for secondary schools. In response to this, the following assertion was given by an expert from the regional education bureau:

Selection of principals is done at Woreda /Town Education Offices level based on the guidelines prepared by the Federal Ministry of Education and endorsed by the Education Bureau. What we actually do here is that we translate the selection guideline into ‘Afaan Oromo’, the working language of the regional state, dispatch it to Woreda/town education offices in the region and follow its implementation.

Haile: Would you please tell me the criteria used to select aspiring principals for the position?

EB-1: Of course, teachers with degrees in any school subject and having a minimum of five years of service could apply to be principal. In addition, s/he must have better performance appraisals for the years served as teacher (EB-1, December, 2023).

In order to triangulate this view of the expert from Oromia Regional Education Bureau, it appear to be mandatory to refer to the policy document currently in use for principal selection for secondary school leadership position. Accordingly, reference is made to the National Curriculum Framework for MA Degree in School Leadership training that proposed the following criteria for selecting secondary school principals to training programs (MoE, 2014, PP 16–17):

1. MA/MSc/MEd holders, BSc/BA/BEd + PGDT holders, (Degree in EdPM and subject area + PGDSL are advantageous)
2. Five years of teaching experience in a government or private school;
3. Potential to serve as a school leader, and the commitment to work as a school leader for a reasonable number of years; unit leadership, department headship is also advantageous;
4. More than 75 % in performance evaluation during the last three semesters;
5. Age not older than 48;
6. Females and teachers with disabilities get an additional 3 %;
7. A pass in the entrance exam (minimum of 50 %) prepared by the universities which offer the program.

A close look into the same policy document reveals that only the following three are weighted among those proposed criteria.

1. University GPA = 40%
2. Performance Evaluation over the latest three semesters = 40%
3. Experience in teaching or as a school principal = 20 %. (MoE,2014, P.17).

As can vividly be observed from the criteria proposed above, ‘potential to serve as a school leader and the commitment to work as a school leader for a reasonable number of years’ (MoE, 2014, p. 16) constitute some of the important variables to consider when choosing applicants for the training. They are not weighted, though. Some of the key informants express doubts even about the successful application of the weighted criteria in Oromia National Regional State. One of the participants (P-4), for instance, vehemently argues,

...the selection criteria are not adequate for identifying candidates with the requisite potential. It rather appears to be nominal for one is required to produce support letter from Woreda Administration Office, even to apply for the position, in which- case, only those who have political partisanship will get priority.(P-3, December,2023).

Another key informant, who was a graduate of EdPM himself, through self-sponsored weekend program for being denied the chance to participate in government-sponsored training program, similarly explains the procedure and challenges applicants face during competition. He notes,

Applicants are required to submit recommendation letter with their academic credentials which is difficult to get unless you are a member of the ruling party or have some kind of acquaintance with Woreda Officials. (P-4, December,2023).

One of the school principals was highly critical of the exiting practice of principal selection for school leadership position as well as further education at the Woreda Education level. He went on criticizing the exiting practice and has this to say;

It has been years since I was assigned as school principal in this school; as I told you earlier, when opportunities for training are given, teachers who are party members were given priority; it is reserved for others, but not for me. Otherwise, it is reserved for a person who belongs to a network of friends and associates with close ties of loyalty and mutual support. Frankly speaking, if I get chance, I'm ready to leave this profession. (P-3, December, 2023).

The other principal informant, a graduate of a government-sponsored program in School Leadership himself, explained that although there is a clearly defined policy document regarding the selection, preparation and placement of principals, the actual practices at the grassroots level often differ significantly. He described the current situation as being misaligned with the intended direction. To support his argument, he remarked, "I know colleagues who hold an MA in School Leadership but have been demoted and reassigned to teach subjects related to their undergraduate degrees, even at the primary and junior secondary levels."(P-1, December, 2023).

An attempt was made to validate this assertion by asking the decision-makers about the criteria they consider when selecting and deploying principals for secondary schools.

When questioned about the persistence of this practice in the Regional State, one Woreda Education Official provided a revealing response:

What matters most is the effectiveness of the individual in school leadership to implement government policies; his/her commitment to align with the ruling party's agenda and adhere to the government's educational philosophy. Even when all other factors are equal, political partisanship plays a crucial role in the selection and placement of these key figures. (EO-3, December 2023).

Even though, the policy by the Federal Ethiopian Ministry of Education (2013a; 2014) dictates that selection of secondary schools' principals for MAScL preparation program should be based on merit (University GPA = 40%; Performance Evaluation over the latest three semesters = 40%; and Experience in teaching or as a school principal = 20 %). (MoE, 2014, P.17); as the data analysis reveals, loyalty and favoritism (Old-boy-ism) were given priority in Oromia National Regional State. This implies that the current education system appears to give priority for unwritten and defective selection-criteria and therefore the chance for the process to bring competent and experienced candidates to the preparation appear to be minimal since selection for training is made among those incumbent principals. However, researchers in the field note that such approach results in an injustice in the application pool, where the person who is less-competent is more likely to get hired (Aravena, 2020; Palmer & Mullooly, 2015).

The literature often highlights the importance of selecting candidates with leadership potential to attain favorable results. For example, Huber (2005) argues for hiring qualified individuals who can evolve into future leaders, a tactic aimed at avoiding the allocation of substantial resources to unfit candidates. Likewise, Hoyle and Torres (2010)

suggest that admitting the most talented and passionate leaders into leadership training programs enhance effectiveness.

The finding of this study is consistent with the findings of Gurmu(2019) that found out political affiliation is the main criteria considered in Ethiopia to select primary school principals to positions. It is also consistent with the finding of Damie et al.'s study (2021) that found out that, in most cases, selection, recruitment and assignment of school leaders for leadership development in Bale Zone of Oromia National Regional State were political affiliation. Moreover, the finding of this study is also consistent with the finding of Trussew et al.'s study (2017) which identified that the absence of objective criteria and a lack of transparency in the selection and appointment processes undermine professionalism and democratization. Additionally, Trussew et al. (2017) noted that rapid changes in policies regarding the selection of school principals, along with an emphasis on short-term training and the acceptance of certificates and postgraduate diplomas as sufficient qualifications for school leadership, present significant challenges. Furthermore, the finding of the current study is also similar to the finding that Palmer and Mullooly (2015) identified as problems with the selection procedures, such as their highly subjective nature and the prominence of non-merit criteria like the incumbents' gender, race/ethnicity, politics, favoritism, in principal selection.

4.1.2. Inconsistency and Frequent Changes in Principal Preparation Program

Effective school leadership is built upon the foundation of strategic selection and preparation of capable principals, as successful change hinges on empowering these leaders with the right mix of autonomy and accountability. As the responsibilities of school principals

evolve in response to changing educational demands, societal expectations, and diverse school environments, the literature emphasizes the necessity for reform in leadership preparation programs (Darling-Hammond et al., 2010). Consequently, when a country introduces a new principal preparation program, it is equally important to determine the optimal duration for the program to remain functional and active to ensure a positive impact on school leadership. In this context, research suggests that a principal preparation program should ideally remain active for a minimum of 3 to 5 years after its introduction as timeframe allows for adequate implementation, refinement, and assessment of the program's effectiveness (Hornig & Loeb, 2010; Sahlberg, 2011; Tan, 2014).

In light of this context, attempt was made to investigate the rationale behind the frequent changes in principal preparation programs for secondary schools, i.e., from EdAD to EdPM, to EdL, to PGDSL, and ScL in the Oromia National Regional State of Ethiopia, through interviews and document analysis.

In order to learn the rationale behind the frequent changes in principal preparation programs for secondary school leadership, interviewees were asked 'what necessitated the frequent changes in secondary school principal preparation program?' In response to this, HoDs of Educational Planning and Management from principal preparation program hosting universities confirmed that there is the frequent change of preparation programs with even a sudden interruption of the existing/functioning program. All the three key informants from universities indicate that with the exception of EdAd that remained functional for longer period of time, (from its inception in 1970s by Addis Ababa University till 2000), the time it was changed to EdPM by MoE's authoritative decision), other principal training programs underwent fast changes (U-1;U-2,U-3).

One of the HoDs, a graduate of EdPM himself, critically observed the exiting frequent changes with the principal preparation for secondary school leadership. He went on explaining the exiting practice and has this to say;

Principal preparation programs are frequently changing in recent years; i.e., EdPM was changed to EdL which was under implementation from 2010-2012 but was then immediately changed to PGDSL in 2013 which was further changed to MScL for secondary school level principals in 2014. Today, all the programs have been interrupted and there is no clear direction from MoE and therefore, where we are heading is unknown. In our case, we are dealing with those self-sponsored MA candidates who joined earlier in weekend and summer programs.

Haile: that is amazing. But what do you think is the reason behind this fast changes?

U-1: I think it has to do with Donors' influence. When donors come up with certain project, they come with lump sum fund and definite time-frame. When the project terminates, looking for another donor, with a different project, appears to be a must. Hence, shortage of resources and donor's varied interests are the root cause for frequent changes in the principal preparation programs (U-1, December 2023).

On this particular issue, a response by one of the HoDs (U-2) is quoted as "I am aware that changes in principal preparation programs are fast these days. Particularly, the changes from EdL to PGDSL then to ScL which took place between only 2010/11 and 2014 are unbearable".

Another key informant, an expert from the Federal Ministry of Education explained the reasons for the frequent changes in principal preparation programs with some reservations as he claimed to be a new-comer for the position. He notes;

Of course, there are frequent changes in preparation programs for both teachers and school principals. Mostly, the changes are made at MoE level, following changes with governance and education policy. As these reforms require huge resource, financial and technical support from partners, donors and other international organizations that have a stake in education reform appear to be crucial. Even then, the courses and the training materials are prepared by professionals from universities under the auspice of Ministry of Education (EO-1, December 2023).

As can be learnt from the responses of key informants drawn from principal preparation program hosting universities and the Federal Ministry of Education, the recent principal preparation programs particularly, EdL, PGDSL and ScL were donor-driven, short-lived and frequently changed between only 2010/11 and 2014. However, research suggests that a principal preparation program should ideally remain active for a minimum of 3 to 5 years after its introduction as timeframe allows for adequate implementation, refinement, and assessment of the program's effectiveness (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Sahlberg, 2011; Tan, 2014). A case in point is Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership (AITSL) that provided initial training and continuous support over 3-5 years where leadership programs have led to improved leadership practices and student outcomes across various schools (AITSL, 2014). The other notable example is Singapore's National Institute of Education (NIE) Principal Preparation Program with the duration of

1-2 years of initial training, followed by continuous professional development over 3 years where this approach to principal preparation has resulted in high-performing schools, with principals being equipped to lead effectively in a rapidly changing educational landscape(Tan, 2014). Therefore, Ethiopia needs to learn from proven experience of these countries and incorporate these lessons into its educational framework so as to enhance sustainability and effectiveness of its principal preparation programs and ultimately improve school performance and student achievement.

The finding of this study is consistent with the finding of Yohannes's study (2019) that found out that there were frequent program changes, three times in less than half a decade, in principal preparation program in Ethiopia.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this chapter is to present summary of the major findings of the study drawn from pertinent sources, conclusions drawn from the major findings, recommendations and implications for policy and practice.

This study sought to explore the practices of and challenges associated with the preparation and development of principals in government secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State of Ethiopia and thereby suggest the way forward. To achieve the stated objective, the study was guided by the following basic questions:

1. What policies and strategies are in place for:
 - 1.1. Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 1.2. Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
2. What are the current practices in terms of:
 - 2.1. Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 2.2. Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 2.3. What proportion of secondary school principals is qualified in Oromia National Regional State?

- 2.4 What types of professional development activities do secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State engage in to develop their leadership practices?
- 3 What policy- practice gaps are there pertaining to:
 - 3.1 Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 3.2 Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 3.3 Selection of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
- 4 What major challenges exist with regard to:
 - 4.1 Leadership preparation of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?
 - 4.2 Leadership development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State?

The study followed pragmatic paradigm in knowledge creation and, hence, employed parallel mixed research design where both quantitative and qualitative data were collected concurrently. The rationale for employing this approach in the study was that of triangulation as it sought to obtain different but complementary data on the same problematic issue (Creswell, 2003; Scott & Morrison, 2007) to better understand all the relevant factors impacting the research problem.

A combination of cluster-sampling, simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and availability sampling techniques were applied to select the sample zones, secondary

schools and the target respondents. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used to collect data from respondents: relevant person from MoE and OREB, woreda education officers, secondary school principals, sampled from west Harargea, Arsi, West Shoa, and Sheger City Administration of Oromia National Regional State. National and regional policy documents were also analyzed. A pilot test was carried out in eight secondary schools found in Nekemte town to verify the study's objectives, test instrument validity, and ensure adherence to research protocols.

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to analyze the quantitative data. On the other hand, the data collected through interview and document review were transcribed, coded, categorized and analyzed qualitatively. Presentation, discussion, and interpretation of results were concurrently made during the analysis. The quantitative data were displayed first in tables and then substantiated and triangulated by the qualitative data in the form of texts and direct quotes. Accordingly, based upon the analysis made, the major findings of the study are summarized hereunder.

5.1. Summary of Major findings

1. The demographic characteristics data secured from both quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed that secondary school principalship in Oromia National Regional State was male dominated (89.6%), majority (79.2%) of whom are young (in the age range between 30-39), and a little more than half (54.2%) of them had no appreciable experience in school principalship.

2. The majority (68.8%) of secondary school principals currently serving in Oromia National Regional State are subject specialists, specializing in various subject areas,

without having any kind of specialized training in school leadership implying policy-practice gap. Surprisingly, the data further revealed that 20 principals out of 33 (60.6%) had Natural Science background.

3. Even though, the policy by the Federal Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE,2013a;2014) dictates that selection of secondary schools principals for the position and MA in ScL preparation program should be based on merit; both the qualitative and quantitative data analysis conducted in this study reveal that the prominence of unwritten, non-merit criteria such as the applicants political loyalty and favoritism(Old-boy-ism) were given priority in the selection of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State.

4. The existing University-based MA in ScL preparation program, in particular seems to be aligned with the competencies outlined in the National Professional Standard for School Principals in Ethiopia, the policy document of MoE(2013a, p.12), so as to help incumbent principals in the process of acquiring leadership competencies designed for the program. However, the fact that some courses like ‘School Community Relation’ are offered in a distance modality than face-to-face and/or for a limited duration of time (the summer program lasts only six weeks), as well as absence of centrally- prepared and harmonized training-module—where the breadth and depth of the course contents are typically decided by the course instructors based on their prior knowledge and experience—are evident flaws, though, as the graduates feel they could not benefit as much from the courses. Despite these weaknesses in the program, the initiative to prepare school leaders for leadership roles at graduate level, situated in universities, is a step in the right direction.

5. The data further revealed that only a little more than a quarter; i.e. (31.3%), of the respondent secondary school principals have participated in leadership preparation programs and specialized in at least one of the three graduate programs (EdPM, EdL or ScL) run by various Universities that have principal preparation programs in regular, weekend, and a combination of summer-distance-summer.

6. The study also unveiled that the recent principal preparation programs particularly, EdL, PGDSL and ScL were donor-driven, short-lived and frequently changed (three times between only 2010/11 and 2014). However, research suggests that a principal preparation program should ideally remain active for a minimum of 3 to 5 years after its introduction as timeframe allows for adequate implementation, refinement, and assessment of the program's effectiveness (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Sahlberg, 2011; Tan, 2014).

7. The study also revealed that professional development practices for secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State are scarce and limited to self-initiated practices like unstructured and non-intentional experiences resulting from daily work, reading guidelines, and manuals.

8. Education office-initiated professional development practices for the incumbent secondary school principal were also limited to activities like experience sharing at the CRC level, school visits by supervisors, performance appraisal, and rarely from conferences and seminars of school principals (at Woreda, Zone, Regional, and National levels). And, even where it is practiced, it appears to be sporadic, unorganized, and unsystematic.

9. The study also revealed that even the professional development activities that are commonly practiced in other countries and proved/found to be helpful in developing

principal's leadership skills like mentoring and coaching are not known and practiced by Woreda Education Officials of the study area.

10. The study also demonstrates that induction for novice principals in the secondary schools of Oromia National Regional State is overlooked by Woreda Education Officials.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the study's findings and the discussions held thus far, the following conclusions can be drawn.

As is shown in the findings, the majority of public secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State are assigned to principalship positions without any form of leadership preparation and, hence, found to be under qualified to lead at this particular level. Exacerbating the problem, a considerable number of them lack any appreciable experience in school principalship. In reality, the misplaced principals and the schools themselves suffer negative effects as a result of this misplacement/assignment. On the one hand, it causes the principals' morale to decline due to poor performance, which may ultimately lead to psychological or physical withdrawal. On the other hand, it may result in poor performance of schools thereby contributing to the already deteriorating quality of education.

The findings of this study highlight significant concerns regarding the sustainability and effectiveness of recent principal preparation programs, specifically the EdL, PGDSL, and ScL initiatives. The donor-driven nature of these programs, coupled with their short-lived existence and frequent alterations, raises questions about their long-term viability and impact on educational leadership. The evidence suggests that for such pro-

grams to be truly effective, they must remain stable and operational for a minimum of 3 to 5 years. This duration is crucial for allowing adequate implementation, refinement, and thorough assessment of their effectiveness, as supported by existing research (Hornig & Loeb, 2010; Sahlberg, 2011; Tan, 2014).

The study also reveals that Professional development practices for the incumbent secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State are scarce and limited to self-initiated practices like unstructured and non-intentional experiences resulting from daily work, reading guidelines, and manuals. Education office-initiated practices were also limited to activities like experience sharing at the CRC level, school visits by supervisors, performance appraisal, and rarely from conferences and seminars of school principals(at Woreda, Zone, Regional, and National levels). And, even where it is practiced, it appears to be sporadic, unorganized, and unsystematic. The study also revealed that even the professional development activities that are commonly practiced in other countries and proved/found to be helpful in developing principal's leadership skills like mentoring and coaching are not known and practiced by Woreda Education officials of the study area.

The study also demonstrates that induction for novice principals in the secondary schools of the region is overlooked by Woreda Education Officials. However, it should be noted that an effective induction program is meant to ease the transition for newly deployed principals, expedite their socialization process, aid in their understanding of the intricate realities of school leadership, and boost their self-confidence so that they can effectively perform their duties (Bush, 2008). Conversely, lack of or insufficient induction programs might have impact on and slowing down the learning process; and in a

severe case, there is a higher chance that such induction process may make the recently appointed principals to become doubtful about their ability to lead today's complex and challenging secondary schools effectively.

The assignment of trained, experienced and committed principals contributes much to the attainment of educational objectives. As principals vary or differ in their qualification, preparation/development, specialization, experience and interest, all this need to be considered in assignment decisions. However, the criterion mostly used in principal assignment was found to be loyalty over merit. The use of loyalty alone is unlikely to make a positive contribution to the effective utilization of knowledge, skill and ability of the principal. Above all, it leads to the de-professionalization of school principalship.

Compared to the number of secondary school principals who were below the requisite qualification/specialization, the provision of both long and short-term in-service training was found to be inadequate and, at worst, had been interrupted for the last three years. Therefore, the reliance on summer program alone and, in severe case, interruption of the training program seems to make the meeting of the required standard a long-term/distant objective.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the preceding results obtained from the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data and conclusions drawn thereof, the following recommendations and implications for educational policy and practice were forwarded.

A well-designed and transparent selection criteria and procedure increase the possibility of nominating the most eligible individuals for secondary school principalship. Above all, an effective principal selection process must involve various procedures and criteria to ensure a suitable alignment between the ideal candidate and the specific needs of the school for its improvement. Hence, Oromia Education Bureau needs to give emphasis to merit-based criteria over loyalty and acquaintance (Old-boy-ism) so as to bring eligible professional principals for secondary schools in the regional state. Besides, the Bureau has to closely monitor how policies and strategies are being translated into action at Woreda Education Office level and ensure the implementation of the National Policies (MoE,2013a;2014) pertaining to selection and placement of professional principals for secondary schools in the regional state. Moreover, it would be of paramount importance to reconsider the placement of principals who have MA degree in ScL, EdPM, EdL ; but deployed to teach in primary schools, for one or the other reason, as the current practice entails negative implication on the utilization of meager resource.

It is a plain truth that the shortage of qualified principals cannot be alleviated overnight for it requires ample resources. While the long-term responses to the shortage of qualified principals lie in improving the attractiveness of principalship as a profession, what may be done in the short-term is to give priority to providing inadequately qualified principals with the opportunity to get/attend University-based professional training in educational leadership and continuously develop their leadership skills on-the-job afterward. Apparently, school principalship is a different role from classroom teaching and, hence, just as physicians, lawyers, and pilots they require specific preparation and development. Therefore, the provision of continuous and appropriate in-service professional training

for all under-qualified incumbent principals deserves serious consideration by the Regional Education Bureau.

In order to improve the longevity and effectiveness of principal preparation programs, ultimately leading to improved educational leadership and outcomes, MoE needs to;

- develop strategies that promote the sustainability of principal preparation programs rather than fully relying on donor-funded projects. This may include partnerships with local educational authorities and institutions to foster ownership and investment in the programs.

- prioritize long-term funding commitments to ensure that these programs can operate for the recommended duration. This will facilitate ongoing training and support for principals.

- establish a stable framework for principal preparation programs that minimizes frequent changes. This stability will enable educational leaders to fully engage with the curriculum and develop the necessary skills over time.

Cognizant of the far-reaching contributions of professional development practices in providing incumbent school principals with opportunities to learn, grow, and change; it appears to be timely to introduce on-the-job professional development interventions like coaching, mentoring, and many others, in our education system. In this regard, Oromia Regional Education Bureau in collaboration with the EdPM department of the Universities in the regional state needs to introduce the use of peripatetic university professors as coaches and mentors. In this strategy, a professional/an instructor /trainer who is qualified and specialized in EdPM, ScL, EdLM will be assigned in two secondary schools that

have no geographical distance as mentors or coaches. For the successful implementation of this strategy, schools need to be arranged in to clusters within one hour of travel. Moreover, mentors and coaches should also be provided with adequate financial and other incentives so that they can be motivated to accept this mode of professional development for incumbent secondary school principals.

The study also demonstrates that induction for novice principals in the secondary schools of the region is overlooked by Woreda Education Officials. However, it should be noted that an effective induction program is meant to ease the transition for newly deployed principals, expedite their socialization process, aid in their understanding of the intricate realities of school leadership, and boost their self-confidence so that they can effectively perform their duties (Bush, 2008). Conversely, A lack of or an insufficient induction method might have an impact on and slow down the learning process; and in a severe case, there is a higher chance that such induction process may make the recently appointed principals to become doubtful about their ability to lead secondary schools effectively. Hence, newly deployed secondary school principals need to be systematically developed through induction immediately after appointment so as to enable them become familiar with the context in which they are leading and the school culture. This could be done by attaching newly deployed secondary school principals to senior and successful principals in their nearby schools for induction.

In order to ensure school leadership succession, the preparation and development of school leaders should follow a structured approach, starting from heads of departments to deputy principals and ultimately to principals. For instance, training programs for heads of departments should not only teach them how to lead a department but also pre-

pare them for future roles as deputy Principals. Similarly, courses for deputy principals should focus on their current responsibilities while also equipping them for the role of principal. Furthermore, once appointed Principals should undergo immediate induction and receive ongoing development to ensure their continuous growth in school leadership.

Albeit the concerted efforts of the Federal Ministry of Education in preparing sound policies to professionalize educational leadership (MoE,1994), it was evidenced from the reality on the ground that it is far from being realized-implying that the prevalence of policy-practice gap. It should be noted here, however, that failure to realize/enact policy to practice leads to the deterioration of professionalization of educational leadership at all levels in general, and secondary school principalship, in particular. There is no doubt that this discrepancy, in turn, adversely affects the principal's performance/role in ensuring secondary school's effectiveness and students' achievement. Hence, it is high time for the Federal Ministry of Education and the Oromia Regional Education Bureau in collaboration with public universities to formally prepare and continuously develop school principals as stipulated/ envisioned in the Education and Training policy (MoE, 1994); Teachers', Principals' and Supervisors' Development Blueprint (MoE, 2013a); National Professional Standard for School Principals (MoE, 2013b); and Ethiopian Education and Training Roadmap (MoE, 2017).

5.4. Implications for Educational Policy and Practice

The findings from the study on leadership preparation and development practices for secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State highlight several critical implications for educational policy and practice:

5.4.1. Implications for Education Policy

5.4.1. 1. Strengthening Principal Selection Processes

Education authorities in Oromia National Regional State need to develop and implement clear, transparent, merit-based criteria for the selection of secondary school principals. This will help eliminate biases related to personal connections and political loyalty, ensuring that qualified candidates are chosen based on their competencies and experience.

5.4.1. 2. Policy Implementation and Monitoring

The identified policy-practice gap signifies the necessity for effective implementation and monitoring of educational leadership policies at the grassroots level. Educational planners should ensure that policies are not only developed but also actively enforced, monitored, and evaluated. Regular monitoring and evaluation of principal selection and preparation practices need to be instituted by the Oromia Education Bureau to ensure adherence to national policies. This will help identify gaps and areas for improvement, facilitating better outcomes in secondary school leadership.

5.4.2. Implications for Practice

5.4.2. 1. Enhancing Leadership Preparation Programs

The high percentage of principals assuming leadership roles without formal preparation highlights the urgent need for structured training programs. The Federal Ministry of Education need to rethink the modalities of preparation for aspiring principals beyond summer programs to address the acute shortage of qualified principals. Collaboration with universities to prepare harmonized training modules aligned with the National Professional Standards for School Principals in Ethiopia will enhance quality and consistency in principal preparation.

5.4.2. 2. Addressing Experience Gaps

Given that many secondary school principals lack adequate experience, mentorship programs connecting seasoned leaders with inexperienced ones could be beneficial. Woreda Education Officials need to develop programs that provide induction, mentorship, and support for newly appointed principals, particularly those with limited experience. Pairing them with experienced school leaders can facilitate knowledge transfer and professional growth.

5.4.2. 3. Enhancing Continuous Professional Development Opportunities

The scarcity of systematic professional development practices indicates a need for more intentional and structured opportunities for principals. Educational planners at the regional and woreda levels need to design ongoing professional development initiatives aligned with the specific challenges and needs of secondary school leadership. This can include workshops, seminars, and access to resources that promote effective school leadership.

5.4.2. 4. Establishing Supportive Networks

The limited collaborative practices, such as sporadic experience sharing and school visits, suggest that creating supportive networks among principals could enhance leadership effectiveness. Establishing regular forums for principals to share experiences, challenges, and best practices can foster a culture of continuous improvement.

5.5. Suggestions for Future Research

The issue of leadership preparation and development of principals for secondary school settings is not much explored in Ethiopia in general and the context of Oromia National

Regional State in particular. Therefore, at least the following four areas are recommended for future researchers interested in the issue.

The first possible research area is to see the impact of leadership training on school performance. Future research need to investigate the direct impact of structured leadership preparation programs on the performance of secondary schools in Oromia National Regional State. This could help Universities that offer principal preparation programs identify which training modalities are most effective as well as in planning authentic experiences, thereof.

The other important area for further research could be Collaboration Models among MoE, Oromia National Regional Education Bureau, Universities and Secondary Schools. Interested researchers can explore effective models of collaboration among these key actors in developing authentic leadership preparation programs. Understanding successful partnerships could inform better preparation practices.

Still the other important area for further research is conducting longitudinal studies on principal experience .Conducting longitudinal studies that track the career progression of principals and their impact on school outcomes could provide valuable insights into the importance of preparation, experience and mentorship in educational leadership.

As a final note, exploring effective strategies for the implementation and monitoring of educational leadership policies can also be another important area of research which is of high importance for the policy makers as well as key actors like Woreda Education Officials and Universities. Future research could focus on case studies of successful policy enforcement in similar contexts and the factors that contributed to their success.

By addressing these implications and suggestions for future research, educational planners, policymakers, and practitioners can work towards enhancing the quality of leadership in secondary schools, ultimately leading to improved educational outcomes in the Oromia National Regional State.

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Appendices

Appendix-A

Addis Ababa University
College of Education and Behavioral Studies
Department of Educational Planning and Management
PhD Program in Education Policy and Leadership
Interview Guide
For MoE/REB Officials

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. This is an academic research which aims at exploring the current **practices and challenges of leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia national regional state**. As the study seeks to identify the challenges associated with the existing leadership preparation and placement practices in the region, your responses are very much crucial for the attainment of objectives of the study. So, feel free to answer candidly. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. You are earnestly requested to provide your honest responses to the items in the interview script. Your participation in the study is completely based on your consent to contribute to the betterment of the leadership quality of secondary school principals in the region. Moreover, your participation in the study is anonymous that the information you provide will be kept confidential and solely used for academic purpose.

Background information

Date of interview _____

Time started _____

Place of interview _____

Position within the MoE/REB _____

Sex _____ Age _____

What is your highest degree completed? _____

What is your field of specialization? _____

For how long have you been serving in this position? _____

The total number of universities providing training for school principals in the region _____, namely _____

Time completed _____

Interview guide questions for MoE/REB Focal person

1. What is the role of your office with regard to secondary school principal preparation and placement?
2. What proportions of secondary school principals in Oromia National regional state are qualified for their current position?
3. How and when was the MScL preparation initiated? What was the goal of the program?
4. What necessitated the frequent change in secondary school principal preparation program?

Probe: from EdAd to EdPM, EdPM to EdL, EdL to PGDSL, PGDSL to ScL .

Was it evidence based? Was it participatory?

5. **W**hat mechanisms do you use to follow up the principal preparation and development program? **Probe:** whether or not it is in line with the National Principal's Professional Standard/competence framework?
6. What consideration does your office will take into account when it assigns principalsto assume principal position and when it replaces them by another person(demote)?
7. Do you have a licensing and re-licensing policy both at National and regional level? what strategies were being used to realize it so far?
8. Is there succession planning to ensure the identification of talents of prospective school principals ? what strategies were used to realize it?
9. What major challenges did you face so far with regard to selection/preparation/development/ retention of secondary school principals in the regional state?
10. What do you suggest to overcome these challenges?

Reserve Final Questions

Overall, what do you think the program(MAScL) is most successful at accomplishing?

Overall, what do you think are the program's area of weakness? Be specific. Can you give examples?

Overall, how well prepared do you think graduates are to assume the role of the principal?

What is your evidence of this? How do you obtain this information?

Thank you so much again for your time and valuable responses!

Appendix-B

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

Department of Educational Planning and Management

Research Interview Questions (For *Woreda/Town* Education Officer)

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. This is an academic research which aims at **exploring the current practices and challenges of leadership preparation and placement of secondary school principals in Oromia national regional state**. As the study seeks to identify the challenges associated with the existing leadership preparation and placement practices in the region, your responses are very much crucial for the attainment of objectives of the study. So, feel free to answer candidly. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. You are earnestly requested to provide your honest responses to the items in the interview script. Your participation in the study is completely based on your consent to contribute to the betterment of the leadership quality of secondary school principals in the region. Moreover, your participation in the study is anonymous that the information you provide will be kept confidential and solely used for academic purpose.

Thank you so much for your contributions in advance.

Background information

Date of interview _____

Time started _____

Place of interview _____

Position within the WEO _____

Sex _____ Age _____

What is your highest degree completed? _____

What is your field of specialization? _____

For how long have you been serving in this position? _____

Interview guide questions for Woreda/Town Education Office expert

1. What is the role of your office with regard to secondary school principal selection, preparation and placement?
2. What proportion of secondary school principals in your woreda/town are qualified?
3. How are secondary school principals selected in your Woreda/Town?
 - 3.1. What are the current selection and recruitment **standard/criteria** for hiring secondary school principals in this woreda/town?
 - 3.2 Who are the **members** of selection committee? Who do you think **plays the decisive role** from among the committee members?
4. What is your experiences and perceptions regarding **fairness** in the selection process used to select principals?
5. Did you face any challenge during selection? What was it? What do you suggest to overcome the challenges related to selection of secondary school principals?

6. Do you notice any difference between graduates of MScL and those of other programs that you recruit principals from?

- a. IF SO, PROBE:
- b. Compared with graduates of other programs (eg. EdAD, EdPM, ELM), how well prepared do you think graduates of this program are to work as instructional leaders? In what ways? How can you tell?
- c. How well prepared are ScL graduates to build [learning communities](#)?
How can
 - i. you tell?
- d. What about these principals' capacity to work with parents and community
 - i. members?
 - ii. **Probe for other skills:** change management, collaborative problem solving, providing effective leadership, etc.

2. What consideration does the worded will take into account when it assigns the incoming principals and when it removes them from their positions?

3. What do you think are some of the reasons for frequent turnover of secondary school principals? What are the strategies designed to overcome this challenge?

4. 8.. Do you have a licensing and re-licensing policy both at National and regional level? what strategies were being used to realize it so far?

5. Is there succession planning to ensure the identification of talents of prospective school principals ? what strategies are being used to realize it?

6. 10. What **leadership development** [on -job] training strategies are available for the incumbent secondary school principals ? (probe: induction, refreshment training, workshops, seminars, CPD, etc).
7. What major challenges did you face so far with regard to selection/preparation/development of secondary school principals in the regional state?
8. 12. What do you suggest to overcome these challenges?

Thank you so much again for your time and valuable responses!

Appendix-C

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
College of Education and Behavioral Studies
Department of Educational Planning and Management
Research interview questions (For EdPMHoD at University)

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. This is an academic research which aims at exploring the current **practices and challenges of leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia national regional state**. As the study seeks to identify the challenges associated with the existing leadership preparation and development practices (policy-practice gaps) in the region, your responses are very much crucial for the attainment of objectives of the study. So, feel free to answer candidly. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. So, you are earnestly requested to provide your honest responses to the items in the interview script. Your participation in the study is completely based on your consent to contribute to the betterment of the leadership quality of secondary school principals in the region. Moreover, your participation in the study is anonymous that the information you provide will be kept confidential and solely used for academic purpose.

Thank you so much for your contributions in advance.

PART I. Background information

Date of interview _____

Time started _____

Place of interview _____

Sex _____ Age _____

What is your highest degree completed? _____

What is your field of specialization? _____

For how long have you been serving in this position? _____

Location of the University/Region /Zone?City _____

The University was established in-----

Department started official duty in _____ year

The total no. of student trainees----- ,Academic staff -----

The University functions in regular, distance, summer, other (tick)

Time completed _____

PART II. Interview guide questions for EdPMHoD at University

1. What is the role of your department with regard to secondary school principal selection and preparation ?
2. How and when was the M.A preparation program initiated? What was the goal of the program? How about MA in ScLpreparation program?
3. What necessitated the frequent change in secondary school principal preparation program?

Probe: fromEdAd to EdPM, EdPM to EdL, EdL to PGDSL, PGDSL to ScL .

Was it evidence based? Was it participatory?

4. What mechanisms do you use to follow up the principal preparation/development program? **Probe:** whether or not it is in line with the **Principal's Professional Standard of Ethiopia**/competence framework?

5. Is there a prescribed procedure in checking the match between principal training courses and the competencies in the *National Professional Standard for School Principals of Ethiopia*? How do you tell?

6. What is your impression about the quality of the graduates' profile in terms of:

7.1 Improving students' academic achievement (Instructional Leadership, supervision and support)

7.2 Leading and managing school and school functions and personnel properly.

7.3 Enhancing school and community (Society) relations

8. What major challenges did you face so far with regard to selection, preparation/ professional development of secondary school principals in your department/University?

9. What do you suggest to overcome these challenges?

Reserve Final Questions

Overall, what do you think the program (MScL) is most successful at accomplishing?

Overall, what do you think are the program's area of weakness? Be specific. Can you give examples?

Overall, how well prepared do you think graduates are to assume the role of the principal?

What is your evidence of this? How do you obtain this information?

Appendix-D

Addis Ababa University

School of Graduate Studies

College of Education and Behavioral Studies

Department of Educational Planning and Management

Research interview questions (for principals)

Dear participant,

Thank you for participating in this study. This is an academic research which aims at exploring the current **practices and challenges of leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia national regional state**. As the study seeks to identify the challenges associated with the existing leadership preparation and placement practices in the region, your responses are very much crucial for the attainment of objectives of the study. So, feel free to answer honestly. The interview will take approximately 30-45 minutes of your time. You are earnestly requested to provide your honest responses to the items in the interview script. Your participation in the study is completely based on your consent to contribute to the betterment of the leadership quality of secondary school principals in the region. Moreover, your participation in the study is anonymous that the information you provide will be kept confidential and solely used for academic purpose.

Thank you so much for your contributions in advance !

Background information

Date of interview_____

Time started _____

Place of interview _____

Location/Region _____ Zone _____ Woreda _____

Name of the school _____

The school was established in _____

The total no. of students _____, teachers _____ support staff _____

The school functions in the shift/non-shift

Sex _____ Age _____

What is your highest degree completed? _____

What is your field of specialization? _____

For how long have you been serving in this position? _____ as a teacher _____?

Time completed _____

Interview guide questions

1. How are secondary school principals selected in your Woreda/Town?

1.1. What are the current selection and recruitment **standard/criteria** for hiring secondary school principals in this woreda/town?

1.2 Who are the **members** of selection committee? Who do you think **plays the decisive role** from among the committee members?

1.3 What are your experiences and perceptions regarding **fairness** in the selection process used to select principals?

1.4 Did you face any challenge during selection? What was it? What do you suggest to overcome the challenges related to selection of secondary school principals?

2. Have you ever attended any induction program when you were first assigned to school principal position? If 'yes', who organized & managed it? What were the topics/issues covered?
3. Have you ever attended any leadership preparation training program? Do you believe that the program content of the courses emphasized **Lead and facilitate vision of learning**? What is emphasized and where?
 - 3.1 Where in the program are you prepared to **Lead and facilitate vision of learning**?
 - 3.2 Where do you learn how to **Develop and manage school community Relations**?
 - 3.3 Does the training helped you **communicate effectively with families** (about the school mission and performance) to support their students' learning?
 - 3.4 Over all, what benefits do you think you get from the training program you attended?
4. How much does the program content emphasized **Instructional leadership Domain**?
 - 4.1 Does the program prepared you to **Lead and manage learning and teachings**?
If so, where in the program?
 - 4.2 Does the program prepared you to **Lead and develop individuals and team**
5. Do you think that the course work has provided knowledge that promotes **Administrative leadership Domain**?
 - 5.1 Do you think that the training program helped you to **Lead and manage school operations and resources**?
 - 5.2 To what extent is the training program helped you manage school resources (personnel, instructional time, supplies (equipment) to optimize teaching and learning?

6. What part of your school leadership coursework **most** prepared you for the roles and responsibilities as a school principal?
7. What part of your school leadership coursework **least** prepared you for the roles and responsibilities as a school principal?
8. Since completion of your M.A classes, what types of training have you received directly related to school leadership? Is there on-going professional development practice?
9. Did you face any challenge during selection/preparation/placement? What was it?
10. What do you suggest to overcome the challenges related to selection/preparation/placement of secondary school principals?

Thank you so much again for your time and valuable responses!

Appendix-E

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
College of Education and Behavioral Studies
Department of Educational Planning and Management
Questionnaire for Secondary School Principals

Part I. Introduction

Dear principal,

Thank you for participating in this study. My name is **Haile Getaneh Terfasa**, currently studying for **Doctor of Philosophy Degree(PhD)** in “**Education Policy and Leadership**” at **Addis Ababa University**. I cordially invite you to take part in this research entitled “**Leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia National Regional State: Policies, Practices and Challenges**”. The purpose of the study is to explore the practices of and challenges associated with the preparation and development of principals in government secondary schools of the Regional State and thereby suggest the way forward for the years ahead.

This questionnaire is, therefore, designed to assess the practicing/position incumbent principals’ perceptions pertaining to their leadership preparation and development. By taking part in this research, you would have the opportunity to voice out your ideas, concerns, and suggestions pertaining to how best school principals should be trained for Secondary schools in Oromia National Regional State. Hence, as a principal in this school, your responses are very much crucial for the attainment of objectives of the study.

Your participation in the study is completely based on your consent to contribute to the betterment of leadership preparation and development of secondary school principals in Oromia national regional state. Moreover, your participation in this study is anonymous that the information you provide will be kept confidential and solely used for academic purpose. Hence, you are earnestly requested to provide your honest responses to the items in the questionnaire.

NB: No need of writing your name in any part of the questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!

Part II. Personal details

Instruction: Please give your response on the space provided

1. Woreda _____
2. Name of the School _____ Year of establishment _____
3. Your Sex : A) Male B) Female
4. Your Age in Years: A) Less than 30 B) 30_39 C) 40_49 D) 50 and above
5. What is your highest qualification? A) Diploma B) BA/BSc C) MA/MSc
D) Other (if any) _____
5. Field of Specialization _____
6. How many years have you served in this leadership position? A) <1 year B) 1-5 C) 6-10
D) 11-15 E) 16-20 F) >20
7. Total service years in teaching _____
8. Have you ever attended any Leadership preparation Courses ? A) Yes B) No
9. If 'yes' the type of Principal preparation program was: A) EdPM/EdAd B) EdLM

C) PGDSL D) ScL E) Other (please specify) _____

Part III: Domains and Competences for Principal Leadership Preparation

NB. [To be filled only by those principals who attended a university-based leadership preparation].

Instructions: To what extent does the University-based training given to you helped you to develop the following leadership competences? Please rate your school leadership preparation on a five-point scale as indicated below. Circle the number that applies to each statement as per your choice.

Key: 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly agree					
A. Leadership Preparation Activities					
To what extent does the University- based training helped you to?					
I. School vision and community leadership Domain					
1.1 Lead and facilitate vision of learning	1	2	3	4	5
Build and sustain an educational vision for the school	1	2	3	4	5
Use clear ethical principles to guide decision making and problem solving	1	2	3	4	5
Engage staff in comprehensive planning for school improvement	1	2	3	4	5
Encourage staff initiative and innovative efforts	1	2	3	4	5
Take staff opinion into consideration when facilitating change	1	2	3	4	5
1.2. Develop and manage school community Relations	1	2	3	4	5
Work with families to support their students' learning	1	2	3	4	5
Promote a culture of open communication with families	1	2	3	4	5

Communicate effectively with families about the school mission and performance expectations	1	2	3	4	5
Collaborate with school community stakeholders to support teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5
Mobilize the community's cultural, social, and intellectual resources	1	2	3	4	5
II. Instructional leadership Domain					
2.1 Lead and manage learning and teachings	1	2	3	4	5
Establish high expectations for student learning	1	2	3	4	5
Hold teachers accountable to improve student learning	1	2	3	4	5
Support differentiated instruction to enhance student learning	1	2	3	4	5
Hold teachers accountable to improve student learning	1	2	3	4	5
Conduct teacher observations and assessments to improve teaching effectiveness	1	2	3	4	5
Redesign the school's organization to enhance teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5
Create a coherent educational program across the school	1	2	3	4	5
2.2. Lead and develop individuals and team	1	2	3	4	5
Work with teachers to develop goals for their practice and professional learning	1	2	3	4	5
Provide constructive criticism and challenge teachers to become better teachers	1	2	3	4	5
Work with teachers to develop goals for their practice and professional learning	1	2	3	4	5

Work with teachers to change instructional methods if students are not doing well	1	2	3	4	5
Plan and implement professional development activities for teachers	1	2	3	4	5
III. Administrative leadership Domain					
3.1. Lead and manage school operations and resources	1	2	3	4	5
Manage school resources (e.g., personnel, instructional time, supplies/ equipment) to optimize teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5
Manage facilities and their maintenance to promote a safe and orderly learning environment	1	2	3	4	5
Manage support services to enhance learning for all students	1	2	3	4	5
Manage school policies and procedures (e.g., schedules) to optimize teaching and learning	1	2	3	4	5

PARTIV: Principal Leadership Development Practices

NB. [To be filled by all principals who attended a university-based leadership preparation as well as who did not attend].

Please for each learning activity listed below, indicate how often you use this activity to develop your leadership practices in your school by using the rating below.

Please respond to each item by circling the number which best describes your opinion.

Key: 1=Not at all; 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Many times, 5= Almost always						
S/No	Leadership Development Activities	Rating Scale				
1	Challenging work assignments or projects completed on-	1	2	3	4	5

	the-job					
2	Coaching by supervisors, peers and/or super-ordinates	1	2	3	4	5
3	Internal and external meetings of school leaders	1	2	3	4	5
4	Internal or external 'knowledge networks' or communities of learning	1	2	3	4	5
5	Participating in a committee or working task- force	1	2	3	4	5
6	Induction	1	2	3	4	5
7	Mentor programmes- formal and informal	1	2	3	4	5
8	Reading (books, newspapers, articles, magazines, manuals. guidelines, directives)	1	2	3	4	5
9	Unstructured & non-intentional experiences resulting from daily-work	1	2	3	4	5
10	Experience sharing at CRC level	1	2	3	4	5
11	Formal university-based leadership development	1	2	3	4	5
12	Classroom training-short-term or longer term courses	1	2	3	4	5
13	Workshops, Seminars, forums,	1	2	3	4	5
14	Conferences of school leaders (@woreda, zone, regional and national levels)	1	2	3	4	5
15	Visiting and seeing other effective school principals in action	1	2	3	4	5
16	On-line learning via internet	1	2	3	4	5
17	Performance appraisals	1	2	3	4	5
19	Working on CPD	1	2	3	4	5

1. What part of your school leadership coursework **most** prepared you for the roles and responsibilities as a school principal? Mention at least three top courses and briefly

explain why so? Courses:

2. What part of your school leadership coursework **least** prepared you for the roles and responsibilities as a school principal?

3. Since completion of your M.A classes, what types of training have you received directly related to school leadership? Is there on-going professional development?-----

4. Mention the most recent learning experience (either formal, non-formal or informal) you have completed at work in the last 2 years, which has **significantly affected your leadership skills in your school.**

Thank you so much again for your genuine responses!